

Chaotou Wenxue--China's New Literature

Geremie Barme

The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs, No. 2 (Jul., 1979), 137-148.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0156-7365%28197907%290%3A2%3C137%3ACWNL%3E2.0.CO%3B2-6>

The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs is currently published by Contemporary China Center, Australian National University.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/ccc.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Reports

CHAOTOU WENXUE – CHINA'S NEW LITERATURE

Geremie Barme

Political purpose and literature are closely linked in many countries, but in none more obviously than China. Literature of dissent or disagreement has been known and outlawed in China for centuries. As the criticisms of the Gang of Four's literary policies increased in 1977 to 1978 a ready-made vocabulary of invective dating from well before the fall of the Qing dynasty was invoked.¹ The traditional view that literature had a didactic and therefore socio-political function² was reinforced by the introduction of the Leninist principle that literature is "a cog and screw in the machinery of the revolution."³ The importance of such thinking in China prior to 1949 was that it aided the development of an anti-war and anti-imperialist literature which in turn had a significant function. In 1949 the founding of the People's Republic of China resulted in a dramatic change in the organization and role of the Communist Party, yet there was no significant alteration in the heavily politically motivated literary policy necessitated by the war.

Much post-1949 Chinese literature is marked by an obvious propagandistic function. However, within this large corpus of mediocre political writing can be found a handful of short stories, fables and poems that attempt to step beyond the transient demands of Party policy and deal more directly with the social and political realities of the new society. Xiao Yemu's *Between Husband and Wife* (*Women fufu zhi jian*), Wang Meng's *The Newcomer* (*Zuzhibu xinlaide nianqingren*), Liu Binyan's *The Bridge* (*Qiaoliang*) and Ai Qing's *The Gardener* (*Huayuanren zhi meng*) are but a few such pieces.⁴ The encouragement of amateur writers and the introduction of Soviet literary theories during the first years of the People's Republic did, however, provide a far wider scope for literary endeavour than allowed in the areas under Guomindang (Nationalist) control before 1949. Unfortunately, 1957 saw a sudden end to literary experimentation and innovation. Mao's literary

principle of *shuangge* ("double revolutionaries" – revolutionary romanticism and revolutionary realism) replaced socialist realism,⁵ and all attempts at socially relevant realistic writing were attacked as "poisonous weeds" and their writers denounced and banished.⁶ This curbing of literary debate and the formation of literary stereotypes which permitted only a dogmatic black and white representation of society continued in full force up to 1977 and is still evident in the majority of Chinese literary creation. During the Cultural Revolution literary policy became such a hazardous field that only a small élite of literary experts (the modern day censorate!) were capable of divining the spirit of Party policy.⁷

The revival of literary initiative and creativity has not been an easy thing for China's writers whether they be professional or amateur. Twenty years of persecution have left most older writers fearful of a new period of literary and political repression. It is therefore no surprise that in the year following the fall of the Gang no literary work appeared which did not groan heavily under the weight of Gang literary models. Even the new Peking operas *Butterflies' Attachment to Flowers* (*Dielian hua*) and *The August 1st Storm* (*Bayi fengbao*) are works that the creators of "model Peking opera" could well be proud of. Nevertheless, 1977 did see the gradual appearance of a number of short stories that dealt with Chinese society after the fall of the Gang.⁸ In November 1977 a short story was published that was not only markedly different from the stories produced during the Cultural Revolution⁹ but was also unlike any story published in China since 1957. This story, *The Class Monitor* (*Banzhuren*), was by Liu Xinwu, an editor in the Peking Publishing House.¹⁰

Liu's story tells of a class monitor, Zhang Junshi, who is put in charge of a juvenile delinquent, Song Baoqi. Zhang learns that Song is not the product of a broken home or an unhappy childhood as he first suspected, but rather a victim of the corrupting political influences of the Gang of Four. In accepting Song into his class Zhang is faced with the opposition of a number of his students. The leader of the opposition is a young girl called Xie Huimin who, Zhang discovers, has been as badly affected by the Gang's line as Song Baoqi. Liu's narration centres on the discussion of E.L. Voynich's *The Gadfly* and the correct attitude to be taken in reading it. Deeply impressed in his own youth by *The Gadfly*, Zhang discovers that the young people who grew up during the Cultural Revolution see the book as "smut" (*huangse*),¹¹ deserving of the ban imposed on it by the Gang. Zhang's surprise on learning this and the fact that only a handful of his students regard any of the pre-1966 literature as fit for popular distribution lead the narrator to reflect on the spiritual damage wrought on the young by the Gang of Four and to call out, Lu Xun-like, "Save the children!" Liu's style suffers from lengthy ideological digressions and a reticence in dealing more directly with the problems raised in the story itself. However,

The Class Monitor was, in late 1977, the most daring and socially relevant piece of officially produced literature in China for two decades.

