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Narrative in Mao Dun's *Eclipse* Trilogy:

A Conflicted Mao Dun

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Asian Languages and Cultures

by

David Hull

2012

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Narrative in Mao Dun's *Eclipse* Trilogy:

A Conflicted Mao Dun

By

David Hull

Doctor of Philosophy in Asian Languages and Cultures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Theodore Hutters, Chair

This dissertation is an exploration of the narrative mode of Mao Dun's (茅盾 1896 – 1981) first work of fiction, the 1927-8 *Eclipse*(蝕) trilogy. It focuses on explaining the context and nature of realism as it appears in the work. The dissertation includes a biography of Mao Dun that covers his early education, and his years as an editor and as a translator. The biography also shows the influence of western literary theory and ideology on his development as an intellectual and author. Realism as a literary mode is presented in its general form and as a type of realism that developed in China. The dissertation also analyzes realism and naturalism as Mao Dun explains the ideas in his own literary criticism. A close reading of samples from the *Eclipse* trilogy shows how Mao Dun used a type of realism with a shifting objective view,

similar to a free indirect style. Finally the dissertation provides a textology study: a typology and analysis of the differences between the two major editions of the trilogy. The types include Clarity and Accuracy, Political Concerns, Narrative Voice, Simplification of Characters, and Problematic Sensuality. Through analysis of the differences between the two editions, the dissertation provides evidence that, although Mao Dun was willing to sacrifice some of the complexity and contradictions of his novel in 1954 when the second edition was edited, he strove to maintain the core of his most problematic central characters and the fundamental ideals of his narrative voice.

The dissertation of David Hull is approved.

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2012

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He was on my committee and on my side from the very beginning. I need not mention the uncountable insights and improvements of his that made this a stronger work; anyone who knows of him will take that as a given. What I do want to acknowledge is the deep influence he had and continues to have on me in a broader sense. I am certainly a better academic, a more effective teacher, and a more supple translator thanks to his guidance, but if I could flatter myself to say that I learned how act with humanity from him, I would be content.

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INTRODUCTION

As 1927 was coming to an end, the great hopeful future that was found in the minds and hearts of China's leftists was collapsing. Sun Yat-sen (孫中山 1866 – 1925), who had been able to hold the various factions of the Nationalist Party together, was long dead, and Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石 1887 – 1975), the new leader of the Nationalist Party, had finally brought his animosity toward the left into the open, moving against them in an overt bloody struggle. The contest was quickly lost and Chiang was left in control of the political and military apparatus that would soon unite China, if only briefly. Any hope of a coalition government was gone, to say nothing of any hoped-for socialist rule. Thousands of Communists and other leftists were dead, their leadership scattered. Only the most committed believer could hold any faith in the movement's future. Optimism was utterly gone.

It was at this time that Mao Dun (茅盾 1896 – 1981),¹ a committed leftist and one of the earliest members of the Chinese Communist Party, decided to write fiction. From late 1927 into 1928, he wrote three novels that would be collectively known as the *Eclipse* (蝕) trilogy. He wrote the novels as a way of providing hope for his compatriots among the communists and leftists that had suffered so greatly, and they also serve as a

¹ For an explanation of Mao Dun's name, see chapter one.

way of documenting the story of how what would be called the Great Revolution of 1927² had failed so completely.

However, despite his intentions, Mao Dun's trilogy is not an optimistic work, and the history it provides is not one of powerful leaders or military campaigns. With only a few exceptions, not one of the characters finds a positive way forward. And those positives that are suggested are not shown in the fiction itself, but only hinted at as possibilities in the far future. The historical value in the novels lies more in the psychological makeup of the characters within, tied as they are to the titles of the individual novels: *Disillusions* (幻滅), *Waverings* (動搖), and *Pursuits* (追求). The characters that Mao Dun provides are representations of those people he knew or types of people he knew within his social, literary, and political circles. They were the young bourgeois intellectuals that made up the left wing of the Nationalist Party. They were the people with whom he worked, and in particular, the women who had done political study with his wife.

These two drives, the drive to provide encouragement and the drive to record as history, seem to be at cross purposes. The history of recent events were unequivocally disastrous for Mao Dun and his colleagues, and in the same way, the fictional events in the novels are equally disastrous for the characters within. Mao Dun has provided a parallel reality in these novels through which the reader can attempt to understand the ways in which these young bourgeois intellectuals dealt with such devastation. This is

² It is sometimes conflated with the Nanchang Uprising, which was in fact one part of the Great Revolution.

the history that Mao Dun wrote. And if there is a ray of hope to be found within, it is in the faithful reproduction of the people who struggle, even if their cause fails, even if they fail individually. Because if the reader can see Fang Luolan's wavering between loyalty and lust and perhaps see truth in that, then the reader may be able to see a way forward for the future, even if there is no way forward for Fang Luolan.

The issue that is the nucleus of this dissertation is the way in which Mao Dun presents this parallel truth. Mao Dun is often and quite rightly described as one of the early and most successful champions of realist fiction in China, but less often is the nature of his realism examined in detail, and less often still are his novels read closely for evidence to support understandings of Mao Dun's realism. Mao Dun's realism is naturally a realism informed by his extensive reading of European and American fiction and theory, but it is also born of the specific context and environment in which he writes, and later, the environment in which he edits.

It is for this reason that the first chapter of this dissertation is a brief biographical sketch of Mao Dun and his world. The chapter explores his early education, his career as a literary critic and finally the beginning of his political and writing careers. The sources for this chapter are not as complete would be ideal. I rely mainly on Mao Dun's own autobiographical writings, most notably his autobiography, *Wo zouguo de daolu*, his serialized memoirs, and several articles he wrote about his own history shortly after he became a famous figure in the 1930s. Mao Dun's autobiographical writings are rather inconsistent, however. As an example, he spends a good deal of time describing a school trip to the Nanyang Exposition in 1910, but less than one might hope about the

construction of narrative, character and plot in his novels. There is also an understandable but unfortunate lack of detail and candor in his political life, especially after he leaves Shanghai and begins his full-time political work. When it comes to writing about this period, he is naturally self-aware – he is far too cagy to write otherwise. That said, what he does put down on paper seems accurate, as far as these things go, and there is no reason for any disproportionately critical eye.

Secondary sources on this topic are rather disappointing. There are various early works, but they generally go no further than repeating Mao Dun's own statements, particularly the Chinese sources published after Mao Dun is an established figure of the new People's Republic. In 1960, Marián Gálík wrote a draft of a biography, and had the good fortune to have Mao Dun look it over and offer corrections and suggestions. Unfortunately, it was never published and as yet, I have been unable to acquire a copy. Luckily a good deal of his findings make their way into his excellent 1969 *Mao Tun and Modern Chinese Literary Criticism*. Susan Wilf Chen also has a wealth of collected information on his early years in her "Mao Tun: The Background to His Early Fiction." There have been a few efforts to write biographical studies of Mao Dun since then, but in general they have not proved to be particularly helpful, some focusing more on his personal life, or occasionally simply fabricating fictional histories.

The second chapter of the dissertation deals with the narrative mode of Mao Dun and in particular of the *Eclipse* trilogy. As mentioned above, Mao Dun is often considered one of the leading lights of Chinese realism, but this is a simplification both of Chinese literature, where forms of realism had age-old roots by the time Mao Dun began

writing, but also a simplification of Mao Dun's narrative voice. Before dealing with Mao Dun's narrative mode, a step back is needed in order to frame the concept of realism. Here I set out a brief understanding of realism and naturalism as they came about in Europe, both as a response to romanticism and as forms in and of themselves. Gustave Flaubert is particularly helpful in this. He proposes that an objective portrayal of reality is the ideal, and that the author must control his passions, lest they contaminate the reality as experienced by the characters. This creates an excellent contradiction wherein the objective truth must be arrived at by the depiction of the subjective views of the fictional characters. This shift between the objective and subjective is perfectly suitable to Mao Dun's narrative mode in *Eclipse*.

There are a few works that touch on Mao Dun and his narrative style, although most deal with Mao Dun either as a part of a broader examination of narrative or in a tangential way of getting at other issues. David Der-wei Wang's *Fictional Realism in Twentieth Century China* presents the tensions in Mao Dun's narrative between an ideal Marxist determinism and the psychologically complicated and erratic humanity that must enact history. Wang sees Mao Dun as attempting to mediate between those extremes. He also sees in Mao Dun a worry that the eventual narrative of history will not be entirely truthful, and so writing fiction paradoxically becomes a way of writing history before history can. This aspect is particularly interesting in light of the fact that the trilogy went through such a significant editing, as will be discussed below. In a similar vein, Marston Anderson's *The Limits of Realism*, also focuses on the task that realism owes to history. Anderson does an excellent job of putting realism in the Chinese context. And like Wang, he comes to the conclusion that Mao Dun was struggling to reconcile his writing with the

reality that he experienced in his own life. *The Lyrical and the Epic* by Jaroslav Průšek provides a broad approach to narrative in the Chinese context. Průšek's understanding of Mao Dun's narrative fits very well with Flaubert's vision of realism and the suppression of the author's subjectivity.

There are a few other critical works on Mao Dun and his conception of realism and narrative voice, the most important of which bear mentioning here. Marián Gálik's *Mao Tun and Modern Chinese Literary Criticism* is excellent in its exploration of Mao Dun's life as a literary critic. John David Beringhausen's 1980 dissertation "Mao Dun's Early Fiction, 1927-1931: The Standpoint and Style of His Realism" has very useful sections on narrative structures and rhetorical devices, and "modernist elements." And although it is not specifically focused on Mao Dun's realism, Chen Jianhua's *Geming yu xingshi* provides an excellent framework from which to analyze Mao Dun's early fiction in terms of Mao Dun's concept of *shidai xing* (時代性) and his female characters.

However, to reach a better understanding of Mao Dun's conscious thoughts on narrative mode, there is no better method than to directly examine his own writings on the subject. He spent many years as a literary critic and wrote a good deal about narrative. This is not to say that he is in any way consistent in his thinking on the subject. Nor is it to suggest that the ideas of the literary critic Mao Dun in the early 1920s are identical to those of the author of fiction Mao Dun in the late 1920s. However, there is much that can be read with great applicability to his later fiction in these early articles.

Most of the articles come from the period when Mao Dun was the editor of *The Short Story Magazine*.³ During this time, he wrote an incredible number of articles for his own magazine as well as others, and as he became more politically active, the burden of his output became even heavier. Throughout this period, he read voraciously and commented on foreign theories of literature. His understanding of western literary theory was necessarily filtered through the limited books in English he was able to acquire in Shanghai, but it was substantial nonetheless. The style at the time, to which he subscribed completely, was to place narrative modes in an evolutionary framework. Narrative modes followed the biological rules of Darwin. While western literature, broadly speaking, had moved through the stages of classicism, romanticism, and realism into neo-romanticism, China was mired in romanticism. The so-called “social Darwinism” of Herbert Spencer fit well into this literary evolution mindset. The same fear that the Chinese people would be made extinct through weakness of species held in the literary world. Thus if China were unable to escape romanticism, and evolve, they would face the same literary fate as the dinosaurs.

This scientific mindset in terms of literary modes deeply informs Mao Dun’s narrative mode. Mao Dun never took great pains to distinguish realism from naturalism as some other literary theorists did, and this is also telling. Despite his loyalty to the idea of scientific literature and the evolutionary progressions, Mao Dun at this point is

³ The Chinese title of the magazine is 小說月報 which would be more properly rendered *Fiction Monthly*, and many scholars use this title in English. However, as the magazine itself often uses the English title *The Short Story Magazine*, this is the title I use.

interested less in the naming of things, but in their effects. He seems to see naturalism as a subset of realism, but this is not critical to him. What he is focused on is the terminal selfishness that romanticism can engender and the dangerous depressing effect that realism can have. The conflicts must be examined, not to form a purer theory, but in order to serve the population. In this way, he is more of an engineer than a theoretic scientist, and this is born out a few years later when he begins to turn his blueprints into novels.

It is examples from the trilogy that are the focus of the final section of the second chapter, and the goal is to explain the nature of Mao Dun's narrative voice. In this I begin with Dorrit Cohn's idea of the "narrated monologue," which is a more narrow conception of free indirect speech. Free indirect speech is a narrative mode that allows for the subjective worldview of a character to influence the narration of the text. Cohn's narrated monologue specifies that the narration appears in the idiom of the character, but maintains the third person perspective. With this as a starting point, we can investigate Mao Dun's fiction directly.

By examining key passages in the trilogy, the tension in Mao Dun's presentation of realism become clear. The narrative point of view generally remains stable, but the character that is influencing the narrative voice often becomes unclear, leaving the reader unsure as to the attribution of the mood or content of the narration, and even leaving open the possibility that the narrative is authorial commentary. This potential instability of Mao Dun's realism is even more explicit in the several cases of hallucination in the trilogy. The narrative follows the mind of the characters as they lose contact with their

own reality. The episodes are presented as objective depictions of the very unrealistic fantasies that affect the minds of the characters. This however is still within the form of realism that Mao Dun, and perhaps even Flaubert would espouse. It is the objective depiction of the subjective reality of the character which is yet uncontaminated by the author's bias. The question that remains is whether or not such a depiction can avoid symbolic meanings that cannot be found within that individual mind.

The final chapter is the textology study: an exploration of the differences between the original version of the trilogy and the canonical edition that Mao Dun significantly edited in 1954. Jin Hongyu has published a textual analysis study with the trilogy as his subject in his *Xinwenxue de banben piping*, but where he is more interested in the linguistic side of the analysis, this chapter focuses on the narrative implications of the changes. The original texts were published serially in *The Short Story Magazine* from the fall of 1927 to the fall of 1928. They were published individually in 1928, then collected by the *Kaiming shudian* publishing house and published as a whole with the title *Eclipse*. In 1954, the *Renmin wenxue chubanshe* planned to publish a canonical edition of the novels as part of a planned publication of the complete works of Mao Dun. As part of this plan, they asked Mao Dun to make some edits to the novels for republication. He took this opportunity to make many significant edits throughout all three of the novels. His reasoning for making these alterations is, as one might expect, rather conflicted. He is acutely aware of the potential problems that will come of any alteration, but he goes ahead regardless.

The core of this chapter is a typology and analysis of the alterations in the trilogy. The edits generally fall into five broad categories: Clarity and Accuracy, Political Concerns, Narrative Voice, Simplification of Characters, and Problematic Sensuality. The first category of Clarity and Accuracy simply refers to changes made with the goal of correcting factual, grammatical or logical problems in the text. The category of Political Concerns lays out changes made based on the changed political context in 1954. Clearly, while Mao Dun needed to be circumspect in writing on some topics in 1927 and 1928, in 1954 he was Minister of Culture in Mao Zedong's government, there were more issues to consider, and he used this editing opportunity to remove items that could serve as targets for political enemies. The third category, Narrative Voice, is tied to the issues in the second chapter, but here the focus is on the attempted elimination of the "I narrator." These edits present a narrative mode more consistent with his ideal realist mode. Simplification of Characters refers to Mao Dun's paring down of the psychological complexity of several characters, and in one case nearly removing a character entirely. This simplification suggests that in 1954, Mao Dun wanted the characters to be more easily categorized into acceptable types. The final type of edit is Problematic Sensuality. There are several edits where explicit sexuality is removed from the novels, and this might be seen as an effect of a more puritanical mood of the 1950s, but not all that is explicitly sexual is removed from the trilogy. I suggest that Mao Dun used the editing of some explicit passages to serve other goals, most often the simplification of characters as mentioned above.

Through the analysis of this dissertation, Mao Dun and his versions of realism come into sharper relief. To look for a consistent realism that is definable and reliable

throughout his career as a literary critic and beyond into his authorial and political career is pure folly, and yet there are ways of understanding what he thought was important. By understanding how he came to realism, as a way of writing literature, as a way of promoting Chinese intellectualism, and even as a way of saving China, we can better see the aspects of realism that were critical to him. The struggle between the supposed objectivity of realism and the subjectivity of his own ideology is central to his success as a writer, but that struggle did not end with his writing or publishing. Even through the writing of the three novels, the nature of that struggle changed. More dramatically, the 1954 re-editing of the trilogy shows the struggle still very much alive.