The popular reaction to Liu's story was immediate. Within three days of the story's being printed Liu received a letter from a reader who declared "Your story has made such a deep impression on me that I don't really know how to express what I feel."¹² After a month Liu had received over two hundred letters from all over the country, and in the March 1978 issue of *People's Literature* (*Renmin wenxue*) a selection of readers' letters was printed. Comments ranged from declaring that Liu's story had broken with the stereotyped formulas of Gang literature to stating that Liu's work and the popular reaction to it should be adequate proof to the authorities that "books should be liberated." Liu himself was so encouraged by the public response that he continued to write and within six months published a number of other stories.¹³

Liu's early stories have all managed to touch on areas forbidden by Gang of Four and even Zhou Yang literary dictates. Since for some twenty years most themes were banned, it was not difficult for a writer to touch on new subject matter. Liu's story *The Position of Love* (*Aiqingde weizhi*)¹⁴ was the first story most young people had read that dealt with the theme of love! It is thus little wonder that with a modicum of talent and a certain political daring a writer such as Liu Xinwu was able to create the sensation he did. The reader familiar with the workings of Chinese politics and literature may be intrigued by the timing of Liu's literary inspiration. His decision to write *The Class Monitor* coincides so perfectly with the political and cultural changes in late 1977 that one wonders whether it is just an example of what Engels calls an inevitable coincidence (*ourande biranxing*).

Liu's position as an editor in one of China's most important presses may well have afforded him an insight into the new directions literature and culture would be taking following the reorganization of the Ministry of Culture and the reappearance of Zhou Yang and Xia Yan in October 1977. It is interesting that despite official encouragement in publishing *The Class Monitor* some circles were quick to negate the story and the trend it represented as being 'dangerous.' Such in fact was the opposition that Liu was finally required to explain himself in an article in the *Guangming ribao*.¹⁵ What Liu reveals in this review of the "mental struggle" he suffered in writing *The Class Monitor* is his awareness of the manifold problems facing the honest writer in China and the way he managed to avoid coming to grips with most of them in his writing.

Although opposition to the "problem literature" (*wenti wenxue*) that developed in 1978 continued, the debate on "practice as the sole criterion of truth", orchestrated by Deng Xiaoping and the "three Hus" (Hu Yaobang, Hu Qiaomu and Hu Jiwei),¹⁶ prevented a resurgence in Gang of Four style literary thinking. By mid-1978 Liu had been recognized as the most

significant contemporary writer since Hao Ran. The September-October issue of *Literary Review* (*Wenxue pinglun*) devoted over twenty pages to a discussion of Liu's story and its place in modern Chinese literature.¹⁷ The comments of many writers and critics centred on the fact that since the criterion of truth was social practice the criterion of good literature should also be seen as "practice", i.e., popular approval. Thus, it was argued, the laudatory reception given to Liu's story was proof that such literature was ideologically correct! Peking People's Press published a collection of Liu's stories entitled *Thoughts of My Old School* (*Muxiaode liunian*) in October and in December a selection of the best post-Gang stories was published by the People's Publishing House.¹⁸ Following the Third Plenum of the CPC's Eleventh Party Congress and the fall from power of Wang Dongxing and the "whatever" faction¹⁹ in December 1978, high level official approval was given for the new literature and it was declared to be a "new wave" in Chinese writing, the precursor of a new age in Chinese literature. This "new wave literature" (*chaotou wenxue*) thus became the pivot of interest of Party writers as well as underground amateurs hopeful of a chance to get their previously counter-revolutionary works recognized as an off-shoot of the "new wave".²⁰

Liu Xinwu has not been the only important writer of the new literature. The works of writers older and younger than Liu appeared in literary journals throughout 1978, giving a depth and variety to the themes of Chinese short story writing that Liu was incapable of. One of the most noteworthy of these writers was Lu Xinhua, a first-year student in the Chinese department of Fudan University in Shanghai. Lu is, in many ways, a representative of the post-Red Guard generation which was too young to take an active part in the Cultural Revolution but suffered the twists and turns of policy no less than their more active elders. Born in Shandong province in 1954, Lu graduated from lower secondary school on Changdao Island off Shandong in 1968, whereupon he was sent to the countryside as an "educated youth". He was able to finish his upper middle schooling while in the country and after a year of farm work was accepted into the army in 1973. After serving in the army for four years he was sent to work in an agricultural implements factory in Nantong District, Jiangsu. He was among the first young people allowed to take the "new" university entrance exams in late 1977 and was given a place at Fudan University.²¹ Lu's contact with society is more varied than that of most Chinese young people; he has been worker, peasant and soldier. Having grown up during the Cultural Revolution he is also aware of the tragedies of modern Chinese society and is sensitive to the political realities of his own situation as an innovative young writer. Lu's first story *The Wounded* (*Shanghen*)²² reintroduced the tragic theme into Chinese literature and became the centre for a while of a separate literary movement – that of the "literature of the wounded" (*shanghen wenxue*), subsequently incor-

porated into the officially backed "new wave literature" movement. Although Lu's stories are mild (his more recent story *Forgive him, God!*²³ deals with a split in a family caused by the Cultural Revolution) they have inspired millions of young people throughout China to try to understand their involvement with the Cultural Revolution and deal with the wounds left by it whether they be mental or physical. Since the publication of *The Wounded* literary societies within universities and outside them, underground and open, have sprung up²⁴ representing the divergent attitudes and expressions of young people who are attempting to recreate the joys and pains of the Cultural Revolution and somehow to understand it through writing. Perhaps the most exciting offshoot of the "literature of the wounded" is the part it has played in encouraging the literary side of the "democracy movement" that began in November 1978. It is doubtful how long the unofficial discussions and pamphleteering resulting from the "democracy wall" in Peking will last, but it may have well allowed younger writers an opportunity for contact and exchange impossible through any CPC directed movement.²⁵

There have been a number of others over the last two years who, along with Lu Xinhua, may develop into a generation of young amateur writers. One of the most interesting of these is Kong Jiesheng of Guangzhou. A twenty-four year old worker in a lock factory, Kong has written a number of interesting and amusing short stories. His first published story, *Marriage (Yinyuan)*,²⁶ is one of the most readable of the new literature. Now a regular contributor to the revived Guangdong literary journals *Zuopin* and *Guangzhou wenyi*, Kong writes mostly of young people and their lives in the fast-changing world of post-Cultural Revolution China. Another noteworthy writer is the twenty-three year old PLA soldier Wang Yaping of the Shenyang Military Region (not to be confused with the poet of the Anti-Japanese War). His first major story *Sacred Duty (Shenshengde shiming)* published in September 1978 is the first piece of officially published post-1949 writing to describe a labour camp and hint at the conditions inside. Wang's story uses the Cultural Revolution as a backdrop and tells of the sufferings of a man (Bai Shun) and his family at the hands of political opportunists during it. Wang's style suffers from the use of mellifluous language and a delight in the description of characters' throbbing hearts, watering eyes and emotion-filled hand movements. In November 1978 Wang's story was selected by the Emei Film Studio in Sichuan to be made into a film.

The writing of *chaotou wenxue* is not limited to young writers. A number of established writers have reappeared and begun writing, sometimes with a maturity and depth lacking in their younger colleagues. The most interesting of these writers is Wang Meng. The author of two short "poisonous weeds" (*Little Seed* and *The Newcomer*) in 1956 and an unpublished novel,²⁷ Wang spent nearly twenty years in Xinjiang for "attacking the Party" in 1956.

Although his formal rehabilitation did not take place until 1978 along with that of other "rightists", he was allowed to return to his home in Peking in 1977 and even publish a story. Most of Wang's recent writing has been restricted to the safer form of reportage, though he has published one memorable short story entitled *Something Most Precious* (*Zui baoguide*).²⁸ This story touches on the question of the Party's part and responsibility for the tragedies of the Cultural Revolution and the manipulation of young people. Wang writes of this with such deceptive brevity that few critics have realized the implications of the conflict between the old rehabilitated cadre father, Yan Yixing, and his ex-Red Guard son, Dandan, who is a candidate for Party membership and who was partly responsible for the death of one of his father's close friends during the early stages of the Cultural Revolution. Though perhaps not repenting his "rightism" of the 1950s, Wang clearly acquired the art of subtlety during his years in Xinjiang.