CHAPTER ONE: BIOGRAPHY AND CONTEXT

Mao Dun's Early Life⁴

Mao Dun (茅盾) is the pen name for the man born Shen Dehong (沈德鴻), courtesy name, Yanbing (雁冰).⁵ He was born in the picturesque village of Wuzhen, Dongxiang County in Zhejiang on July 4, 1896. As with many intellectuals who would become revolutionaries, his family had past glory but had fallen on difficult times. In his autobiography, Mao Dun explains that his paternal great-grandfather was a merchant and trader who was successful in his trade but also hedged his bets by buying a position in the government and was posted to Guangzhou for three years before returning to Wuzhen to

⁴ The best early information on Mao Dun's life comes from a few articles he published in the 1930s and 1940s, but they are fairly fragmentary. As noted in the introduction, in 1960, Marián Gálík wrote a draft of a biography that had been read and commented on by Mao Dun himself on it, but to date I have been unable to access it. More complete information comes from Mao Dun's memoirs which were published in serial in the journal *Xinwenxue shiliao* (新文学史料) beginning in 1978. These memoirs were expanded on and published as an autobiography, *Wo zouguo de daolu*, in Hong Kong in 1981. These memoirs and the autobiography draw heavily from the earlier articles. Some of the details could be supported through other texts, but those supporting documents generally come from Mao Dun's own depiction of events as well. The vast majority of studies on Mao Dun in Chinese are also closely based on these texts. All this said, beyond an unsurprising self-aggrandizement and perhaps some selective memories common to all autobiographies, there is no reason to doubt the fundamental data of what he presents in his own writings.

⁵ The naming convention of his family is relatively interesting. His father was named Yongxi (永錫), that generation having the character "yong" and a second character with the metal radical (金). This was based on the line from the Classic of Songs, "For such filial piety, without ceasing, There will ever be conferred blessing on you." (孝子不匱，永錫爾類. trans. James Legge). For Mao Dun's generation, the constant character was to be "de" (德) and the following radical would be water, because according to the five phases, water follows metal. (See *Wo zouguo de daolu*, 1:19)

retire.⁶ His paternal grandfather and his younger brother both tested into the *xiucai* rank, but never further.⁷ Mao Dun's mother reports that they were both great disappointments to their father. The family's judgment was that the brothers never knew hard work and that if the elder had only applied himself, it wouldn't have been difficult for him to attain the *juren* degree.⁸

Mao Dun's father, Shen Yongxi (沈永錫), felt the pressure of his fathers' generation's failures layered on top of the growing numbers of the family and the steady draining of family wealth. After receiving a *xiucai* rank at eighteen, Shen Yongxi decided to continue his studies, not for the civil service exams, but toward a more practical goal: he would study medicine with his father-in-law. His father-in-law was a well-known doctor throughout Zhejiang whose standards were so strict that he never took more than four or five students at a time, but he did find room for his new son-in-law. Two years after Mao Dun was born, his maternal grandfather died, and the family moved back into his father's family's home.

At five years old, it was time for Mao Dun to begin studying at the family school, but his father, who had become very interested in the "new educational materials," refused to let him attend. Instead, his father had his mother, who had received an informal but deep classical education at her father's home, teach young Mao Dun. The books came from

⁶ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:8–11.

⁷ The civil service examinations were awarded in ranks. The *xiucai* is a provincial award; *juren* is a national ranked scholar.

⁸ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo Zouguo De Daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:11–16.

Ye Chengzhong's (葉澄衷 1840 – 1899) new progressive Chengzhong Elementary school in Shanghai.⁹ Later, there was a brief time when he was allowed to attend the family school, but only because his father had been temporarily put in charge of teaching there. Even then, the other children studied the standard old-style texts while Mao Dun maintained his study of the new textbooks. His father was very strict in his teaching, adding to Mao Dun's studies a daily schedule of text memorization. After only a year, his father, who had been suffering from a chronic illness that neither he nor his numerous physician colleagues could diagnose, took to his sickbed.¹⁰

The illness had taken a more serious turn and Mao Dun's father was eventually diagnosed with bone tuberculosis¹¹ by a female Japanese doctor who had been sent for from a new foreign-run hospital in the nearby village of Nanxun (now part of Huzhou city). On finding his illness was terminal, he made out a will that would set the future of his sons. In his will, he says that without a new reform movement, China will most probably be broken up, but even if it were not, there will be a great need for talented men of engineering and sciences. And if his sons were unwilling to be “slaves of a dead kingdom,” they could go abroad and find work so long as they had technical skills. As he

⁹ The texts he studied at this point included *Zike tushuo* (字課圖說, which Mao Dun has correct in his 1932 “Wo de xiaozhuan” and elsewhere, but has in his autobiography as *Zike tushi* 字課圖識), *Tianwen gelue* (天文歌略), and *Dili gelue* (地理歌略).

¹⁰ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:55.

¹¹ In “Wo de xiaoxue shidai”, Mao Dun calls the illness *fengshi bing* (風濕病 – rheumatism) but this is changed to *gulao* (骨癆 – bone tuberculosis) in *Wo zouguo de daolu*. Gálík also notes that Mao Dun corrected this in a note for a draft of Gálík's unpublished biography of Mao Dun in 1960.

later was giving away his books, he passed along Tan Sitong's (譚嗣同 1865 – 1898) *Renxue*, a book of reformist and humanist philosophy, to Mao Dun, saying that he might not be able to understand it then, but one day he might.¹²

¹² Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:42–45.

Mao Dun's Formal Education

Rather than continue studying at the family school that he disdained, Mao Dun's father sent him to a private school that was run by a relative.¹³ Soon after, however, a public school named Lizhi Primary School was opened in Wuzhen and in 1904, an eight year-old Mao Dun enrolled and was quickly sorted into the advanced class. He was the youngest in the class – the oldest student was twenty years old. The curriculum was fairly conservative. He classes included Chinese, History, Mathematics and Moral Cultivation, this last based on the *Analects*.¹⁴ It is at this time however that he discovers a cache of “light reading” books in a back room of his home. Mostly very badly printed, occasionally to the point of being unreadable, wood-block copies, there were some that were not too advanced for him to read. In particular, he enjoyed a barely-legible copy of *The Journey to the West*, as his mother had told him many of the episodes already, making it easier to read. His father discovered that he had been reading these “light reading” books and encouraged him to continue, even having more books bought for him – so long as none of the books were illustrated. His idea being that such a young child would not read if there were pictures to look at.¹⁵

¹³ Among his fellow students here was the teacher's daughter Wang Huiwu (王会悟 1898 – 1993) who would eventually become the wife of Li Da (李達 1890 – 1966), a critical member in the founding of the CCP. (*Wo zouguo de daolu* 1:55-6)

¹⁴ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:56.

¹⁵ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Wo de xiaoxue shidai” 我的小學時代.

After two years at the Lizhi Primary School, and shortly after his father passed away, he graduated and enrolled in the Zhicai Advanced Primary School where there were many more courses: a more advanced mathematics course which included algebra and geometry, Physics, Chemistry, Music, Painting and Gymnastics, in addition to Chinese and English. While the curriculum was fairly progressive, the Chinese class focused on the classics such as *The Book of Rites*, *The Book of Changes*, *Zuo zhuan*, and *Mencius*.¹⁶

Marián Gálík cites Mao Dun's early thoughts about his secondary school life from a 1936 article listing what he had learned: "...prose (shu) after Qin and Han should not be read, parallel prose (pianwen) being an orthodox literary genre. One must learn how to write poems (shi) from the Seven Poets of the Jian'an Period (Jian'an qizi); in writing letters one has to imitate the letters (xiaoza) of the period of the Six Dynasties."¹⁷ The passage continues beyond what Gálík cites, "In bearing, one should act the unconventional dandy [風流瀟灑] and one's manner should be brilliant and unrestrained [清華風狂]."¹⁸ In 1936, Mao Dun was for the most part dismissive about his secondary education but it is also clear that his classical education was not being neglected. In his autobiography written more than forty years later, he is slightly less indifferent toward this stage of his education, talking with pride about lessons written in the style of Zhuangzi.

¹⁶ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:59.

¹⁷ Gálík, *Mao Tun and Modern Chinese Literary Criticism*, 7. (the translation and parentheticals are Gálík's)

¹⁸ Mao Dun 茅盾, "Wo de zhongxuesheng shidai ji qihou" 我的中學生時代及其后, 55.

In 1909, Mao Dun was thirteen years old and prepared to enroll in secondary school, but because Wuzhen didn't have a secondary school, he was sent to Huzhou to the Zhejiang Number Three Provincial Secondary School. The reasoning was that there was another boy from Wuzhen there also attending secondary school, and so his mother's mind was slightly eased as there was someone who could look after him. At Huzhou Secondary school, his classical education continued with Mozi, Xunzi, Han Feizi, and especially Zhuangzi, and many others. Despite this focus on the classics, in his autobiography, Mao Dun notes that the headmaster, Shen Puqin (沈譜琴 1873—1939), was a secret member of the *tongmenghui*¹⁹ and that the gymnastics course at the school was nearly indistinguishable from military training, including parade drill with rifles and a version of forced marches.²⁰

On coming back for a second year at Huzhou Secondary School, the school organized a field trip to Nanjing for the 1910 Nanyang Exposition. His mother sent him extra money so that he could attend. This event was important for the further effect it had in opening the eyes of young Mao Dun to the greater world. In his autobiography, he claims that it was also where he purchased a copy of *A New Account of Tales of the World*, the fifth century collection of sketches that Lu Xun would praise in his *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction*. Also, he buys a few *yuhua* stones as souvenirs for his

¹⁹ The *tongmenghui* was a secret society that harbored many revolutionaries.

²⁰ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:62–64.

mother.²¹ *Yuhua* stones will play a role in a romantic reminiscence of better times between Fang Luolan and his wife in *Waverings*.

Adding to the young Mao Dun's political awareness, in 1910, there was an instructor's strike brought on by Headmaster Shen's attempt to modernize the teaching. The strike led to a brief progressive revolution by the replacements instructors – including an English teacher who impressed by his focus on the position of the tongue in making certain English sounds and a Chinese instructor who taught Liang Qichao (梁啟超 1873 – 1929). The replacement teachers only stayed on for a little over a month before leaving and returning the class to their previous instructors, but this was one step for Mao Dun in realizing that his education was not as “fresh” as he would have liked.²²

The second step on that road was brought about by meeting with a cousin over winter break. The cousin told him about the Jiaxing Secondary School he was attending where all of the English instructors were graduates of the American Saint John's University in Shanghai, and the instructors were “just like friends” in contrast to the imperious attitude at Huzhou. He did return to Huzhou in the spring, but there was one final and rather bizarre incident that convinced him to transfer to another school. According to his autobiography, an older first year student came to be teased. People thought he was a hermaphrodite (半雌雄) because he had a sharp voice and never took off his clothes when it was hot. This student liked to be with the younger students,

²¹ Ibid., 1:66.

²² Ibid., 1:66–69.

including Mao Dun, and so another student started saying “unbearable” things about the two of them.²³ This distressed Mao Dun so much that he couldn’t focus on his studies and he says that it was then that he decided to transfer schools.

This event is given only a couple of lines in his autobiography, and he doesn’t directly refer to it in his other reminiscences. There are however, two passages from articles written in 1936. The first is from “*Wo de xiaozhuan*,” where he writes, “The first time I transferred schools was to avoid a strange fellow student (if I write an autobiographical novel in the future, I could write in more detail about this event).”²⁴ The second passage is from “*Wo de zhongxuesheng shidai ji qihou*.” “The way that life at school is passed by is by giving the best-looking first-year student the name “Face, [English in the original]” and then competing to become his friend, competing by writing poetic doggerel that praises him or that mocks the others in the competition.”²⁵ The passages most probably refer to the same incident. It seems significant that this relationship is referred to so obliquely in the articles written only 26 years after the event, despite that it was a significant reason in his decision to change schools and was traumatic enough to make him unable to focus on his studies, heretofore a very central part of his life. It is expanded only very slightly in the much later autobiography and remains largely unexplored. In the end, we can see that his leaving the Huzhou Secondary School had

²³ Ibid., 1:71–72.

²⁴ Mao Dun 茅盾, “*Wo de xiaozhuan*” 我的小傳, 44.

²⁵ Mao Dun 茅盾, “*Wo de zhongxuesheng shidai ji qihou*” 我的中學生時代及其后, 52.

more behind it than a desire to be “just like friends” with the English speaking teachers at Jiaxing, but the nature of the relationship between him and the older first-year student remains unclear.

In any case, in the fall of 1911, Mao Dun transferred to Number Two Provincial Secondary School in Jiaxing. What he had heard about the school was mostly true. The teachers were indeed much friendlier with the students. One teacher even attended the students’ Mid-Autumn Festival moon-viewing party. The reputation for advanced mathematics that had been the main reason Mao Dun’s mother allowed the transfer was also well-earned. Mao Dun was quite behind, but the teacher and students made a real effort to help him. The much vaunted English course was a bit more of a mixed blessing. Their teacher did graduate from St John’s University, but it turned out that he was half-foreign and although his English was very good, he didn’t speak Chinese well at all.²⁶

The other thing that the school would be notable for was the number of people on staff who were called members of the *tongmenghui*. Many, including students had already cut their queue. At Huzhou, there was only one teacher who had cut off his queue. The headmaster, Fang Qingxiang (方青箱) had a false queue that he wore because he had to deal with government officials regularly. The older students knew that the teachers would occasionally go to Fanfu to “hear the sutras,” which they supposed was code for secret *tongmenghui* meetings. When the revolution did come, there was a great

²⁶ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:72–73.

deal of excitement, but aside from some of the teachers leaving to take part, there was not much change, although this is when Mao Dun himself cut off his queue.²⁷

What caused Mao Dun's next move was a newly arrived strict school proctor who took away many freedoms the students had previously enjoyed. Mao Dun and others resisted, and they were publicly labeled troublemakers. While the exams were going on, Mao Dun sent a dead rat to the proctor with a few choice lines from the *Zhuangzi*: presumably the story where Zhuangzi likens Huizi to an owl protecting a rotten dead mouse.²⁸ After a drinking party in which he Mao Dun is careful to note that he did not partake, some fellow students also destroy the marker on which their names were announced as troublemakers. Soon after returning home for winter break, he received a notification that he had been expelled.²⁹ These events are also given a slightly different gloss in the 1936 "Wo de xiaozhuan." There, he writes, "The reason for the second [transfer] was due to writing satirical doggerel about an unpopular proctor. Later under the influence of alcohol, we trashed his bedroom."³⁰ This alteration seems little more

²⁷ Mao Dun 茅盾, "Huiyi xinhai" 回憶辛亥, 60.

²⁸ *Zhuangzi* 17:47 6-9 "Huizi being a minister of state in Liang, Zhuangzi went to see him. Someone had told Huizi that Zhuangzi was come with a wish to supersede him in his office, on which he was afraid, and instituted a search for the stranger all over the kingdom for three days and three nights. (After this) Zhuangzi went and saw him, and said, 'There is in the south a bird, called "the Young Phoenix" - do you know it? Starting from the South Sea, it flies to the Northern; never resting but on the bignonia, never eating but the fruit of the melia azederach, and never drinking but from the purest springs. An owl, which had got a putrid rat, (once), when a phoenix went passing overhead, looked up to it and gave an angry scream. Do you wish now, in your possession of the kingdom of Liang, to frighten me with a similar scream?'" [trans Legge]

²⁹ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:72-75.

³⁰ Mao Dun 茅盾, "Wo de xiaozhuan" 我的小傳, 44.

than an attempt to make himself seem less childish. Rather than get drunk and destroy a bedroom, he resisted the abuse of power. Rather than write limericks about an unpopular new authority figure, he made an allusion to a great work of philosophy and literature.

Curiously, in almost all sources, there is very little about Mao Dun's time at the next school he attended, a private school called Anding Secondary School in Hangzhou. In his autobiography, he only casually notes that some of the teachers had studied abroad in Japan and only briefly praises one poetry teacher who would later become an editor at *Zhonghua shuju*, and another Chinese teacher who literature and poetry as a historical progression. It is from this school that Mao Dun graduates, ending his secondary schooling.

For the following period of three years Mao Dun spent studying at Peking University, we are even more reliant on and at the same time less satisfied by Mao Dun's autobiography. Not having the autobiography to work with, Gálík writes, "We do not know anything exact about Mao Tun's life in Hang-chou [Hangzhou], where in the year 1913 he sat for matriculation, neither is anything known about his life during the Preparatory Course at the Peking University where he studied in the years 1913-1916." Although he does rather archly record that "The morals of the professors and students were low," and, "It is not known what Mao Tun's [Dun's] behaviour was like in these years."³¹ As Gálík also notes, there is a brief mention of his time at Peking University in "Wo de xiaozhuan." It mainly deals with his not being able to follow his father's wishes

³¹ Gálík, *Mao Tun and Modern Chinese Literary Criticism*, 9–10.

in studying industrial arts. His mastery of the sciences being relatively weak, he chooses to study the humanities coursework instead which on graduation would allow him to enter one of three college departments: Liberal Arts, Business, or Law. His intentions seem to be of becoming a teacher, but in the end, he did not have to choose a department, as his mother was unable to support him financially any further and he was forced to leave school.³²

Unfortunately, in his autobiography, Mao Dun doesn't shed much light of value on this period either. He does talk about his journey to Beijing and with whom he stayed and traveled. He talks about the value of getting a corner bed in the dormitory room and writes briefly about some of the students and teachers, including an unnamed foreigner who tried to teach *Ivanhoe* in Beijing dialect until the students asked him to speak in English so that they could understand him and a French teacher from Holland that would occasionally start speaking in German. He also mentions his interest in a course on Shakespeare, taught by another unnamed foreigner, and that he got into the habit of reading the *Shiji* over every winter break.³³ But he doesn't talk much at all of his own intellectual journey over the three years that should be quite critical in his intellectual development. We move from a young man interested in the politics of his teachers and who has only recently cut off his queue into a rather murky period.

³² Mao Dun 茅盾, “*Wo de xiaozhuan*” 我的自傳, 44.

³³ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:84–85.

When he does talk about the political events of the time when he was in Beijing, it is without opinion or comment. There were no thoughts on Beijing itself, other than an oddly out-of-place comment that the park at the Summer Palace did not in fact look like West Lake, as it was said to, and that it took too much effort to climb the steep steps to the famous Tower of Buddhist Incense. As for events of that time, the then-president of the Republic of China, Yuan Shikai (袁世凱 1859 – 1916), is presented with the Japanese twenty-one demands and there are rumors that he will order an all-out war with Japan, but later he accepts them. Yuan Shikai takes the throne and then dies, throwing the nation into chaos, but all Mao Dun gives us is a description of watching the fireworks that were set off during the coronation, slyly commenting that while the fireworks spelled out “Peace to All Under Heaven,” there was supposed to be one that wrote “Yuan” in the sky as well, but that it was canceled.³⁴ This gap is frustrating, especially considering what we know about his years to come.

³⁴ Ibid., 1:85–87.

Early Years at the Commercial Press

Mao Dun's rationale behind leaving Peking University and deciding to seek work at the Shanghai Commercial Press is not presented at all in the autobiography. Although, as mentioned above, in the article, "Wo de xiaozhuan," Mao Dun addresses the topic briefly, albeit without much more clarity. He writes about deciding which college department to enter after his three years in the preparatory course. After tellingly noting that his mother could not decide for him as she did not understand, he says, "I, myself, was a student of my paternal grandfather's naturalism. After the three year preparatory course, the issue would resolve itself. Because of her financial straits, my mother could not support my continuing to study, and it just so happened that a relative had given me an introduction to work translating and editing at the Commercial Press."³⁵ While this is interesting because it is Mao Dun speaking of naturalism in terms of his paternal grandfather in a way that seems more in alignment with Zhuangzi than Zola, the mood here is flippant. He does not address his desire to stay in school or to leave. It is simply a stated fact that he is introduced to work in Shanghai, and that is where we next find him.

In any case, he leaves Beijing in 1916 and does end up in Shanghai in August of 1917. In the autobiography, he shines a little more light on how he was able to get the job at the Commercial Press: The "naturalist" paternal grandfather encouraged Mao Dun's mother to write a letter to an influential uncle. In the letter she asked this uncle to find Mao Dun a job, specifically not a job in government or banking. This is certainly fortunate for him,

³⁵ Mao Dun 茅盾, "Wo de xiaozhuan" 我的自传, 44.

although he does write more than once about the “intellectual ministry” of an editorial office being just like a government office in another shape in terms of internal politics. In fact, the uncle came through with the introduction at the Shanghai Commercial Press through high level connections at the Beijing branch, and that connection was high enough that Mao Dun ran into suspicion from his new coworkers because of how well he was treated.³⁶

After only a month and a half grading papers sent in to the English correspondence school, a task which he seems to have enjoyed, he writes a letter to the general editor about the weaknesses in a dictionary they published. The letter created quite a stir and Mao Dun is told that his talents were being wasted where he was, and what did he think about working on a joint translation project? Mao Dun agreed, and so was transferred out of the English office and into the Chinese office. The translation was not, as Mao Dun hoped, Shakespeare, but rather Frank George Carpenter’s *How the World is Clothed*. And his translation partner, despite being well-known and having already translated Carpenter’s *New Geographical Reader: Europe*, was much less impressive than Mao Dun’s hopes. To Mao Dun, Sun Yuxiu (孫毓修 1871 – 1922) had an inferiority complex due to the fact that his English was actually quite poor. He archly suggests that Sun’s translation style was fairly “meaning-based (意譯)” rather than literal, and that for accuracy, he would fall short in comparison to Lin Shu (林紓 1852 – 1924), who is famed for his liberty-taking in translation and who Mao Dun says might be able to keep

³⁶ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:93.

at best sixty percent of the original. He does finish the translation in the parallel-prose style that Sun had been using, and then goes on to translate the remaining two books in Carpenter's trilogy: *How the World is Housed*, and *How the World is Fed*. He then goes on to compile a book on Chinese fables that he is particularly disappointed in because of Sun's sloppy categorization and bad scholarship. Because of his unhappiness with the standards of the work, he is generally of a mind to not have his name associated with any of them, and for the first translation he is able to keep his name off of the copyright page entirely. For the fable book however, he cannot completely escape and he is listed as "complier," while Sun Yuxiu is "revision editor."³⁷ And in the end, even the later Carpenter texts have Shen Dehong listed as translator.³⁸

After having worked at the Commercial Press for about a year, Mao Dun took two weeks of vacation to take his mother and younger brother on a tour to Shanghai and then to Nanjing, where his brother was going to attend the newly-opened specialized hydro-engineering school. Mao Dun takes great pleasure in his mother's happiness that they have both found their places in the world, and her claim that she has finally fulfilled the wishes expressed in her husband's will.

On returning to work, he found that his position would be changing significantly. Zhu Yuanshan (朱元善), the editor for several magazines at the Commercial Press, who had earlier asked Mao Dun to translate a science fiction story for *The Student's Magazine*,

³⁷ Ibid., 1:95–103.

³⁸ Chen, Susan Wilf, "Mao Tun: The Background to His Early Fiction," 21.

was trying to get him to work for him full time.³⁹ Sun Yuxiu fought the transfer. The result was an awkward situation where Mao Dun worked half-days at each job. This would be his first real magazine work and he is critical generally of how things are done. For the *Education Magazine*, Zhu collected scattered articles mostly from Japanese magazines (although he did not understand Japanese), has them translated by indifferent translators, then edits them in ways that, “occasionally added errors and laughable mistakes.”⁴⁰ He had no real understanding or interest in educational theory. It is easy to read this criticism in light of Mao Dun’s own deep study of the literary issues he would promote when he becomes editor.

Mao Dun says that what Zhu lacked in education or skill he made up with boldness in following trends. Specifically mentioning that Zhu subscribed to *New Youth*, and thus must have read Hu Shi’s “Some Modest Thoughts on the Reform of Literature,” and Chen Duxiu’s “On Literary Revolution,” Mao Dun felt that Zhu wanted to keep up with that style of writing, more as a commercial decision than as any ideological or theoretical stand.⁴¹ The result of this was that Zhu’s “test reform” of *The Student’s Magazine*, starting with an editorial to be written by Mao Dun that would be titled, “Students and

³⁹ Mao Dun claims that the science fiction story (although he does not note the original title or author, it seems to be H.G. Wells’ 1894 “Aepyornis Island,” which he rendered as “The Egg Hatched After Three Hundred Years” 《三百年後孵化之卵》) was originally intended to be published as a translation. However, it was published in *The Student’s Magazine* as an original Chinese work. He says that this was common practice at the Commercial Press, even when it was easy to tell the story wasn’t originally in Chinese. This was also the case for most of the fiction at *Short Story Monthly* except for Lin Shu’s translations.

⁴⁰ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:109.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Society.” The end of the article in particular was a call to encourage students to work hard in their studies and take up an attitude of battle in improving themselves and becoming independent. Soon after, Zhu asked Mao Dun to write a similar annual article for the new year issue, the first of which was titled “1918 Nian de xuesheng,” which he felt went “a step further,” explicitly putting the need for students’ hard work in the global context of the volatility that was sure to come at the end of the European war and domestic instability. He claims three wishes for the students: an innovation in thinking, creation of culture and a fighting spirit (奮鬥注意). Mao Dun suggests that this article was a sign of his coming patriotic and democratic thinking, although he is very quick to mention that all this was nothing more than bourgeois “individual liberation” and “personal independence” and not influenced by the Marxism that would come later. Here he notes that unnamed people who have studied his early thought suggested that he was influenced by Marxist evolutionary theory, but that in fact he was almost entirely influenced by what he read in *The New Youth Magazine*, they had not mentioned anything of dialectical materialism or historical materialism.⁴²

At this point, Mao Dun began working a great deal more on translations. Coming off of the success of his earlier translation of an H.G. Wells story, Zhu encouraged him to find more science novels for *The Student’s Magazine*. His next work would be a science fiction novel that would be titled, *The Tale of Construction on Two Moons*.⁴³ Mao Dun

⁴² Ibid., 1:111–112.

⁴³ Mao Dun and others claim that this is a novel written by Russell Bond, but I have been unable to find it (兩月中之建築譚 - Susan Wilf Chen has the English title as *Tale of Building in Two Moons*). Bond is

felt that the work did not warrant one hundred percent faithfulness in the translation, but Zhu demanded that the scientific parts of the novel be absolutely accurate, so Mao Dun turned to his brother for the technical translation.

Mao Dun added some Chinese elements to an American study to the translation as a joke, but Zhu loved it and had him add a writing brush and incense burner and other Chinese accoutrements to the desk of an American student in the story. His excuse was that foreigners were the only ones buying up all the antiques at the Shanghai L. Moore and Company auctions even when they were fake, so surely an American student would have those things.⁴⁴ Mao Dun uses this as an example to show how he disapproved of the casual translation. This was very much the sort of thing that Lin Shu would do and he wanted to make sure to express his objections, writing that he limited the anomalous chinoiserie to that one time and that one passage, and would never again allow such intrusion in his work.

After this, they moved from science fiction to fiction that taught science. Russell Bond's *The Scientific American Boy at School* was more of a science text with a very loose fiction draped over it, so Mao Dun let his brother do most of the work while he

certainly the author of the 1909 *The Scientific American Boy at School* (理工學生在校記 - Susan Wilf Chen has the English title as *Diary of a Technology Student*), which Mao Dun and his brother also translated, but Bond does not have seemed to have had any inclination in the area of science fiction, and no list of his writings include anything so fanciful. As Mao Dun himself notes, the procedure for keeping records on the translated texts was shoddy at the Commercial Press. This novel is likely a work of fiction from another author entirely.

⁴⁴ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:112-113.

merely, “added a bit of decoration to the language.”⁴⁵ While this perhaps does not speak very well of his early judgment of literature, he chose these for their science content rather than their literary merit. The process does continue to show his frustration with the standard methods of literary work at the Commercial Press and his dedication within those constraints. He was not ready to attempt to change the way things were.

In 1918 over the Spring Festival vacation, Mao Dun returns home and marries a young woman from the Kong (孔) family. She is named according to the Shen family system, Dezhi (德止). This was an arranged marriage, the foundation of which had been laid when he was five years old. And although Mao Dun attempts to soften this fact in his autobiography, he doesn’t object at all at the time, presenting himself as being more focused on his new career at the Commercial Press. When the arrangement was first made, the Shen family instructed the Kongs to teach the girl how to read and write and told them not to bind her feet. The Kong family however did bind her feet for nearly half a year, causing her feet to never be quite natural. They also did not teach her how to read or write, save her family name, “Kong.” Mao Dun’s mother was worried that an illiterate wife would not be suitable for a young man of letters, but Mao Dun suggested that they could simply send her to school, which is what they did. Years hence, Dezhi and her friends would prove a fertile source for Mao Dun’s female characters, but they would not live together until she left school and moved to Shanghai in early 1921.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 1:113.

In early 1918, he was also expanding the content of *The Student's Magazine* into biography. He put together two series, one titled "Biographies of Tailors," and the other, "Biographies of Cobblers." They included over fifty biographies, including literary men such as Leo Tolstoy, Robert Bloomfield (English poet 1766–1823), and Richard Savage (English poet 1697–1743), as well as prominent men of other fields such as George Fox (One of the founders of the Quakers 1624–1691), William Gifford (English satirist 1756–1826) and James Lackington (English bookseller 1746–1815).⁴⁶ The content was culled from copies of the *Everyman's Library* and *Modern Library* that were available at the Commercial Press offices. These biographies were intended to be stories of the kind of innovative thinkers with fighting spirit that had bettered their situation through education and work – just the things that Mao Dun's earlier essay had called for in Chinese students.

Another result of Mao Dun's reading from the *Everyman's Library* and *Modern Library* was a growing interest in Russian literature. He also increased the scope of his reading via mail order, notably the Japanese Maruzen and American Evans companies. He quickly became infatuated with Tolstoy and in April of 1919 published an article on Tolstoy and "contemporary Russia" in *The Student's Magazine*. While it is not strictly speaking his first work of literary criticism, in this article Mao Dun addresses issues that will run through much of his later criticism and his own fiction. The core argument is that Tolstoy is, or represents a new movement that is going to alter the entire world. He writes:

⁴⁶ Chen, Susan Wilf, "Mao Tun: The Background to His Early Fiction," 25.

The 19th century is a period of unexpected fertility of thought of the Russian people and it is also their great age. It will undoubtedly influence also several decades of the 20th century and these decades will be governed by this great age. Modern Russian bolshevism [English in the original] has conquered Eastern Europe and it will flood Western Europe too. The world stream of thought rushes forward and no one knows where it will end. And Tolstoy is its very initiator.⁴⁷

As Gálík and Chen note, it is surely hyperbolic to suggest that Tolstoy is the font of the modern stream of thought that includes (or is) bolshevism, and Mao Dun will back off of such claims in later articles. What is useful is the importance he places on Tolstoy as he reads him and the Russians in general, especially in terms of what he sees as their essential nature. He claims Tolstoy says that there is a connection between the goodness or badness of an author and the goodness or badness of a work of art. This is also an issue of national style. Mao Dun says that French authors “lack goodness” and are conformist in terms of morality. English authors see the beauty in literature but never move beyond what they see as morality, but what is actually “slave morality,” which inhibits wither critical ability.⁴⁸ Only Russian authors are different, never compromising their moral integrity. This comes of the Russian national character being “feminine and sympathetic” and proved in the crucible of a despotic government, social evil and bitter suffering.⁴⁹ It is not difficult to see Mao Dun drawing parallels between the Chinese situation and the Russian even at this point.

⁴⁷ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:115[trans: Gálík].

⁴⁸ It is unclear if Mao Dun had read Nietzsche at this time, but the use of the concept of “slave morality” is certainly in line with his idea of English authors being bound by their morality.

⁴⁹ Chen, Susan Wilf, “Mao Tun: The Background to His Early Fiction,” 32.

Mao Dun's Tolstoy is also dismissive of Shakespeare because of his sympathy with the aristocracy. He also claims that central to Tolstoy's beliefs is the idea that, "if art becomes alienated from the common members of human society, it is of no use and has no creative power."⁵⁰ Gálik claims that this need for universality that Tolstoy proposes in *What is Art?* is well-suited to the anti-traditional mode of China at the time. How can literature be universal if it is written in a form that only a small percentage can read? What will come to be a specific issue that surrounds the *Eclipse* trilogy is also addressed here by comparing Tolstoy to Ibsen: "when Ibsen discusses social evils, he goes no further than exposing them, while Tolstoy firmly establishes a means of salvation."⁵¹ However, in his autobiography, he admits that this "attempt to analyze the issues from an angle brought into being by the influence of a literary reading on the tide of social thinking" is laughable when looked at with hindsight.⁵²

Although his prose had been moving steadily toward a more vernacular form, he claims that it is at this time, under the influence of the nascent May Fourth Movement, that he made the conscious decision to translate into vernacular, starting with Chekhov's *At Home* which appeared in the *Xuedeng* (學燈) magazine. He also claimed that he exerted his all to make the translation as faithful as possible, which is to say he exerted his all to make the translation as faithful to the English translation. This is evidence of a

⁵⁰ Gálik, *Mao Tun and Modern Chinese Literary Criticism*, 22–23.

⁵¹ Chen, Susan Wilf, "Mao Tun: The Background to His Early Fiction," 31.

⁵² Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:115.

move beyond the guidance of his earlier editors. He had been choosing most of his translation subjects and essay topics for a while, and now he was beginning to assert his own standards of quality to his work.