The author of *Red Sun* (*Hongri*), a pre-Cultural Revolution war classic, Wu Qiang, wrote a story soon after his rehabilitation entitled *Struggle of the Soul* (*Linghunde bodou*).²⁹ The story is about the betrayal of an old cadre by a trusted friend in 1975. As in Wang Meng's story the betrayal comes about through the guileless innocence of young people. The veteran woman short story writer, Ru Zhijuan,³⁰ criticized during the Cultural Revolution as "the second Wang Guangmei", has also reappeared to write a number of stories, the most interesting of which to date is about an old peasant Party member who is attacked, criticized and finally relieved of his official duties for failing to carry out extremist Party policies during the Great Leap Forward. In this story, *Wrongly Cut* (*Jiancuolede gushi*), which appeared in the February issue of *People's Literature*, Ru became the first writer to deal with the extreme leftist policies of Mao and other Party leaders after 1957 – no mean feat considering that at the time all official criticisms were still restricted to internal Party documents. Ru's description of the old trusting peasant in the face of a politically ambitious and callous Party bureaucracy creates a feeling of despair similar to that so common in the short stories of Chen Ruoxi. One hopes that older writers like Wang Meng, Wu Qiang and Ru Zhijuan will continue to contribute their talent and insights to the literature of China. It is possible that their participation in story writing may also encourage the less daring members of the older generation of writers to take up the pen again and attempt stories based on contemporary themes.

A new and officially approved literature is growing in China after an hiatus of two decades, though few if any of the new stories reach high standards as yet. Thematic variety and characterization allow writers a greater scope, though just how much is a question of concern to all of them. Despite the appearance of various underground literary magazines such as

Today (Jintian) in Peking and *The People's Voice (Renmin zhi sheng)* in Guangzhou in the last weeks of December 1978 and early 1979, the officially published short stories remain the central hope for a Chinese literary revival.³¹

The most important aspect of thematic variation in 1978 was the revival of the tragic theme. Though suggested for discussion by the writer Lao She in 1957,³² the possibility of "socialist tragedy" in literature remained unrealized until the publication of Lu Xinhua's *The Wounded* in August 1978. A debate on the ideological acceptability of the tragic theme soon developed and coincided with the closing stages of the debate on "truth and practice", the fall of the Peking Mayor, Wu De, and the official recognition of the "April 5" movement of 1976.³³ The *shanghen wenxue* or "literature of the wounded" that Lu's story gave rise to was criticized by some for uncovering the dark side of society and aiding the enemies of socialism. Subsequent debate has favoured the view that such literature uncovers the political and social misdeeds of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four and acts as a positive force in uniting the people against the incorrect political line.³⁴ Writers soon came to realize, however, that the end of the campaign against the Gang of Four (scheduled for late 1978) would eliminate the need to describe the dark side of society created by the Gang and therefore bring an end to the literature of socialist tragedy. There was a solution: as the literary critic Xiang Tong commented in November 1978,³⁵ "Tragedies can occur as a result of contradictions among the people. The bureaucratism, commandism and subjectivism of some state cadres have resulted in a number of tragedies in the past . . . in bureaucratic *yamen* all hope for advancement, all initiative, is crushed. Is this not tragedy?" He goes on to declare that, "another source of tragedy in a socialist society is the abiding strength of old thinking and habits . . . the influence of feudal autocracy is still strong . . . and is the cause of many tragedies."³⁶ Though the question of the portrayal of tragedy in literature was still under discussion at the time of the writing of this article, it is very possible that Xiang Tong's thinking will be the basis of a new approach to Chinese literary theory.

In a similar vein, Liu Xinwu says, "Even when the movement against the Gang of Four is over there will still be contradictions and problems in our society, we'll still need to uncover and criticize them in our writing . . ." ³⁷ Signs of such writing are already evident. The December issue of *Zuopin* printed a very short story called *The Accusation (Gaozhuang)* by Wei Liao.³⁸ It is about the conflict of an old door-keeper and a mid-level cadre who had used his position and authority to ingratiate himself with the leadership of his unit – regardless of whether it be controlled by the Gang of Four, Lin Biao or Deng Xiaoping – a "faithful minister of three dynasties" (*sanchao yuanlao*). The head of the unit, a recently rehabilitated old cadre, supports the old doorman with a promise to criticize the cadre. Though by no means an inspired story, *The Accusation* is interesting in that it deals with

a situation now common following the CPC's call to end the movement against the Gang in December 1978. For in trying to turn the attention of the people to economic construction and modernization the Party must deal with the biggest and most difficult problem in China – that of a vast, corrupt and politically opportunistic self-motivated body of mid-level cadres. In the struggle to deal with this problem there should be no dearth of material for a rich and varied literature.