In the following years working at the Commercial Press, he becomes a major force in introducing foreign authors to Chinese readers while using the opportunity to sharpen his skills as a literary critic. Expanding beyond his earlier “Biographies of Tailors” and “Biographies of Cobblers,” through the second half of 1919, Mao Dun publishes a series of thirty-four biographies of modern dramatists in *The Student’s Magazine* including Gorky, Chekhov, Rostand, Maeterlinck, Hauptmann, Yeats, and many more. Susan Wilf Chen discovered that, like his earlier biographies, these are mostly abridged translations rather than newly written biographies, this time from Barrett H. Clark’s *The Continental Drama of Today*, and *The British and American Drama of Today*. She suggests that the selections of what he translated and the rare comments he added into his translations show a developing attitude toward literary styles. As an example, after a passage on the realism of Gorky’s *The Lower Depths*, she comments that Mao Dun agreed with the criticism that Gorky had discarded artistry in his attempts at realism, and followed the popular vogue that “realism and artistic technique were mutually exclusive.”⁵³ This potential negative correlation between artistry and realism will be relevant to the analysis in the following chapter.

⁵³ Chen, Susan Wilf, “Mao Tun: The Background to His Early Fiction,” 37–38.

What this does show is that these are categories with which Mao Dun was becoming comfortable in discussing and evaluating literature. This becomes clearer in some of the other biographies. Hauptmann is "...a great man of talent and art. He is also a socialist who hates brute force..." whose equal is only found in Shaw, who Mao Dun had also written on earlier. But again, his support of socialism is not blind. He translates Clark's view of Galsworthy as "...a humanist in the broadest sense, who transcends Socialism and Reformers," but adds that although the factory manager is cruel, the union representatives are obstinate and it is their failures that cause the destitution of their families. Chen suggests that this is evidence of his early adoption of socialist criteria of evaluating literature which I do not find convincing, but she rightly sees the connection between this work showing the faults of revolutionaries and Mao Dun's later novel *Midnight*.⁵⁴ I would also add *Waverings* and *Rainbow* (虹) and all of Mao Dun's most effective fiction to that list.

By early 1920, Mao Dun was also beginning to write more biographical and introductory essays. In these essays we see his interest went well beyond fiction and literary criticism. He was interested in almost anything the west could provide. In his autobiography, he explains the hunger for foreign writing:

That time was very dynamic time for academic thought. Those intellectuals who had been influenced by the new tide of thought gulped down like a starving man all manner of things that had come from abroad, introducing all types of ideologies, thoughts and theories one after another. Everyone was thinking that

⁵⁴ Ibid., 40.

Chinese feudalism must be utterly destroyed, and only by going abroad can a replacement be found: “Going West to seek Truth.”⁵⁵

It was in the service of this “truth-seeking” that he came to translate selections from Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* for the magazine *The Emancipation and Reconstruction Semi-Monthly*, and an essay on “Nietzsche’s Doctrine” in *The Student’s Magazine*. It is not clear how much of Nietzsche he had read at this point, although Gálik suggests that his information is mainly drawn from Anthony Ludovici’s *Nietzsche, His Life and Works*.

In Nietzsche, Mao Dun does seem to appreciate the attack on tradition and call for a reevaluation of moral structures. He says that the Commercial Press in particular was steeped in a “crass money-grubbing philosophy (市儈哲學)”⁵⁶ that represented the traditional thinking that Nietzsche attacked well. He does however, stop short of following his will to power: “However it may be, my view is that Nietzsche is completely wrong and those who look at people from the viewpoint of struggle or life are not completely right. If people would do nothing but struggle only for life, contemporary civilization could not be a reality; applying merely brutal force, people would eat up one another.”⁵⁷ In some ways this sums up Mao Dun’s commitment to struggling against tradition, and although he is one of those who are looking to the west to find something to replace “Chinese feudalism,” he does not go into extremism.

⁵⁵ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:116.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:117.

⁵⁷ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Nikai de xueshuo 尼采的學說” [trans: Gálik].

In the first half of the 1920s Mao Dun truly establishes himself as a leading voice in the “New Tide of Thought” movement and finds his positions on literary issues. In November of 1919, Mao Dun was given the opportunity to serve as editor for a new section of *The Short Story Magazine* as it partially reformed itself for a new start in the new year. The intention was to raise sales by publishing “new literature” as a main portion of the magazine. Although he hoped for a more complete renovation of the magazine, he took up this charge with zeal. In an preview article about the “New Tide in Fiction,” which heralded his new position at the magazine, he states clearly that the aim of the magazine is “to perform a wedding ceremony between western and eastern literature bringing forth a type of new eastern literature!”⁵⁸ This presents a vision of fusing the two literatures together for the creation of a child literature, but this new literature will be “eastern.” This is consistent with Mao Dun’s ideas at the time: the goal is to save Chinese literature by infusing it with western theory and experience.

This new literature would require educating Chinese authors and readers on the proper way of reading and writing. And when Mao Dun talks about the type of person that will be needed to transmit this “new tide of thought,” it seems that he has himself in mind. The Chinese literary man must know, “what is literature? What is literary theory? What is literary art? What is called “socialized” literature? What is called democratic

⁵⁸ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Xiaoshuo xinchao lan yugao” 小說新潮欄預告.

literature?”⁵⁹ He saw himself as a man who could answer these questions and how could bring his readers along in their education as well.

⁵⁹ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Xianzai wenxuejia de zeren shi shenme?” 現在文學家的責任是什麼？ .

Mao Dun on Literary Evolution and the Place of Realism in the Hierarchy of Narrative Modes

When the new reformed version of *The Short Story Magazine* was published in January, Mao Dun laid out his ideas more explicitly on how to marry the two literatures together. The core of his argument here is an adaptation of literary evolution. For Mao Dun and many others at the time, just as social Darwinism suggested an orderly progression of society, and a fatal end to those that fell behind in this progress, there was an equally clear progression in literature that could be seen in the west, which had “evolved” further. Mao Dun’s progression was as follows:

Western classicist literature wasn’t destroyed until Rousseau. Romanticism came to an end with Ibsen. Naturalism began with Zola. Symbolism raised its head with Maeterlinck, and so on all the way down to Neo-Romanticism. At the beginning, one is restrained by the scope of those who have gone before, then liberated (Rousseau was of the era of literary liberation) with an emphasis on objectivity. From objectivity to subjectivity, and again from subjectivity returning to objectivity. But it is not the same objectivity as before. One cannot take one step that will reach heaven in the evolutionary sequence.⁶⁰

Gálik sees this progression, in particular the liberation from restraint and the new synthesized version of objectivity, as clear Hegelian dialectic, and he this becomes clearer in later works, although Mao Dun does not make the connection explicit here. What is clear is what Mao Dun is doing is showing his readers the way forward by using the western model which has been definitively worked out.

⁶⁰ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Xiaoshuo xinchao lan xuanyan” 小說新潮欄宣言.

There are two implications to this evolutionary process in literature. This argument demands as prerequisite that Chinese literature is inferior, and demonstrably so. He claims that Chinese literature was stuck in a “Pre-Realist” stage, a full three categories behind the west.⁶¹ The second implication, and the main thrust of the article, is that before Chinese authors or readers are going to be ready for Neo-Romanticism, which is the highest expression of literature of the day, they must delve deep into the contexts that came before: that which restrained the earlier authors. His reasoning is that while, “Thinking can stride ahead a thousand *li* in a day, but unfortunately art cannot be made without “exploring the roots and exhausting the sources.””⁶² He is not only saying that they must introduce realism in order to follow the progression toward the goal of neo-romanticism, but that they must fully understand all that has come before, not excepting what is of value in older Chinese literature. In the creation of a new literature, nothing can be dismissed out of hand except a blind imitation of the old. The marriage of the two literatures was truly to be a bringing together of both traditions to form a new literature.

In another article entitled, “Critique of the Criticism of New and Old Literature,” in the same issue of *The Short Story Magazine*, Mao Dun explains what he means by new literature. His criteria are as follows:

One: it is universal in character. Two: it has the ability to express life and to show how to live. Three: It is for regular people and not for a special class of people. Because it must be universal, we must use the vernacular in writing it.

⁶¹ Mao Dun here conflates Realism and Naturalism. This conflation will be explored in more detail in the following chapter.

⁶² Mao Dun 茅盾, “Xiaoshuo xinchao lan xuanyan” 小說新潮欄宣言.

Because it focuses on expressing life and showing how to live, we must focus on thoughts and not on form. Because it is for regular people it must have a humanist spirit and a bright and lively atmosphere.⁶³

That he also suggests the term “progressive” might be better than “new,” shows that he is concerned that the issue doesn’t devolve into one of era or form. New literature should be written in the vernacular not because the vernacular is somehow “new” as an essential characteristic, but because the goal of universality of new literature is served by the result of using vernacular fiction. This same argument can be made relative to the earlier discussion of narrative style. Mao Dun doesn’t value neo-romanticism in and of itself, but because it has a humanist spirit and is written for everyone. These goals are also relative.

Realism is similarly to be judged in relation to these ideals of new literature. In an article from the following issue of *The Short Story Magazine*, “Can We Now Promote Symbolist Literature?” Mao Dun explains the weaknesses of realism:

Realist literature’s weaknesses are that it makes people dispirited and it causes them to lose faith. It riles up their emotions; it is too spiritually unbalanced. The reason we promote symbolism is in order to achieve that balance.⁶⁴

This will be a critical issue when Mao Dun comes to write fiction himself, and a constant struggle for him. If literature must show the reader how to live, can it do so by a negative example? Is there no literary merit to irritating emotions or dispiriting them? These problems will be taken up in the following chapter.

⁶³ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Xin jiu wenxue pingyi zhi pingyi” 新舊文學平議之評議.

⁶⁴ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Women xianzai keyi tichang biao xian zhuyi de wenxue me? .” 我們現在可以提倡表象注意的文學麼？

These failings of realism are substantial, but Mao Dun again comes back to the necessity of moving through the evolutionary processes of literature in the passage which immediately follows the above:

Moreover, as the prestige of the neo-romanticists rises day by day, they certainly can point out the correct way forward; they have the ability to make people keep faith. Of course we must take that way forward. But before traveling, one must prepare. We must prepare. Symbolism follows on after realism on the process that leads to neo-romanticism, so we have no choice but to promote it.⁶⁵

In this way, Mao Dun suggests that although realism isn't completely established yet, there is no harm in promoting the next stage of development. The issue becomes more muddled in another article written seven months later where he says only neo-romanticism can lead China to a correct view of life, and specifically that the failings of naturalism were even worse than romanticism: while romanticism brought on dispiritedness through "fanciful emptiness," naturalism does so because it sees everything as vile.⁶⁶⁶⁷ I do not see this inconsistency in what to promote and what to avoid promoting as a failing in Mao Dun's system of thought, but rather the effect of a whirlwind tour of literary theory and a rather frantic grasping for systems.

The Short Story Magazine was still not selling well, and so Mao Dun was chosen to become the editor-in-chief and completely revamp the content beginning with the

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ This "seeing everything as vile" comes of using "analysis" but not "synthesis" as well. Mao Dun uses these two words in English. The article also marks one of his earliest mentions of "the omnipotence of materialist science [唯物主義科學萬能主義]." This shows the inroads of his political thinking in is literary analysis.

⁶⁷ Mao Dun 茅盾, "Wei Xinwenxue Yanjiuzhe Jinyijie 為新文學研究者進一解."

January 1921 edition. His plan was to move the magazine entirely into new literature and the new tide of thought. In addition to the obligatory article announcing the reform of the magazine, the first renovated issue included new short fiction from Chinese authors; translations of Gorky, Tolstoy, Katō Takeo, and others; an introduction to “the Norwegian Realist,” Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson by Mao Dun; another article on “The Bible and Chinese Literature” by Zhou Zuoren (周作人 1885 – 1967) and other miscellanea like a regular column on “Literary News From Abroad.”⁶⁸ Mao Dun felt that this first issue represented a great variety of viewpoints, and he goes to great pains in his autobiography to explain that the only reason why Zhou Zuoren’s article on the Bible was printed in front was as a kindness to a “famed professor,” and that in fact, the majority of people involved did not agree with the article.⁶⁹

The group of writers that helped Mao Dun fill that first issue joined together to form the Literary Research Association. They were able to gather together a membership list in time to publish it along with their manifesto as an appendix to that January issue of *The Short Story Magazine*. Aside from Mao Dun himself, listed under the pen name Shen Yanbing (沈雁冰), the list of founding members contains the following names: Zhou Zuoren (周作人), Zhu Xizu (朱希祖), Geng Jizhi (耿濟之), Zheng Zhenduo (鄭振鐸), Qiu Shiying (瞿世英), Wang Tongzhao (王統照), Jiang Baili (蔣百里) Ye Shaojun

⁶⁸ The first issue was thrown together very quickly – typesetting had to be completed within forty days of his taking over – because Mao Dun refused to publish the manuscripts that had been prepared for the issue ahead of time. His objection was that they were all either of the “Saturday School” or translations from Lin Shu, neither of which were consistent with his vision of new literature.

⁶⁹ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:143.

(葉紹鈞 aka Ye Shengtao 葉聖陶), Guo Shaoyu (郭紹虞), Sun Fuyuan (孫伏園), and Xu Dishan (許地山).⁷⁰ The stated goals of the association were to bring together scholars for exchange of ideas, to increase knowledge, and to bring forth the foundation of a writer's union.

This Literary Association will come to be tied directly to that output of *The Short Story Magazine* well after Mao Dun leaves it. And although the “Reform Manifesto” of the first 1921 issue is rather all-embracing, allowing that even Chinese classical literature had value in the past and would make a contribution in the future, the main thrust of the Association and thus the magazine was to continue and expand on educating Chinese people about foreign literature and foreign literature theory. And in the coming years, the magazine did exactly that with an incredible volume of translations, introductions, biographies and news. Most of the content was from Russia, England and the United States, but there was a significant amount of material from Japan, Northern Europe, Germany and France as well as a good deal from “oppressed peoples.”⁷¹ And the plan of action announced in that manifesto was that all schools of literature must be studied, even if their theories were in mutual opposition, although in practice, there was still an emphasis on realism. Even the manifesto notes that although realist literature was on the

⁷⁰ In his autobiography, Mao Dun references another list of members that included Guo Mengliang (郭夢良), Ms. Bing Xin (冰心女士), Ming Xin (明心), and Ms. Lu Yin (廬隱女士). Ming Xin was another pen name that Mao Dun used in writing for other magazines.

⁷¹ Issue 12.10 of 1921 was specifically subtitled “Oppressed Peoples’ Literature.” It mainly included words from Eastern Europe – Polish, Czech, Serb, Jewish, etc...

decline in the world, it was still needed in China, “as the true spirit and masterpieces of realism still remain to be introduced.”⁷²

Over the next couple of years, Mao Dun also solidified his own support behind, not neo-romanticism, but naturalism. His emphasis is mostly on a style of writing that can match the age, one that can represent objectively that which society is. In another article from the reformed *The Short Story Magazine*, he says that this is an issue of class and progress: In ancient times, literature was of the individual; in the middle ages it was of the aristocrats; but modern literature was of the masses. What writers must build now is a *national* literature of citizens. He continues:

The goal of literature is to present life in a comprehensive way. No matter if it uses a realistic method or a symbolist allegorical method, its goal is always to present life, to expand the joy and empathy of humanity, with the characteristic of the time as the background. Literature is now a branch of science. It has its object of study: human life – that is the life of the era. It has its instruments of research: Poetry, Drama, and Fiction⁷³⁷⁴

This gives a vision of how he saw literature in a fairly mature form that he would carry forward at least until he begins writing fiction himself. The foundation of correct literature is a result of historical progress. It represents reality in an objective, scientific manner for the good of society. How society is to be defined is still left fairly vague however. He is seeking a Chinese literature for Chinese people, but in doing this,

⁷² Mao Dun 茅盾, “Gai ge xuanyan” 改革宣言.

⁷³ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Wenxue he ren de guanxi ji zhongguo gulai duiyu wenxuezhe shenfen de wuren” 文學和人的關係及中國古來對於文學者身份的誤認.

⁷⁴ In the original text, the words “Poetry,” “Drama,” and “Fiction” are provided in English.

Chinese literature will become in a sense, international. In terms of the history we tell here, this doubling down on these ideas is a political as well as an academic choice, and it brings repercussions.

The most egregious offender against these ideals was the “Saturday School” genre of literature, thus named after the name of a journal well-known for publishing fiction of that style. In July, 1922 issue of *The Short Story Magazine*, Mao Dun writes a broadside against the genre while promoting naturalism. The version of naturalism he presents is very much in line with his earlier views. It demands absolute objectivity and a deep knowledge of life so that the work would reflect actual social conditions. He goes into detail in attacking a specific short story from *Saturday*, and immediately states the main “old school” fiction problems that persist in modern fiction. They are technically poorly written, using an “accounting-style” of narrative. They are written from a completely subjective point of view. Finally, one of the biggest ideological failures is that they are written for profit rather than for society. He makes a particular point to emphasize the pandering that the Saturday School did with emotional stories of beautiful women all for the sake of “money worship.”⁷⁵ *Saturday* threatened to sue for libel, and a new editorial environment at The Commercial Press was in no mood to defend Mao Dun. He stepped down from editing *The Short Story Magazine* at the end of 1922, but continued to write for it, in addition to his writing for many other magazines under many names.

⁷⁵ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Ziranzhuyi yu zhongguo xiandai xiaoshuo” 自然主義與中國現代小說.

As Susan Wilf Chen notes, once he was no longer the editor, he felt free to redouble his attacks on the Saturday School which led to a vicious article in the final issue that he edited. In an article titled, “Are There Really Works that Represent the Old Culture and Old Literature?” he references his earlier attack on the Saturday School and strengthens his vitriol. The sickness of the Saturday School might be excused as a failing of society and the economic system – after all, they are selling sickness, but people buy it too – but just as someone who gets tuberculosis can act so as not to infect others writers have obligations. This is the moral failing of the authors. Moreover, the effects might be so insidious as to bring the Chinese citizens to a sub-human or even sub-animal state.⁷⁶

This strident attack seems to be one of the main causes for the strife between the Literary Association and the Creation Society. The Creation Society, with members such as Guo Moruo (郭沫若 1892 – 1978) and Yu Dafu (郁達夫 1896 – 1945) felt the Literary Society’s attack on subjective literature was an attack leveled at themselves rather than the Saturday School. In his autobiography, Mao Dun seems to feel suggest that it was all a misunderstanding, but the split became a simple shorthand for categorization at the time and since. The standard reading is that the Literary Society was realist, objective, and under the banner of art for life’s sake while the Creation Society was romantic, subjective and on the art for art’s sake side. This is over-simplification, but with a kernel of truth on both sides.

⁷⁶ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Zhen you daibiao jiu wenhua jiu wenyi de zuopin ma.” 真有代表舊文化舊文藝的作品麼？

Mao Dun continued his manic writing schedule, publishing translations, theory pieces, a good number of articles on women's issues and other assorted essays in several magazines and under several names. His time was however, increasingly given over to political work.

Mao Dun and Politics

Before Mao Dun's memoirs and later his autobiography were published, there was a great deal of confusion about his early political activities. In particular, there were debates about when or if he had joined the Chinese Communist Party, and what his relationship with the Party was. While these are tangentially informative to our purpose here, this brief history will trace more of the development of his political thinking. We now have slightly more information, but again, it comes almost entirely from his own pen, and as he wrote his memoirs he clearly had an incentive to play up his political work in those early days. While this aspect of his life is much less well-documented than, for example, his work at the Commercial Press, it is the course of his political work that leads him directly to writing the *Eclipse* trilogy, so it is certainly worth examination.

Like most people at this time, what Mao Dun knew of Marxism came from *New Youth* magazine, which had published several articles about the Soviet revolution in Russia. In early 1920, Chen Duxiu (陳獨秀 1879 – 1942) came to Shanghai, having recently been released from prison for agitation around the May Fourth protests. His plan was to reestablish the *New Youth* in the French concession where it would be beyond the reach of the Chinese government. Mao Dun made friends and quickly became much better informed on Marxist theory and news from the Soviet Union.

In May of 1920, they established a “Communist Small Group and Marxist Research Association.” The founding members were Chen Duxiu, Li Hanjun (李漢俊), Li Da (李達), Chen Wangdao (陳望道), Zhang Dongsun (張東蓀), and Dai Litao (戴季

陶), although Zhang and Dai left after the first meeting. According to his memoirs, Mao Dun was invited to join in early 1921.⁷⁷ They held weekly meetings to discuss “Marxism, class struggle, and imperialism.”⁷⁹ After Chen Duxiu was fined for “extremist speech” in *New Youth*, his home was not the best meeting place and so these meetings were occasionally held at Mao Dun’s home. Even before this though, he was translating various articles for the short-lived secret journal *Communist*.

It is at this point that Mao Dun’s literary work for the various journals began to take a secondary priority to his political work. According to his biography, he became the main contact for the party after it was officially founded in July, a position that he held at the offices at the Commercial Press, so that if someone from out of town wanted to contact the party, they would first meet with him at his office. Some of Mao Dun’s activities in service of the nascent party seem rather desultory. In late 1921, he taught English at the first party-run school in Shanghai called Pingmin Women’s School, but only for a few months.⁸⁰ He did some labor organizing with the typesetters at the Commercial Press and he even led a public May Day meeting of a couple hundred people,

⁷⁷ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Huiyi lu” 回憶錄, 231.

⁷⁸ Although in most cases, Mao Dun’s autobiography is nothing more than a reprinting of his memoirs that had been published in serial, this section of his memoirs, titled, “Complicated Life, Study and Battle 複雜而緊張的生活、學習和鬥爭” does not appear in the autobiography. Susan Wilf Chen suggests that he was a founding member of the group, but the memoirs clearly state he was invited to join in 1921. After his death, a notice was placed in the People’s Daily retroactively recognizing his party membership dated to 1921.

⁷⁹ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Huiyi lu” 回憶錄 234.

⁸⁰ Although one of his students would become the writer Ding Ling.

but they were scattered by the concession police force before anyone would speak. He also began lecturing quite often on topics well beyond literature: “Current events, the national movement, the issue of women’s liberation, even foreign policy.” Unfortunately, almost all of these lectures are lost, and Mao Dun does not elaborate beyond the above.⁸¹

Mao Dun continued to participate as the party took more concrete form. In 1923, the party center notified each member that they were to join the Nationalist party as individuals. At the same time, the Shanghai branch was reformed to include Zhejiang and Jiangsu as well as the Shanghai metropolitan area. This reorganization aimed at developing party membership and small groups and promoting labor movements in the new areas. This increase of responsibility required a new election. Mao Dun was elected as one of five executive committee members and it was decided he would be in charge of national movement tasks. He claims that at this point he had set aside most of his literary work: “The executive committee meetings were usually weekly, but when something came up that required study, we would meet daily. That was added to my other meetings and activities, so while before I would do literature during the day (my work at the Commercial Press Translation Bureau) and political work at night, now I was doing political work even during the day.”⁸² The literature work he had been doing was editing translations of Lin Shu, translating *Ivanhoe* and other tasks that seem rather remote from

⁸¹ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:203.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 1:208.

his newfound political awareness, so that as his responsibilities in the party system grow, it is not surprising that his literary writing nearly disappears.

He stayed in this position until March of 1924, when he resigned his position in favor of an editorship at *Republic Daily's* "Society Portrait" (民國日報 社會寫真) supplement. The change is an odd one. He takes over as secretary and accountant for the executive committee, but only until by-elections can be held, and he only stays at the editing job for four months. Also in 1924, the Bengali writer Tagore visited China causing a stir among the Chinese leftists. Mao Dun attacked the poet for idealizing "eastern culture:"

In a loud voice, he decries the Western-style factory that destroys the beauty of the lovely Chinese countryside. Can it be that the beauty of the countryside is Eastern Culture? Western "nostalgic" poets took the hideous city nibbling away at the beautiful countryside as grist for their poems and wrote very good ones. Evidently, in the west there is the beauty of the countryside as well, and that which Tagore worries for us has already happened in the west. To hear Tagore speak, the west had Eastern Culture, but it was long ago destroyed by Western Culture.⁸³

This is a good example of where Mao Dun's mind is both politically and even in terms of literature. He sees Tagore as equating "Eastern Culture" with the undeveloped pastoral countryside, and by making that connection, he is saying that to maintain identity, the East must refuse development. As before, Mao Dun sees China in evolutionary terms: What the west went through to become advanced, China must also go through. There is only one way to advance. And as for literature, literature will find its place. This seems

⁸³ Mao Dun 茅盾, "Taige'er yu dongfang wenhua: du taishi jing hu liangci jiangyan de ganxiang" 泰戈爾與東方文化：讀太氏京滬兩次講演的感想。

to be a development away from his earlier claims that literature could be the driving force of societal change. This is perhaps due to his political education in the previous few years.

The next major event in the development of Mao Dun as a political activist and as a writer was the May Thirtieth Movement. Sparked by a strike at a Japanese cotton mill that turned violent, the turning point was a demonstration on Nanjing Road in Shanghai on May Thirtieth when the Shanghai Municipal Police force opened fire on the demonstrators, killing several and wounding dozens. Mao Dun and his wife participated in the demonstrations and were profoundly agitated. A couple of days later on June fourth, the party organized an outreach group aimed at agitating and organizing teachers and students. Although, again, his political work was taking the majority of his time and effort in 1925, he did find time to attempt a few pieces of creative prose.

Before this, I had only written critical essays and translations. I had never written prose. The “May Thirtieth” Massacre made me break my self-imposed taboo. I felt political essays could not give vent to my emotions and righteous indignation... This “experimental writing” perhaps was not unrelated to my eventually walking down the creative road.⁸⁴

The obvious connection that he makes between this early prose and his later fiction is important for several reasons. He is presenting the writing as something that could not be held in and could not be expressed in any other way. It is a personal emotional response to a political event that is horrifying and yet confirms his own ideological view. It is not

⁸⁴ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:251.

a calculated response. There is no claim to be presenting any realistic or naturalistic view of the event.

The one surviving piece of the eight that he wrote that year is the rather disjointed “The Afternoon of May Thirtieth.” The piece is presented with a first-person narrator who walks along Nanjing Road after the demonstration and rails at the violence he was witnessed. There is no narrative or character to speak of. The core of the piece is a prolonged screed against the people in the city who go along with life as if nothing is changed. Elegantly-dressed wives, a blonde woman in a long tight dress smiling at a young girl with plastic flowers in her hair who is sitting next to a fat gentryman – all these are the target of his ire. This character becomes nearly unhinged, coming to “the doctrine of the sons of Mohammed...an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,” and ending with, “I pray for hot blood to come and wash away the whole of this brutal tyranny, and at the same time to wash away this pathetic shamelessness!”⁸⁵ Even though this is fundamentally different from his later fiction – this is more of a screed, an empty railing against injustice – there are still pieces of the later stylist to be found. The attention to detail in the women’s clothing, and the well-drawn scene of a foreign woman picking her way through the shattered glass both presage what will appear in his fiction. There is even a brief hallucination, which of course will play a major role in the *Eclipse* trilogy. Also, the final scene in his novel *Rainbow* draws heavily from his memory of May Thirtieth, if not this specific piece.

⁸⁵ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Wuyue sanshi ri de xiawu” 五月三十日的下午, 259–262.

In the aftermath of the May Thirtieth events, Mao Dun was centrally involved in a strike at the Commercial Press. A union was formed and struck for higher wages and the right to form the union, as well as maternity leave and other general improvements in work conditions. Mao Dun was on the Central Executive Strike Committee and for his account, seemed to play an important role in the negotiations. Things were moving very slowly until an officer from the Shanghai garrison broke into the negotiations and demand that they settle the strike, otherwise the garrison would dispatch troops. The strike ended with many goals met, and it started a series of other strikes at the *Zhonghua Shuju* and elsewhere.

Leaving and Returning to Shanghai (Guangzhou)

With the death of Sun Yat-Sen (孫逸仙) in March 2, 1925, the right-leaning elements of the Nationalist Party began to purge communists from the party. Mao Dun, as one of the more prominent communists in Shanghai, was named on the second list of members to be kicked out of the Nationalist Party. As a way of countering this, Shanghai party members created the “Nationalist Party Shanghai Special Municipal Party Executive Committee” for bi-party cooperation. The members were almost all Communist Party members, with Mao Dun serving as Propaganda Minister.⁸⁶

Near the end of the year, this committee dispatched five members to attend the Second National Congress of the Nationalist Party which was going to be held in Guangzhou. He and his wife Dezhi along with the rest of that delegation took a paddleboat to attend the congress. There was still tension between the right and left wings of the party, but some of the more extreme rightists had been expelled, and so a tenuous balance was preserved.

As he was gathering his things to leave Guangzhou the Committee Secretary for the Guangzhou district sent for him. Mao Dun was asked to stay in Guangzhou and serve as the Secretary of the Propaganda Department of the Nationalist Party under Mao Zedong, who was serving as Acting Director at the time. Mao Dun readily agreed and went to work. If the decision to leave Shanghai and serve as a delegate to the congress

⁸⁶ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:257.

wasn't final confirmation of the direction that Mao Dun's life was taking, this is surely a sign that he was no longer a literary critic. In a 1933 article he says categorically that he had "simply cut [myself] off from literature for the moment."⁸⁷ He was however, still an editor. He was now editing the *Politics Weekly*, an intra-party paper for the Nationalists. This was a task that Mao Zedong had done in the past, but had become too busy to handle now. He wrote less here, as he was learning the craft of propaganda. The main task was to gather news and information from domestic and foreign sources about the Nationalists, disseminate it broadly. They were also to set up an "Inspection Group" that would scour all sources available looking for "misconceptions" about the party, and prepare a brief on how to correct or refute them to be distributed to the party.⁸⁸

This work in Guangzhou lasted until the fallout from the Zhongshan Gunboat Incident of March 20, 1926. Briefly, there was a bungled attempt by a communist to capture Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) aboard the Zhongshan gunboat. Afterward, Chiang ordered another purge of Communist Party members, particularly from military units. The atmosphere in Guangzhou grew increasingly strained.⁸⁹ Soon after, although the connections are not clear, Mao Zedong informed Mao Dun that there was a telegram from Shanghai saying that they wanted Mao Dun to return there. Mao Zedong's final

⁸⁷ Mao Dun 茅盾, "Jiju jiuhua" 幾句舊話.

⁸⁸ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:260–264.

⁸⁹ Although in Mao Dun's autobiography Mao Zedong, who was on a secret mission of inspecting the peasant movement during the incident, seems nearly cinematically posed: infuriated at the news, but calm and composed as he lays out the next steps to oppose Chiang.

directive was that he should look for a suitable newspaper in Shanghai to turn into a party organ. Mao Dun arrived in Shanghai in early April and went back to work. While he did briefly serve as Acting Minister of Communications, and did compile a library or tracts on Mao Zedong's orders, he was unable to buy the *New China News* and turn it into the *Nationalist Daily* as he planned.⁹⁰ It was also at this time that he formally ended his job at the Commercial Press. There were detailed reports in Hong Kong newspapers that Mao Dun was a "Reddist," and members of the Shanghai garrison had been to the office to look for him. Rather than cause the press trouble, he resigned saying that he didn't want to work there anymore anyway.⁹¹

In any case he had no time for his old editorial work, although he did find time for a great deal of reading Greek and Northern European mythology along with classical Chinese poetry. In his autobiography, Mao Dun chooses this moment to mention the incredible influence that the women his wife met in her political work had on him, especially in terms of his burgeoning desire to write fiction. It seems odd, because he very rarely mentions his wife except in passing, and more seldom still does he talk about her work. But the influence was substantial. His general comments are rather shallow: "Because each of these "new women" each had their own characteristic ideological consciousness, their own voices and expressions, you could say that there were

⁹⁰ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:265–270.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 1:274.

differences among their similarities, and similarities among their differences.”⁹² There isn’t much there, save that for Mao Dun, what is notable is their ideological consciousness (思想意識) as well as their physical characteristics, but again, this should not be surprising. It is because of this observation that he first begins to think of writing descriptions of them.

The scene he describes immediately following, however could have occurred in any of his novels:

At that time, there was a member of the group center named Mei Dianlong who was pursuing a Miss Tang to the point of madness. Once he asked Miss Tang: Did she love him or not? The answer was, “I love you and I do not love you.” This was probably just Miss Tang joking with him. But Mei took it seriously. He left Miss Tang and got on a rickshaw, all the while puzzling over what this “I love you and I do not love you” might mean. When he got down from the rickshaw he left the group center documents he had been carrying with him in the rickshaw. Mei did not think about the packet of documents until he had walked for a while, but by that time it was too late.⁹³

This is nearly a perfect parallel to many of his characters. The distracted party man who is thrown into confusion by a “new woman” who is not malicious at all, but destructive nonetheless.

In a 1933 article he explains this idea of taking the woman around him as material for fiction in more detail. He says explicitly here that he was hoping to “steal away” some free time to write fiction. And the reason includes the identical phrase: “the

⁹² Ibid., 1:275.

⁹³ Ibid., 1:275–276.

ideological consciousness of several women had attracted my attention.”⁹⁴ When he becomes more specific about these women, again, it is easy to see some of his more powerful characters from *Eclipse*:

Petty bourgeois female students and female intellectuals did not particularly fancy joining the revolutionary party and so they misunderstood a few books instead. Moreover they held extraordinarily intense illusions about revolution. It was these illusions that led them to join the revolution, although they merely watch on from the edges. There was also another who had suffered setbacks in other facets of life, and so was furious for revolution. There was a spirit of doubt added to her illusions of revolution. Standing alongside them there was another completely different case. They presented a striking contrast, and my plan to try writing fiction grew stronger daily.⁹⁵

Firstly, these are fundamental character themes that run through all of his novels.