Patriotism (*aiguozhuyi*) has a place second only to politics as one of the major themes of the new writing. Kong Jiesheng's *Marriage*, Liu Xinwu's *Awake, My Brother!* and Lu Wenfu's *Dedication*³⁹ all emphasize patriotism as being the only force strong enough to motivate the central characters in these stories to participate in the CPC's Four Modernizations programme. The family and love are also important new themes. As (Chen) Huangmei⁴⁰ writes in his introduction to *1977-78.9: A Collection of Short Stories (1977-78.9: Duanpian xiaoshuoxuan)*⁴¹ says, "These short stories have given the family, love and friendship a place (in Chinese literature) again. Through (the description of) the clash of forces and characters in the extremely sensitive microcosm that is the family, and the struggle over the delicate issue of love, one can see just how many tragic family situations and social problems Lin Biao and the 'Gang of Four created . . .'"⁴² Of the twenty six stories in the above collection, over ten deal with the family, and of the twelve *shanghen wenzue* stories in the collection, eight deal with the influences of the Cultural Revolution on families. Some of these stories are interesting in that they reflect a situation little realized outside China: the way in which the Cultural Revolution destroyed the delicate fabric of the new social organization developed from 1949-66 and seriously affected the collective spirit of society. The result of this in the cities has been to greatly strengthen the family unit and the sense of the individual. In a certain sense *chaotou* or *shanghen wenzue* is an expression of this situation.

Respect for the experienced and aged is a theme highlighted by stories dealing with the rehabilitation of old cadres. A sub-theme in Wang Yaping's *Sacred Duty* is the importance of the older generation of Party leaders and their crucial role in providing an unbroken link with the revolutionary past as well as giving political guidance in the present. Betrayal and political opportunism are themes that appear to be new but in fact abound in classical Chinese literature. Sacrifice links with patriotism in stories like *Dedication* and *Sacred Duty* to become a major source of inspiration to positive characters.

Gone are the young proletarian revolutionaries and old corrupt capitalist-roaders of the literature of the past. A new world of characters and personalities reflecting the heroes and villains perceived by the Party peoples the post-Gang literature. The heroes of nearly thirty years of Chinese literature – the worker, peasant and soldier – have now been replaced by the

ideal figures of a new, forward-looking politics and society – one aimed at the Four Modernizations. In accord with the social need to extol education, learning and science, the intellectual has returned from ignominy to take up centre stage as teacher, scientist or technician. Workers, peasants and soldiers become a backdrop to his activities or recede from view altogether. Old Party cadres such as Ding Yifei in *Struggle of the Soul*, Yan Yixing in *Something Most Precious*, Lao Bao in *Marriage*, Wang Gongbo in *Sacred Duty*, Secretary Lu in *Awake, My Brother!* or even the mother in *The Wounded* play an essential role in the literature as they do in Chinese society itself.

The representation of older cadres and the problem of succession touches on what is perhaps the most interesting development in technique in the “new wave literature”: the reappearance of “middle” or “developing characters” (called *zhongjian renwu* before the Cultural Revolution and *zhuanbian renwu* when depicted in Jiang Qing’s model operas.) Officially banned since 1962, the middle character made a reappearance even before the authorities had had a chance to make an official reappraisal of the theory of middle characters.⁴³ Wang Xiaohua of *The Wounded* and Xie Huimin of *The Class Monitor* are both characters who were influenced by the propaganda of the Gang of Four and found it difficult to accept the changes resulting from the conclusion of the Cultural Revolution. Official critics prefer the concept of “developing characters” in that it connotes change in a positive direction – from passivity to activity, ignorance to awareness, despair to hope, and so on. The new literature abounds in such characters and they often threaten to become the sole object of sympathy in the stories – despite the central role appointed to the more positive characters. Peng Xiaolei in *Awake, My Brother!* and Tang Lin in *Dedication* are just such characters. Though often met with in China such figures were previously never represented in official literature.