Although it is worth mentioning that this was written after almost all of his major works of fiction and there is certainly room for hindsight in the construction of these memories of women in 1926, the themes are consistent and regular throughout. It is the reasons for joining the revolution and the troubles that they face outside of politics that he is interested in, even as they intrude on politics. He is certainly interested in Mei Dianlong’s lost parcel of documents, but he is more interested, and frankly more skilled in the examination of that “I love you and I do not love you” that puzzled him to the point of distraction. The one lingering trouble with this quote is “another completely different case.” He speaks here and elsewhere of types of women, but this one isn’t described. At the end of the article, he suggests that this final type is represented by Miss Jing in

⁹⁴ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Jiju jiuhua” 幾句舊話.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Disillusions while the other two women are there for contrast. Jing then is placed in striking contrast to two negative examples, but whether or not she is the pure and positive revolutionary woman is certainly up for debate.

In Mao Dun's telling, the actual outline and spark of *Disillusions*, the first novel of the *Eclipse* trilogy, comes from an incident described in the same 1933 article.

I remember one evening in August, I had just had a meeting, and was planning to go home. It was raining hard outside right then. There were no pedestrians and no cars. The raindrops were thumping on my umbrella. Walking with me was a woman I had been paying attention to. She had talked too much at the meeting just ended, and right then her face was still flushed with excitement. As we walked together, I suddenly felt a "tempestuous train of thought." If it was possible, wouldn't I have taken up the pen and started writing right then in the rain?⁹⁶

He says that it was that night that he started to write the outline of the novel. And again it is a woman who provides the inspiration to finally break through and provide the impetus to write. The scene is also suggestive. It is much more clearly depicted, with the weather and the two lone characters walking down a deserted street. There is even a hint of the sensual: A woman he had been watching, her face, flushed with excitement, and the sudden inspiration. In all this, one can see echoes of his fiction, but again, this depiction was written well after the novel. Finally, he specifically claims the women in his works are not representations of people he knew: "I am afraid that they must understand that the three main characters [from *Disillusions*] are absolutely not three people. Rather they are

⁹⁶ Ibid.

many people – they are three types.”⁹⁷ These types are seen especially clearly in the *Eclipse* trilogy, but also throughout the rest of his fiction as well.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Chen Yu-Shih suggests that the women he depicts in this article “are symbolic participants in the actual revolutionary history of the 1920s,” (p34) including groups following Comintern policy, collaborationists, and those who promoted an easing of radical peasant movements. This analysis is attractive, but without direct evidence from the author, it is difficult to support. See Chen Yu-Shih, *Realism and Allegory in the Early Fiction of Mao Dun*.

Leaving and Returning to Shanghai (Wuhan and Guling)

In the fall of 1926, the long-planned Northern Expedition, the aim of which was to unite China under the Nationalist banner by military force, had taken the city of Wuhan.⁹⁹ The Nationalists moved their capital to Wuhan and began establishing the infrastructure that a capital city requires. As part of this development, the Nationalist Party requested that Mao Dun to go there and work at the Wuhan branch of the Central Military Political Academy. He was also to recruit students: he found about two hundred (including “a few women”), and political instructors: he found three. In late 1926, he and Dezhi left their children with his mother in Shanghai and boarded an English steamer to Wuhan, passing the January first new year on board.¹⁰⁰

He served as a political instructor at the Academy, covering a range of courses. He taught from the social science lecture materials that Qu Qiubai (瞿秋白 1899 – 1935) had compiled for teaching at Shanghai University. The topics he remembers teaching were: “What is Imperialism?” “What is Feudalism?” “What are the Political Goals of the National Revolutionary Army?” and a specific class for female students, who made up about five hundred of the three thousand total students, on the women’s liberation movement.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ At this time, one should say rather the towns of Hanyang, Hankou and Wuchang. The three would be officially merged into the city of Wuhan in early 1927

¹⁰⁰ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:277–278.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 1:279.

His time at the Academy was brief however. Sometime around early April, he was called to leave his teaching job and edit the *The Republican Daily News Hankow* (漢口民國日報).¹⁰² While his work at the Academy was political in a general fashion, here he was working much more explicitly for the Communist Party. In name, the *Daily News* was an organ of the Hubei Provincial Nationalist Party, but in actuality it was run by Communist Party members to the extent that any internal questions were resolved by the Communist Party Central Committee Propaganda Bureau.¹⁰³ This was made clearer by being set in contrast to the only other high-circulation newspaper in Hankou, the right-wing Nationalist Party paper, the *Central Daily* (中央日報), which was explicitly an organ of the Nationalist Party Central Committee Propaganda Bureau.¹⁰⁴

Shortly after he began work as editor at the *Daily News*, any pretense of unity between the left and right wing of the Nationalist Party disappeared in the aftermath of the April Twelfth Incident. The April Twelfth Incident refers to the violent purge of communists from the Nationalist Party. Dozens of leftists were killed in the street fighting, and well over a hundred were executed in Shanghai alone.¹⁰⁵ Of the event, Mao Dun says, “a few friends and comrades of mine were among the first to fall in those

¹⁰² This generally translated as *the Hankow Republic Daily*, but the masthead has the English title used above.

¹⁰³ The Press Director was Dong Biwu (董必武), and the General Manager was Mao Zemin (毛泽民).

¹⁰⁴ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:281.

¹⁰⁵ Zhou Enlai was famously captured in the turmoil but escaped. For more on the particulars, see Wilbur, C. Martin. *The Nationalist Revolution in China, 1923-1928*. pp 108-112.

massacres. Among them were Hou Shaoqiu in Nanjing and Xiao Chun in Guangzhou.”¹⁰⁶ What followed were three months of confusion as leftists in Wuhan tried to establish a separate government in opposition to Chiang Kai-shek’s newly formed government based in Nanjing. Mao Dun did not play a role in making decisions, but he makes it clear in his autobiography that he sided with Qu Qiubai in opposition to Chen Duxiu’s more moderate faction.¹⁰⁷ On May 14, a unit of Nationalist troops in the city of Changsha massacred leftists probably in the thousands.¹⁰⁸ As news of this new tragedy became known, the Wuhan leftist government was unable to act. After a period of attacks and reprisals, by mid-July, the tenuous alliance fell apart with public denunciations on both sides, and August saw the Nanchang Uprising in which the Communists were initially successful, but eventually pushed southward and defeated.

Between the April Twelfth Incident and the declaration of martial law and purge of communists in Wuhan in July, Mao Dun had been busy putting out propaganda through the various party organs, attacking the Chiang Kai-shek-led Nationalists and attempting to counter negative stories about the Communists. But the foundation for his later writing was being established. He was at the center of an information-gathering network that was saturated with the most tragic stories of the “white terror” period before

¹⁰⁶ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:284.

¹⁰⁷ He even describes an incident where Chen Duxiu comes to him and requests that Mao Dun stop publishing so many articles about women’s liberation and labor and peasant movements, as they were seen as “too red.” (see *Wo zouguo de daolu* 1:288)

¹⁰⁸ In response, Stalin had sent a telegram ordering seizure of land by the masses – not with troops by using peasant unions. Chen Duxiu was less than inspired, calling the idea, “like taking a bath in a toilet.” See Wilbur p131 and footnotes.

the outbreak of open hostilities. He notes a few titles from the July issues of the *Daily News*: “Catastrophe for Party Members in Yidu County,” “Zhongxiang Refugees Cry Out For Aid to Zhongxiang Massacre,” “A Solemn Moving Cry,” “Huang’an Wracked by Crisis,” “Another Two Massacres,” “The Appeal from Luotian Massacre Petition Group,” “The Last Wish of a Martyred Peasant-Ally.”¹⁰⁹

It was the chaos and tragedy that happened in those little county towns, the misfortune that comrades met there, the plots of the counter-revolutionaries I wrote about in the editorials, the “false victimhood [苦肉計],” the cruelty, and more that was impressed so deeply on my mind. Later, when I wrote *Waverings*, these are the incidents that I drew on.¹¹⁰

He explains further in a critical article, “Cong Guling dao Dongjing,” “The characters are fabrications, naturally. The situations are also not entirely true, but a few of the important situations are based on news reports I had received but could not disclose at the time.”¹¹¹

Wuhan quickly became dangerous for a communist as well-known as Mao Dun. In early June, he sent Dezhi back to Shanghai on an English steamer. She was in the later months of pregnancy and Mao Dun felt that Wuhan had become too dangerous for her. Whether or not he was aware of the coming final split is unclear, but on July 8th, only days before the rift between the left and right became an open and irreparable matter and martial law was declared in Wuhan, he wrote a final editorial and resigned from the *Daily*

¹⁰⁹ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:292.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Cong Guling Dao Dongjing” 從牯嶺到東京.

News. That same day he and Mao Zemin went “underground,” which for them meant hiding in a warehouse in the French concession.¹¹²

His journey out of Wuhan was supposed to lead him to the uprising soon to break out in Nanchang. Around July 23rd, he received orders from the Party to go to Jiuling where he would meet “a certain person.” He was also given a secure bank draft for two thousand *yuan* that he was to eventually hand over to a Party organization. He boarded a Japanese steamer headed that direction only to find it full of communists escaping Wuhan. In the next few weeks, he would run into a large number of leftists and communists on apparently similar orders. The next day he alighted at Jiuling and met his contact, who turned out to be Dong Biwu. Dong told him that he was to go to Nanchang, but that the tracks had been cut and that if he were unable to make it to Nanchang, then he should return to Shanghai. Mao Dun tried to give him the check, but he said to take it to his destination. He then left, leaving Mao Dun to discover that only military trains were allowed to pass through the stretch of rail at Mahuiling, but that he might be able to cross over the mountain range to the east through Guling and make it to Nanchang bypassing the Mahuiling line. Rumor was that Guo Moruo had done just that the day before, so Mao Dun decided to try. He ran into an acquaintance who wanted to tag along, and Mao Dun, not having a good excuse, agreed. When they got to the ridge however, Mao Dun learned from another acquaintance who was already there that while the pass had been open, it was not anymore and even Guo had turned back the day before. He made the

¹¹² Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:294.

decision to return, but the night before he was going to leave, he fell suddenly ill with a debilitating case of diarrhea and was unable to move. He convalesced in a small guesthouse at Guling for little over a week, his acquaintance having left a few days after the illness set in, before finding himself able to leave bed.¹¹³

As soon as he was able to move about, he ran into another leftist named Fan Zhichao (范志超) who would explain the news of the Nanchang Uprising and also serve as another stimulant to his urge to write fiction. She explained that the battle had been joined but the outcome was still uncertain. More importantly, Wang Jingwei (汪精衛), who had been central to the final purge of Communists from the Party, and other Nationalist Party leaders were in a conference nearby at Lushan. Many people at the conference knew Mao Dun by sight and so he must remain hidden until they had gone. She returned after two days. He pled with her to find a way to get a Shanghai-bound steamer ticket for him, and she agreed. In mid-August, she came back and told him that the conference was over.¹¹⁴ She had two tickets on the next day's steamer to Shanghai presumably out of Jiuling.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Ibid., 1:295–296.

¹¹⁴ He used the time well, translating an English version of the novel *Their Son* by Eduardo Zamacois into Chinese. He also read his copy of Maeterlinck's *The Buried Temple*, and before his illness struck, wrote a newsletter to the *Central Supplement* in Hankou titled, "Master Cloud and the Straw Hat." The "Master Cloud" refers to Song Yunbin (宋云彬) according to Mao Dun. Chen Yu-shih suggests the "Master Cloud" might be a "Miss Cloud" he writes of in "Cong Guling dao Dongjing" and a "Younger Sister Yun" from another poem of the time, and possibly conflated with Fan Zhichao as well. This "Yun" might be another prototype for characters in Mao Dun's novels. See Chen Yu-shih pp 38-39.

¹¹⁵ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:296–297.

Because of the difficulty in getting tickets, Fan had to get a single cabin for the both of them, and because they couldn't walk about for fear of running into people they knew, they stayed in the cabin and chatted. Mao Dun asked her about her relationships, and she ended up explaining her love life to him. Here we find perhaps the clearest portrait of a real-life character from Mao Dun's novels. She claimed to have only fallen in love with one man, a fellow student, but he had died young. She married her husband Zhu Jixun (朱季恂) out of the necessities of her job rather than any feeling for him, as he was a decade older than she. She also shared love letters written to her by another man, a military officer named Huang Qixiang (黃琪翔), whom she didn't care for because he scared her slightly.¹¹⁶

In a 1928 article for *The Short Story Magazine*, "Cong Guling dao Dongjing," he writes a slightly different version of this period. He makes it sound as if there were even more familiar faces at Guling. As Susan Wilf Chen suggests, it is very possible he has separated Fan Zhichao into multiple individuals in this article, as in 1928 there would certainly be danger being attached too closely to Mao Dun. In any case, he says nothing of his steamer journey to Shanghai, but does present a "Miss Yun," who happened to be in Guling and suffering from "Second stage tuberculosis." However, the illness does not affect her health, but it was critical because, "the menace of the "illness's" dark shadow causes Miss Yun's spirit to waver between passivity and excitation."¹¹⁷ That the word

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 1:297.

¹¹⁷ Mao Dun 茅盾, "Cong Guling Dao Dongjing" 從牯嶺到東京.

“illness” is in quotations in the article lends further evidence for the idea that we are dealing with an allusive situation. But regardless of her existence, Mao Dun makes explicit connection between her and his inspiration. “She spoke of her own life experience, and it sounded to me like a medieval *romance* – not that it was bad, but that it was too good. I began to have an analytical interest in this “melancholy and sickly” Miss Yun – for that is what people called her. She said that her life could be made into a novel, and that is certain.”¹¹⁸ With this we are left with a sickly young woman of experience who is wavering between passivity and excitation. It is not difficult to see Miss Jing from *Disillusions* in this description. And while this may not depict Fan with complete accuracy particularly in terms of the illness, it does seem to fit stereotypes of a melodramatic novel. The only person who was ill at Guling was Mao Dun himself, and so if we take the illness as weakness of the political spirit, the mold for Mao Dun’s fictional characters begin to come into focus. It is worth noting that after this passage, he again explains that Miss Yun does not appear in any of his fiction, although there are perhaps, “people that are similar to her in type,” and that he was very frustrated by the people who tried to guess on which real person his characters were based.¹¹⁹ The irony of course being that Miss Yun was most probably fictional as well.

He got off the steamer at Zhenjiang, figuring that he would be less likely to run into anyone there than at the Shanghai pier. In fact, he did run into a military guard, who

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

found the bank draft that Mao Dun had been carrying. He told the guard that he didn't want it, and that he could keep it himself, and so was able to escape trouble with the knowledge that the Party could simply stop payment on the check. He also nearly ran into one of Chiang Kai-shek's men, but was able to avoid him. It was late August when he arrived back in Shanghai. He came home to hear that Dezhi was in the hospital recovering from a miscarriage. She also suffered from a botched surgery that would leave her infertile.¹²⁰ She did tell him that his name had appeared on a list of people to be arrested made up by the Nationalist government in Nanjing. When people had asked Dezhi where he was, she had told them that he had gone to Japan. He thought that was a good story and they stuck to it.

This meant that he was basically confined to his house, unable to leave for fear that someone might recognize him and report him to the authorities. He remembers that it was not a complete loss, because he was greatly pained and pessimistic when thinking about the failed revolution, for by this time it was clear that the Nanchang uprising had failed utterly. He claims that he never doubted in his commitment to communism, but needed time to think the situation through. What this enforced isolation and thinking through led to were the three novels that would become the *Eclipse* trilogy.¹²¹

Unfortunately, he does not describe the actual writing process in much detail, but the general scene is clear. His isolation allowed him to focus on writing exclusively and

¹²⁰ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 1:297–298.

¹²¹ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 2:1–2.

so he gathered together in his mind all of the things he had been observing for the past several years. He wanted to write one full-length novel, but “because I dared not trust my creative powers,” he decided to write three shorter novels instead. His goals as he states in 1928 were to write on what he saw as the three stages that the modern youth had experienced during the revolution:

1) The exultant excitement on the eve of revolution, and the disillusionment on coming face to face with it. 2) The wavering at the peak of the revolutionary struggle 3) After disillusionment and wavering, not being resigned to loneliness, but to plan to make a final pursuit.¹²²

Originally he had also planned to run the same characters through all three novels, but he gave up on this plan as he started writing the second novel because the timeframes overlapped. Although he did have a couple of characters from *Disillusions* appear in *Waverings*, they did so only briefly. He quickly admits this inability to bring all three novels together as a structural weaknesses, saying that it would have been a little better to have organized the timelines and characters so that the novels would have been tied together.¹²³

His thoughts as usual are focused on the characters that will drive the novels:

In the beginning, there wasn't any great plan. I just felt that there was a lot of material to write in the tumultuous period from the May Thirtieth Incident to the Great Revolution. I just wanted to choose a few characters that I was familiar

¹²² Mao Dun 茅盾, “Cong Guling Dao Dongjing” 從牯嶺到東京.