As a period of ‘release’ (*fang*) the last two years have been more significant than any other time in the history of the Communist Party. The present “hundred flowers” movement has gone much further than the one Mao Zedong carried out in 1956. Just when the CPC will decide to start a period of ‘restraint’ (*shou*) is still uncertain, although there are already signs of its having begun.⁴⁴ It is due to the experience of the first release-restraint cycle of 1956-1957 that many older people have kept in the background while the young have taken the initiative in both political and literary expression. Yet a post-Gang literature is possible in China and with less Party interference may be able to express the thoughts and feelings of a diversity of social groups.

Notes

¹ Such expressions as *wenzi yu* (literary hell), *daru lenggong* (ban, literally "throw into cold storage"), *yugong wenren* (imperial hack), *wei yujin* (contravene imperial prohibitions) and *wenpi* (hack) are but a few examples of this language.

² The famous Tang dynasty Confucian scholar, Han Yu, is known for his saying "Writing expresses the [Confucian] way" (*wen yi zai dao*).

³ See Lenin's *Party Organization and Party Literature*, quoted in Mao's "Zai Yanan wenyi zuotanhuishangde jianghua", *Mao Zedong xuanji*, III (Peking, 1967), p.822.

⁴ See Dr Sylvia Chan's article, "The Image of a 'Capitalist Roader' – Some Dissident Short Stories in the Hundred Flowers Period" in this issue and G. Barmé, "Flowers or More Weeds?", *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 1 (January 1979), 125-133.

⁵ See *Mao Zedong lun wenyi*, (Peking, 1967), pp.182-183.

⁶ Although denounced in 1956, prior to the Anti-Rightist campaign, Ding Ling was seen as a "rightist". She was first sent to labour in Northeast China and then back to her home near Xi'an, Shanxi. Ai Qing was exiled to Heilongjiang and then Xinjiang as was Wang Meng. Many writers were sent back to their 'ancestral homes' (*yuanji*) and dealt with by the local authorities. Xinjiang and Heilongjiang are the Chinese equivalents of Siberia. Tibet does not seem to have been used as an area for sending important political exiles, although labour camps do exist there.

⁷ This elite appeared in print under such names as Jiang Tian, Chu Lan and Xin Wentong. Yao Wen Yuan usually checked all articles by these groups before publication.

⁸ A selection of the best of these stories was made by the People's Literature Publishing House in late 1978 and published in December of that year under the title *A Collection of Short Stories, 1977-September 1978*, with a preface by the writer Chen Huangmei. This selection contains twenty-six stories, eight of which were translated into English by Geremie Barmé and Bennett Lee and published by The Hong Kong Joint Publishers (Sanlian Shudian) in April 1979 under the title *The Wounded: Stories from the Chinese Cultural Revolution*.

⁹ The so-called "literature of conspiracy" (*yinmou wenxue*) inspired by the Gang of Four.

¹⁰ Liu is now in his mid-thirties. He was born in Sichuan and raised in Peking. He spent fifteen years as a cadre or "class monitor" in a Peking middle school before being transferred to work in the Peking Publishing House. He is now an editor in the children's literature section of the press. *The Class Monitor* first appeared in *People's Literature* (*Renmin wenxue*) 11, (1977).

¹¹ The word *huangse* is often translated as "pornographic". In fact, anything from abstract art to disco dancing can be described as *huangse*. As social attitudes in China change following increased contact with the West it seems probable that the use of *huangse* will be restricted.

¹² See *Literary Review (Wenxue pinglun)* 5, (1978), *Shenghuode chuangzaozhe shuo: zou zhei tiao lu!* by Liu Xinwu. Liu also discusses his readers' responses in an interview with Zhang Hua. See "Fang Liu Xinwu tan Zhongguo de xin xieshi wenxue", *Qishi niandai*, 111 (April, 1974), 83-93.

¹³ These included *The Position of Love (Aiqingde weizhi)* and *Awake My Brother! (Xinglaiba, didi!)* which were as well received as *The Class Monitor*.

¹⁴ First published in the first issue of *October (Shiyue)* in September 1978.

¹⁵ See *Guangming ribao* 3 April 1978, p.2.