¹²³ He seems uninterested in discussing that “failing,” immediately turning to his true interest, the female characters. This is true for much of the novels: He had plans of expressing theory and ideology in the novels, but once he began to write, he loses control of the narrative and the characters take over. This is especially clear in *Pursuit*, the final novel.

with – petty bourgeois intellectual youths – and reflect the great era through the aspect of their vicissitudes in the great torrent of revolution.¹²⁴

According to this, the ultimate goal is a reflection of the period of the Great Revolution through the lives of the characters in the novels. But his focus on the characters themselves becomes one of the great successes of his novels, while the setting often seems rather forced.

Beginning in early September, he wrote *Disillusions* in the four weeks at Dezhi's bedside as she recovered from her miscarriage.¹²⁵ On finishing the first half, he showed it to his friend Ye Shengtao, who was editing *The Short Story Magazine* at the time. Ye said that the novel was good and he would send it to the printers that very day for publishing in the September issue. Mao Dun was surprised, but Ye said there was plenty of time to write the ending so it could be printed in the following issue. Mao Dun agreed.¹²⁶

It was also at this time that Mao Dun acquired his pen name. He had written under many pseudonyms in literary and political work, but by now most of them were known. He casually wrote the word for “contradiction (矛盾)” as a name on the draft of *Disillusions* that he had given Ye Shengtao. He said that it was because he had been thinking a great deal about the contradictions in people – especially those petty bourgeois

¹²⁴ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 2:3.

¹²⁵ In “Cong Guling dao Dongjing,” he says that he began the first half of the novel at her bedside in mid-September and finished the second half in his third floor room after she had recovered.

¹²⁶ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 2:6.

intellectuals – and himself while working in Wuhan. Ye worried that it was too obviously a false name and if the government came to him asking who the author was, he would be put in a difficult position. Ye’s solution was to add a grass radical to the first of the two characters. The resulting character, “Mao (茅)” is a rare surname, but it does appear in the traditional list of one hundred Chinese surnames, so he thought it would be less apt to arouse suspicion. Thus the pen name Mao Dun (茅盾) was created, and he would use it throughout his career.¹²⁷

The second novel of the trilogy, *Waverings*, was written over six weeks from November to December and published in three consecutive issues of *The Short Story Magazine*: January, February and March. It was slightly more planned out and more complex in structure than *Disillusions*. Mao Dun wanted to make it present the chaos of a small county seat in Hebei under Wuhan’s jurisdiction during the Great Revolution and “use the small to see the large.”¹²⁸ But naturally, the characters remain at the core of the novel. As an example, although Mao Dun maintains that Fang Luolan is not a protagonist, that he is merely a “representation” or a type, he is the central “waving” character of the novel, and in the end Mao Dun pronounces judgment on him: “the responsibility for the failure of the revolution can only be placed on Fang Luolan.”¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Ibid., 2:5–6.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 2:8.

¹²⁹ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Cong Guling Dao Dongjing” 從牯嶺到東京.

The judgment is on the type of person that Fang represents, of course, but the psychological waverings of the characters are clearly the critical center of the novel.

Pursuits, the final novel of the trilogy, is fundamentally different from the previous two from Mao Dun's point of view. Mao Dun did not begin writing *Pursuit* until April of 1928, four months after the conclusion of *Waverings*. It took him three months to complete, twice as long as it took him to complete *Waverings*, despite them being about the same length. It was published in four installments: June through August. The novel is much more personal than the previous two.

So I can only speak the truth: I honestly presented my slight disillusion, my pessimism, and my depression in the three novels. I truthfully confess: there is none of my own thinking in *Disillusions* and *Waverings*, only objective description. What is in *Pursuits* however is my most recent – to the time I was writing it – thinking and emotions.¹³⁰

There is already contradiction here, but it becomes more fraught. The period of writing affected the novel in a fundamental way:

I love it [*Pursuits*], not because I love that it was well-written, but because I love that it presents a period of depression in my life... The reason I was unable to progress [in writing] quickly was because at that time I developed a spiritual depression; my thinking would go through several back-and-forth conflicts every moment, my emotions would be the highest scorching heat one moment and then tumble down, cold as ice the next. This was because at that time I met several old friends and learned several heart-rending things – Those of you who don't submit in the face of the mightiest power might still be driven to despair and madness by the unreasonableness of those dear to you.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

The information that he was slowly receiving was late-arriving news about those who had died in the failed Great Revolution, and the “unreasonableness” he notes is explained in his autobiography as “Qu Qiubai and his Putschism [盲動主義]”¹³² That Mao Dun understood the third novel to be a more personal, more emotional book that presented his own state of mind is important, and it is true that *Pursuits* is more frantic and more psychologically fraught than the first two novels. However, and despite Mao Dun’s protestations, the argument that the first two novels are completely objective depictions of events is difficult to defend. They carry the disillusion, pessimism and depression of their author as clearly, if perhaps not as dramatically, as the final novel. This tension between the objective and subjective depiction of events as an aspect of the narrative mode will be a major part of the following chapter.

The above quote also makes it clear that, at least in 1928, Mao Dun favored *Pursuits* because of the torment that it represents for him. Each of the characters in the novel fails in their titular pursuits. Mao Dun wryly notes that he took this to such an extent that, “Even Shi Xun’s desire to commit suicide is a failure.” But he continues in a new line of thought, “I’m very sorry to have come up with such a miserable novel; the more I wrote the more absurd it became. But please forgive me, I couldn’t escape the mood. I could only let it be written down like that, to serve as a memorial.”¹³³ It is not only that the characters are tormented in the same way that Mao Dun himself is

¹³² Mao Dun 茅盾, *Wo zouguo de daolu* 我走過的道路, 2:12.

¹³³ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Cong Guling Dao Dongjing 從牯嶺到東京.”

tormented, and that they are unable to complete any plan, but his depression took over the book. The characters were held back in their endeavors by their author's worsening mood, but even he seems to have lost control as *Pursuits* becomes a memorial to his peace of mind to parallel the memorials for his fallen colleagues.

With that, we have the final version of the original three novels, and the basic story behind the man who wrote them. They would be collected in 1930 into a single book entitled *Eclipse*, and of course, Mao Dun would continue down the road he walked toward even greater literary success and a political career.

CHAPTER TWO: NARRATIVE VOICE

Realism

Before we reach into Mao Dun's conception of realism, the first task of this chapter is to briefly explore what realism is. It happens that this is more daunting than might be expected at first glance. Part of the problem is in the name of the thing. It implies an overly simply reduction: Realism is the objective presentation of reality in a literary form. Because this is absurd on its face – fiction is after all, non-real by definition – it is often consigned to being naive or irrational. Beyond the name, there is a problem of the foundational conceit that fiction can represent the world as it is. As Marston Anderson explains, “Contemporary criticism, with its base in linguistic philosophy, has effectively undermined realism's pretense that a literary text may constitute a direct representation of the material or social world.”¹³⁴ This places us in an awkward condition, as pinning down what exactly realism means in a general sense is difficult at best.

Unfortunately, but for valid reasons, Anderson declines to suggest a normative definition of realism, claiming that, “it is the ambiguity of the term, its protean quality, that accords it durability and power, enabling it to continually accrue new meanings in

¹³⁴ Anderson, Marston, *The Limits of Realism: Chinese Fiction in the Revolutionary Period*, 4–5. Here he also references a relevant quote by Thomas Hardy: “Realism is an unfortunate, ambiguous word...” then notes that Edward Gunn seems to have tried to build a new term, “anti-romanticism” that might take the place of the problematic “realism.” The idea of an anti-romanticism is perhaps more useful in that creates a relationship within the broader literary history, but fails by describing what it opposes rather than what it is.

response to changing cultural and historical conditions.”¹³⁵ Other scholars have been similarly struck by the indefinability of the term. Perhaps George Becker puts it most straightforwardly when he opens his discussion of the problem by saying, “At the outset, the historian of the realistic movement must accept the fact that the term realism has never been used with a precise and generally accepted meaning.” He goes further to explain that the nature of the realism has much more to do with the temperament of the author and the “particular literary tradition” to which the author belongs.¹³⁶ This is certainly the case with Mao Dun, but it doesn’t help a great deal in setting a general conceptual foundation from which to move into the particulars of the specific realism of Mao Dun.

The Russian theorist Roman Jakobson did attempt a systematic and comprehensive definition of realism in his 1921 “On Realism in Art.” “What is realism as understood by the theoretician of art? It is an artistic trend which aims at conveying reality as closely as possible and strived for maximum verisimilitude. We call realistic those works which we feel accurately depict life by displaying verisimilitude.”¹³⁷ He however immediately suggests ambiguity in who is considering the work to be realistic, the author or the reader, and suggests that these are two separate interpretations of realism that need settling. He goes on to suggest that as the judgment of realistic or unrealistic is in the reader, that judgment is unreliable because each reader is prone to see

¹³⁵ Anderson, Marston, *The Limits of Realism: Chinese Fiction in the Revolutionary Period*, 6.

¹³⁶ Becker, George J., *Realism in Modern Literature*, 40.

¹³⁷ Roman Jakobson, “On Realism in Art,” 38.

his own theoretical stance as the most able to “convey reality,” whether the stance be romantic, futurist, expressionist or anything else. This is a critical piece in understanding the fragility of any definition of realism. The core problem is in how one understands reality as well as in how that reality is presented.

With this in mind, it will be profitable to look for practical applications of realism in an author of the western canon that is generally placed in the realist camp. Gustave Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* is, of course, one of the earliest and most striking examples of what we consider modern realism, and the voice that appears in this novel is very carefully considered. Flaubert’s own letters from this period are very educational on this point, and in many cases will be echoed by Mao Dun as he discusses his writing.¹³⁸ For example, in 1852, he writes, “Passion does not make poetry, and the more personal you are, the more feeble you will be. I have always sinned in that direction myself; that’s because I have always put myself into everything I have written... *The less you feel a thing the more you are likely to express it as it is* (as it is *always* in itself, in essence, freed of all ephemeral contingent elements”¹³⁹ This will be a constant struggle for the realists, although there are many reasons for wanting to remove the author from the text. Here Flaubert suggests that his reason to remove the author is in the cause of dispassion for poetry’s sake and in order to avoid a feebleness that comes of writing personally, but

¹³⁸ In an introduction to a collection of Flaubert’s letters from the period, George Becker notes that the subject of *Madame Bovary* itself is a “polemic against romantic philosophy and attitudes.” This reminder of realism being born of a reaction to romanticism will of course be a consistent theme in each understanding of realism. P 89.

¹³⁹ Quoted in Becker, George J., *Documents of Modern Literary Realism*, 91.

it is more vital than simply that. Only through a dispassionate expression can the eternal thing be shown as it is in truth. This presupposes an essential eternal real that can be expressed in art, and moreover that that real can be shared from author to reader.¹⁴⁰

As for the subject of his writing, it is in these same series of letters that Flaubert makes perhaps one of his most famous quotes about literature: "... Yvetot in worth just as much as Constantinople and that consequently one subject is as good as another. *It is up to the artist to raise everything.*"¹⁴¹ That is to say that there is artistic merit in any subject the author may choose, and if the author is skilled enough, poetry can be made from anything at all. He goes on to explain that this skill moreover is a scientific skill on a par with anatomy or chemistry: "Art ought, moreover, to rise above personal feelings and nervous susceptibilities! It is time to give it a precision of the physical sciences, by means of a pitiless method!"¹⁴² This returns to the model of the realist author being a detached fabricator of poetry, distilling experience so that all passionate impurity separates and the essential truth remains.

He explains that the key is not to remove the "heart" of the author, but rather the personality: "I believe that Great Art is scientific and impersonal. By an effort of the

¹⁴⁰ It is this possibility of a transmittable "real" that leaves room for ideology within realism. For example, if a Hegelian historical progress is taken as scientifically true, then there would naturally be no objection if that progress were found to be manifest within a realist fiction.

¹⁴¹ Quoted in Becker, George J., *Documents of Modern Literary Realism*, 93.

¹⁴² Quoted in *ibid.*, 95.

mind, you must put yourself into your characters, not draw them to you.”¹⁴³ So for realism, for even though he loathed the term, we must conclude Flaubert was a realist author, the author must set aside any passions and attempt to inhabit the characters to explore and explain their world. This is a promotion of subjectivity in the characters and objectivity in the author. Flaubert is saying he will write the subjective reality of his characters rather than the reality of the author or the reader. This then, is a way to present the essential eternal real, not through any objective fact presented by the author, but by being able to look through the subjective eyes of the characters. This is also one way of attempting to avoid Jakobson’s suggested ambiguity of contesting realisms of author and reader.

This admittedly very brief and very narrow overview of realism will serve as a starting point to understand how Mao Dun understood and used it in his own fiction. The scientific focus shown in Flaubert’s realism that is also central in Zola’s naturalism will prove to be central to Mao Dun’s conception of and rationalization for realism as well. Also, we need not return to Plato to see the ideal of truth and beauty that can be the core of the realist mindset, but Flaubert’s focus on removing the personality of the author in favor of the lived world of the characters will resonate in Mao Dun’s work. And indeed, passion will be a major contributing factor to the way in which realism, if not reality, collapses in *Eclipse*.

¹⁴³ Quoted in *ibid*.

Views of Mao Dun's Realism

Several scholars have written about realism in China during this period, and they have treated Mao Dun in varying degrees of detail. David Der-wei Wang's *Fictional Realism in Twentieth Century China* explores the ways in which realism is used to reflect Mao Dun's historical and ideological consciousness. He also very interestingly suggests that Mao Dun may be more indebted to the "traditional plan of historical discourse underlying classical Chinese fiction,"¹⁴⁴ which seems plausible and is certainly worthy of additional textual investigation. As for Mao Dun's voice, Wang says, punning on the title of *Eclipse's* middle novel, "Vacillating between Zola's scientific naturalism and Tolstoy's apocalyptic humanitarianism, Mao Dun had a hard time making commitment to either."¹⁴⁵ This leads him to two broad conclusions on Mao Dun's fiction: one on the attachment to history and one on determinism.

Wang's Mao Dun is attempting to set the historical record right by writing his fiction, fearing that an official history will be untruthful: "his novels justify their own function only before the master narrative – History – comes into existence."¹⁴⁶ This is a useful way of looking at the task and potential influence of the novel, and it reinforces the centrality of conveying the truth while exposing the malleability of that truth. Wang concludes his analysis of *Eclipse* by repeating his pun, claiming, "Mao Dun vacillated

¹⁴⁴ Wang, David Der-wei, *Fictional Realism in 20th Century China: Mao Dun, Lao She, Shen Congwen*, 27.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

between two roads: History as *deus ex machina*, acting out a certain moral plan; and history as a contingency of erratic and intentional human actions.”¹⁴⁷ He then suggests that this is not inconsistent with the way in which “History” is always mediated. In Wang’s second chapter on Mao Dun, he asserts that Mao Dun wrote in a form of naturalism born of Zola, but using a deterministic Marxist ideology instead of a deterministic scientific ideology. These two approaches to Mao Dun’s fiction – the historical and the deterministic – are helpful in understanding the place of the fiction in a broader context, but leave room for a closer analysis of the text itself.

In *The Limits of Realism*, Marston Anderson provides an excellent and thorough history of the concept of realism as it moves into the Chinese context. He also gives a more textually-based analysis of Mao Dun’s early fiction, coming to the conclusion that “Mao Dun labored, through both the scale and the artifice of his fiction, to reconcile the detail [of the novel] to the structure [of the novel] and the individual to history.”¹⁴⁸ That is to say that he was unable to form a coherent model that could bring a consistency between elements in his fiction to the broader concept of the writing or by extension to the world in which he lived. Mao Dun’s realism as literary method is set in tension with the reality he experiences in his life.

Jaroslav Průšek writes in fairly good detail in his *The Lyrical and the Epic* on the nature of narrative voice in modern Chinese literature and also on Mao Dun’s fiction. He

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 40.

¹⁴⁸ Anderson, Marston, *The Limits of Realism: Chinese Fiction in the Revolutionary Period*, 150.

opens his discussion of Mao Dun with a claim that seems to be perfectly in line with Flaubert's notion of the removal of the author in realist fiction: "Mao [Dun's] striving after objectivity is apparent in the painstaking care with which he excludes the author's person from the narration. There is no trace of the story's being related by anybody."¹⁴⁹ At the same time, he pulls from Lubomír Doležel's concept of subjectivization of narrative (as well as semi-indirect speech) and applies it to Mao Dun: "The linguistic device employed in this kind of subjectivization is "mixed speech," in which the voices, or more exactly intonations, of the various subjects are interpolated into the narrative stream."¹⁵⁰ While this is certainly not the case in its entirety for Mao Dun's work, as there are clear instances of the narrator intruding into the scene, there is a very useful thread here that we will follow later in the chapter. The idea, again following Flaubert, is that in allowing the characters' subjective views to color the narrative, there is a realism that emerges through the suppression of the author's voice, and that this is the type of realism that we see in Mao Dun.