¹⁶ This discussion originated from an article by a teacher in the Philosophy Department of Nanjing University. Hu Yaobang used his position as the head of a special Marxist study group established at the Central Party School to have the editor of *People's Daily*, Hu Jiwei, publish it. The aim of the debate was to allow an official reinterpretation of Mao's works and policies. The Third Plenum of the CPC 11th Congress in November-December 1978 saw the conclusion of this debate with the criticism of Wang Dongxing, Wu Lengxi, Xiong Fu and the other opponents of re-evaluating Mao. Hua Guofeng was also obliged to make a criticism of his dogmatic attitudes and repression of the "theory and practice" debate.

¹⁷ See *Literary Review (Wenxue pinglun)* 5, (1978), 47-69.

¹⁸ To date this is the only individual collection of stories written by a single author after 1976.

¹⁹ The Wang Dongxing faction is known as the *fanshipai* or "whatever faction." This is taken from a statement made by Hua Guofeng in early 1977, "Whatever Chairman Mao said or did, we will say and do."

²⁰ Though much interest has been created by the development of *chaotou wenxue*, many underground writers are still aware of the ideological impediments that prevent their works from being published. It is doubtful whether a greater freedom of publishing will stem the growth of independent and non-Party literature.

²¹ See *Wenhui bao*, 14 October 1978 or *Xinhua yuebao (wenzhaiban)* (1979) 206-9, *Tantan wode xizuo "shanghen,"* by Lu Xinhua.

²² Published in *Wenhui bao* (Shanghai) 11 August 1978. A recent report from Shanghai indicates that the story may be republished with a happy ending, a move which would totally destroy what force it now has.

²³ See *Shanghai wenyi*, 11 (1978).

²⁴ Literary societies such as *Spring Seeds*, *Spring Bamboo* and *Spring Thunder* are common in the Chinese Departments of many universities. Their members are all hopeful of becoming new Lu Xinhuas.

²⁵ Late 1978 was marked by the lively development of underground political and literary groups. However, in early 1979 the factionalism endemic to China's social and political life began to appear, facilitating official discouragement of these groups. The growth of unofficial groups, no matter how small or splintered, is an important event in China and may lead to the development of greater variety in China's homogeneous political scene.

²⁶ See *Zuopin*, 8 (1978).

²⁷ *Long Live Youth! (Qingchun wansui!)*. This novel is being prepared for printing at the moment.

²⁸ See *Zuopin*, 7 (1978).

²⁹ See *Shanghai wenyi*, 5 (1978).

³⁰ For details of Ru's life and works see *180 Biographies d'Auteurs Chinois Contemporains* by Lin Manshu, Cheng Hai and Hai Feng (Hong Kong, 1976), p.226.

³¹ Although there are a number of underground literary journals in China, the works therein are generally of a very low standard. Young underground writers seem to have enough experience and understanding of the society to be able to write on interesting subjects but usually lack the reading knowledge and literary training to be able to express their ideas adequately in an artistic form. It is due to this that political pamphlets and the *pipan* (denunciatory) style writing are still the most commonly used by underground writers. Another type of literature exists in China, that of the older writers and artists who write "occasional pieces" for reading to friends or limited distribution among the literati. Due to the limited circulation of such works few people outside the literary circles of the main cities of China even know of their existence. Though usually of high literary quality and even considerable political interest, such writings will be enjoyed only by a select few while the CPC's intentions towards the present "hundred flowers" remain unclear.

³² See *Juben*, 1 (1979), 15-6. This article was originally printed in the *People's Daily* on 18 March 1957.

³³ Also known as the "Tianan Men Incident".

³⁴ See Note 17.

³⁵ See *Guangming ribao*, 3 November 1978, *Wenyi yaobuyao fanying shehuizhuyishi qide beiju - cong "shanghen" tanqi* by Xiang Tong, also carried in *Xinhua yuebao (wenzhaiban)*, 1 (1979), 198-201.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ See note 12.

³⁸ An English translation of this story will be appearing in a mid-1979 issue of the Hong Kong magazine *Eastern Horizon*.

³⁹ See *People's Literature*, 4 (1978) and Note 8.

⁴⁰ An art critic and cultural administrator. For details of his life see *180 Biographies d'Auteurs Chinois Contemporains*, p.91.

⁴¹ See Note 8.

⁴² *1977-September 1978: A Collection of Short Stories*, p.17.

⁴³ See *Literary Review (Wenxue pinglun)*, 1 (1979).

⁴⁴ At the time this article was being written a number of arrests in Peking and Shanghai had been made of activists in the "democracy movement" and there were signs that further steps would be taken to limit the movement.