Chen Yu-Shih in *Realism and Allegory in the Early Fiction of Mao Tun*, gives some very good contextual understanding of the works, but seems to overread many situations and characters in the novels. I rather agree with Marston Anderson when he suggests that, "For a schematic allegory, even with the help of Yu-Shih Chen's key, *Eclipse* seems murky and inconsistent...the trilogy best reveals its strengths when read as

¹⁴⁹ Průšek, Jaroslav, *The Lyrical and the Epic: Studies of Modern Chinese Literature*, 123.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 125.

a work of psychological realism.” He goes on to say that there are clearly allegorical aspects in the novels, but that to reduce everything to allegory diminishes the works.¹⁵¹

However, Chen does provide a good overview of the three novels and their context.

¹⁵¹ Anderson, Marston, *The Limits of Realism: Chinese Fiction in the Revolutionary Period*, 137n.

Mao Dun's Realism

Introduction

More critical to coming to terms with the nature of Mao Dun's narrative voice is to understand what he himself wrote about the topic. We are fortunate that he worked for as long as he did as a literary critic, as he has left a good deal of writing in this vein. That said, there are several reasons to be wary in reading his own words to discover his own voice. Most critical is that he is a fundamentally different man in his years as a critic in the early 1920s when compared to the man he was in 1927 when he began writing fiction, as seem clearly in the previous chapter. But it also important to see the separation between what he believes to be best, to be ideal in the world of literary theory or even in the world of dialectical materialism in service to a socialist future and the reality of his own writing. Looking back over the process of writing *Eclipse*, he explains, "The reason I cannot give the characters in my novels a way out is that I am not willing to cover over my conscience and say that I believe words that are not so, and I am not so great a genius that I can discover a reliable way out to point out to everyone."¹⁵² He himself is struggling within the constraints of what can be done in writing fiction to reconcile the ideals of realism and the ideals of ideology.

Průšek sets the scene well: "...it would be difficult to find any other writer so thoroughly acquainted with the whole of European literature and European literary

¹⁵² Mao Dun 茅盾, "Cong Guling Dao Dongjing" 從牯嶺到東京, 1140.

theories – and of course with his native literature – as was Mao [Dun].” However, “...he did not succumb as a writer to the influence of any particular European school, but found his own original attitude to, and view of, reality, as the basic ingredient of his work, and shaped in his own way his experience and insights into a work of art.”¹⁵³ While this might slightly overstate Mao Dun’s mastery of European literature and underestimate Mao Dun’s desire to mimic European schools of literature, it does hit cleanly on the result: Mao Dun’s narrative voice as it is expressed in his fiction is something built of various parts and not entirely of or from any one school.

While Mao Dun was quite well-versed in the Chinese literary tradition, from his time at The Commercial Press on, he actively promoted European modes of scientific literature as the solution to the literary ills of China. As mentioned in the previous chapter in the context of Mao Dun’s development as a literary critic, he was convinced of the importance of a historical progression of literary modes. This was a widely held belief that Mao Dun might have picked up from Chen Duxiu,¹⁵⁴ but in China one of the main sources of this concept was Herbert Spencer as translated and interpreted by Yan Fu (嚴復 1954 – 1921). The shifting of ideas of evolution from biology into other realms of study was not a fascination unique to Yan Fu, but as Benjamin Schwartz explains, Yan Fu was indeed very taken with Spencer’s concept of the “social organism” being the analogue to the biological organism. This idea, “provides the most vivid possible image

¹⁵³ Průšek, Jaroslav, *The Lyrical and the Epic: Studies of Modern Chinese Literature*, 142.

¹⁵⁴ See Gálik, pp 29-31

of the nation. It is an organism among other organisms within a Darwinian environment struggling to survive, to grow, and to prevail.”¹⁵⁵ If this then was the nature of the nation, and as the historical dialectic shows the progression of types of social systems, then it is not incongruous to say that literature should work in the same way. That is to say that literature progresses in a dialectic method from weaker, more easily overcome forms, into stronger forms that are not only more able to withstand Darwinian competition, but also build the nation, or in China’s case, save the nation.

For Mao Dun and others, the progression of literature is a movement through the following stages: classicist, romanticist, realist, and finally the highest evolution of literature of his time, neo-romanticist. There are slight alterations and adjustments in this evolutionary scale as Mao Dun reports it. Most important is the place of naturalism in this progression, as will be examined below. Also there are several modes, such as symbolism (at least once spelled “symbolicism” in English) and futurism, which are mostly subsumed within or immediately preceding the “neo-romanticist” category. He also writes of mysticism and aestheticism, but does not fit them well into this progression, although they would probably belong to a form of romanticism.

At least early on in his critical career, there is also room for “travelling two roads at the same time” as Mao Dun calls it in his call for promoting symbolism. He allows for the dual road of promoting both realism and later modes (in this case, symbolism) because, although realism is the best mode for attacking corruption, “...we have

¹⁵⁵ Schwartz, Benjamin, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West*, 56.

promoted realism for more than a year now, and the corruption of society is completely exposed. Have there been any repercussions?”¹⁵⁶ This is an early sign of the impatience and frustration the young critic felt with the tension between the critical and literary worlds and the political world. Nonetheless, the consistent and critical path that is the core of Mao Dun’s interest is the line from classicism to romanticism to realism to neo-romanticism.

Mao Dun sees that the west has already reached into the mode of neo-romanticism, but that China is still floundering in romantic fiction. Reinforcing the dialectical basis of these progressions is the conviction that each stage must be fully exhausted before literature can proceed to the next. His keenly felt awareness of this backwardness is why he takes as his driving goal the promotion of higher forms of literature within China, either by translating foreign works for Chinese writers and readers to study or in the promotion of Chinese writers who are attempting to write in more progressive modes. On one theoretical basis, it is this that makes Mao Dun a realist. He believes that Chinese literature, that is to say Chinese authors and readers, must fully progress through the realist stage so that they can attempt to catch up to the societies that have already moved ahead. And this is no idle desire when one recalls that this is also a competition between “social organisms,” where extermination is always in mind, even if it were to be a merely cultural extermination.

¹⁵⁶ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Women xianzai keyi tichang biao xian zhuyi de wenxue me?” 我們現在可以提倡表象注意的文學麼？.

Chen Jianhua notes that, “By the end of the 20’s the standpoint of his politics and his aesthetics had transformed many times. He gradually cast off the Darwinist view of social evolution and the geographic and racial cultural view of Hippolyte Taine, and proceeded to don the “ideological” uniform of Marxist class struggle.”¹⁵⁷ But, while this suggests a valid understanding of the malleable nature of Mao Dun’s stance, like the theory of literary evolution itself, this also suggests a too linear progression of modes. Mao Dun’s conceptions of these modes were often vague and contradictory. Most notable of these is Mao Dun’s understanding of realism and naturalism.

Mao Dun on Realism and Naturalism

In a series of articles in 1920, Mao Dun’s early understanding of realism becomes clearer, even if his terms become slightly muddier. In several of these articles, Mao Dun conflates realism and naturalism, although to be sure he is not the first or last to do so. In fact, his use of the terms in similar circumstances simplifies an issue that has caused no small amount of scholarly discussion. Marián Gálik has a very helpful chapter simply titled “Naturalism or Realism?” He mainly explores the way in which Mao Dun came to believe in a type of Zola-inspired naturalism from 1921-1922. David Der-wei Wang has an excellent article, “Mao Tun and Naturalism: A Case of “Misreading” in Modern Chinese Literary Criticism.” He examines how Mao Dun developed his own version of naturalism through reading, or misreading, related authors, in this case, Zola and Tolstoy,

¹⁵⁷ Chen Jianhua 陈建华, *Geming yu xingshi: Mao Dun zaoqi xiaoshuo de xiandaixing zhankai 1927-1930* 革命与形式：茅盾早期小说的现代性展开 1927-1930, 30.

mixed with his other ideological bases of Confucian elitism and Marxism. These are useful works to be sure, but they both seem to be looking for a consistent mind in Mao Dun, a quest that is difficult at best in a man who is defined by and literally named contradiction.

Susan Wilf Chen remarks further on this problem:

Similarly, to approach his fiction through his critical theory will throw some light on it, but will ultimately prove unsatisfactory. For one thing, Mao [Dun's] theory is not consistent... For another, he never clearly defines such terms as "naturalism," and it is doubtful that he had a particular precise meaning in mind when he used them...it is also true that his tastes were, in fact, more catholic than his theory.¹⁵⁸

I think it is hyperbolic to say that he had no precise meaning in mind when writing of realism or naturalism, this is unknowable in any case, but Chen is certainly correct to point out his inconsistencies. While his vague representations of critical theory are certainly problematic, there is a good deal of value to be brought out of looking into what he did write. And even if he never did define naturalism, we can gain an understanding in the broad sense of what he felt it meant and what it could do. Her final point is most interesting, and certainly true. He knew how much he disliked the romantic fiction because he read so much of it.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Chen, Susan Wilf, "Mao Tun: The Background to His Early Fiction," 2.

¹⁵⁹ There is certainly room for an in-depth analysis of Mao Dun's use of devices and tropes of earlier "romantic" fiction.

As seen above, attempts to define realism are not as simple as might be expected. Defining naturalism in terms of realism is a helpful way of illuminating both. In the context of European and American literature, George J. Becker sees naturalism as an extension of realism:

There are those who equate [naturalism] with “stark realism,” that is, any account that is unpleasant, sordid, and dubious about man’s higher nature...*in essence and in origin naturalism is no more than an emphatic and explicit philosophical position taken by some realisms*, showing man caught in a net from which there can be no escape and degenerating under those circumstances; that is, it is pessimistic materialistic determinism. [emphasis mine]¹⁶⁰

Therefore if there is any hierarchy it is that naturalism belongs to a broad category called realism. Naturalism is a form of realism that includes “an emphatic and explicit philosophical position.” However, with his passive voice phrasing, Becker tips his hand to his own ambivalence.

Also writing in the European context, Sally Ledger speaks in a similar vein with slightly less ambiguity:

Naturalism was not simply a distillation of realism, though. For whereas the nineteenth-century realist writer purported to sustain an attitude of detached neutrality – as in Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* (1856), for example – the naturalist writers imposed a very specific view of mankind onto their fictional narrative.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Becker, George J., *Documents of Modern Literary Realism*, 35.

¹⁶¹ Ledger, Sally, “Naturalism: ‘Dirt and Horror Pure and Simple’,” 87.

The “specific view of mankind” that she writes of is an animalistic and nearly fatalistic view, what Becker calls “stark realism,” and Richard Lehan calls, “a sterner realism.”¹⁶² As mentioned earlier, this is a view of mankind born of Spencer’s interpretation of Darwin, and in China, it is born of Yan Fu’s interpretation of Spencer. This quote further suggests that as soon as the author begins to present a specific view of humanity from within a realistic framework, the fiction is no longer strictly realist, but moves into naturalism. Presumably, the more of the author’s attitudes toward humanity are expressed in the text, the more naturalist it becomes.

So we are left with this broad understanding of realism and naturalism in theory. Realism requires a detached neutral author presenting a mimetic vision of reality in art. Naturalism requires an interested author with a philosophical point of view presenting a mimetic vision of reality in art. These are not binary positions, but opposing ends of a graduated scale. A text is not realist or naturalist, but more or less realistic and more or less naturalist. I do not suggest that Mao Dun had this understanding of the two modes, but only that this understanding will be helpful in analyzing what he says about the modes and, later, how he actually wrote his own fiction.

To Mao Dun, realism and naturalism are essentially the same thing, or rather if there is a difference, it is only a difference of degree in terms of progression. Naturalism may be further along the evolutionary scale than realism, but they are both fundamentally on the same stage of evolution. What is more crucial to Mao Dun is that they serve the

¹⁶² Lehan, Richard, *Realism and Naturalism*, 35.

same purposes, they have similar effects. As an example of how Mao Dun treated realism and naturalism, here are two descriptions of the effects of the two modes written less than seven months apart in 1920: “But we must understand, the failing of realist literature is that it makes people discouraged, makes them lose hope and it upsets their feelings. It unbalances their spirits.”¹⁶³ And later the same year, “Naturalists simply use analytical methods to examine life, and present life, and the result is that everything they see is evil. This leads to people losing hope, and becoming depressed, and this is exactly the same kind of loss of hope that romanticism’s fantastic illusions cause. Neither can lead to a sound view of life.”¹⁶⁴ Not only is the phrasing very similar, to the point of focusing on the loss of hope using the same word, in the second quote, the dangers of naturalism are compared to those of romanticism, rather than those of realism, which might seem to be more of a type with naturalism. But he is clearly more interested in the effect that the modes have on readers, the social impact.

Another example of his conflation of the two modes comes from a discussion of the weaknesses of realism and naturalism. In an article published on September 15, 1920, he writes, “...but one cannot rely on this [naturalism] to create the highest standard [最高格] of literature. Observation and imagination are two principles of literature. Naturalist literature only emphasizes observation [自然派文學只重觀察]...”¹⁶⁵ In an article

¹⁶³ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Women xianzai keyi tichang biao xian zhuyi de wenxue me?” 我們現在可以提倡表象注意的文學麼？.

¹⁶⁴ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Wei xinwenxue yanjiuzhe jinyijie” 為新文學研究者進一解.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

published only ten days later he writes, “The highest standard [最高格] of art is made harmonious through the mixing of observation and imagination. Realist literature emphasizes observation and abandons imagination [寫實文學偏重觀察而摒棄想象].”¹⁶⁶ He is expressing his understanding of realism and naturalism in precisely the same terms in relation to observation and imagination. While this is not proof beyond doubt that he sees these modes as one single thing, at the bare minimum, it is suggestive that he understands to function in very similar ways.

In 1922, a reader of *The Short Story Magazine* asks Mao Dun what the difference between realism and naturalism is in literature is. His response is much more direct in some ways, but also further reveals his own vagueness. He writes in reply, “Realism and naturalism in literature are actually a single thing. Originally, critics said that the difference between realism and naturalism was in how subjective the description was. They said realism had relatively less subjectivity while naturalism had relatively more.”¹⁶⁷ Thus again, they serve the same purpose, but differ in degree. In this case it is in a degree of subjectivity. This is an echo of his comment that the progression of literary forms moves from the objective (classicist), to the subjective (romanticist) to the objective (realist/naturalist) to the subjective again (neo-romanticist).

A Proscriptive Approach To Realism – Objectivity as a Hindrance to Fiction

¹⁶⁶ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Oumei xin wenxue zuijin zhi quzhi shuhou” 《歐美新文學最近之趨勢》書後.

¹⁶⁷ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Ziranzhuyi de huaiyi yu jieda” 自然主義的懷疑與解答.”

In 1920 Mao Dun had been writing about what the new literature should look like. In an article titled, “A View on the Systematic, Economic Introduction of Western Literature,” after dealing with the titular issue, he explains that he would also like to say a few words on “the art (文藝) that is created now.” He proposes that there are three tasks that cannot be lacking in creating art:

(1) is to use a scientific gaze to investigate all aspects of life and discover an omission that absolutely exists but that people are unaware of. (2) is to use scientific methods in arrangement, composition and description. (3) is to make the written background of the work in accordance with scientific (general) principles.¹⁶⁸

It is clear that the founding principle of this early criticism is science. This isn't surprising, as most of the intellectuals of China at the time were focused on bringing science, or at least a conception of scientific thought, to all aspects of Chinese life. There is a nod to “general” principles and investigation of undiscovered truths, but the quote does not reveal much about what exactly he means by science beyond that. Still, this line of thought is quite in agreement with Flaubert's imagined dispassionate literary scientist distilling truth from observation, seeking principles from data.

In later articles that year, he begins to explain his understanding of the various modes or “schools [派別]” of art and this leads him to attempt to explain what realism actually is. Mao Dun explains his conception of realism in terms of other modes. The most critical of these relationships is realism as a reaction to romanticism. Classicism is

¹⁶⁸ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Duiyu xitongde jingjide jieshao xiyang wenxue di yijian” 對於系統的經濟的介紹西洋文學底意見.

most interested in symmetry, regulation, and order, eschewing transformations or other change. It is typified by Greek architecture, Mozart and the poetry of Alexander Pope. Romanticism is grounded in subjectivity and emotion, and it strives for transcendence, not being bound by tradition or custom. Realism is less of a positive notion in and of itself, but more as a negation of those romanticist notions. It focuses on “describing in the most honest way the actual nature of things.” Although he does note that any artistic endeavor cannot avoid carrying some invention.¹⁶⁹ In the two earlier quotes, he claims naturalism – and realism – lacks imagination. He says that imagination and observation (both words are written in English in both articles), are the two principles of literature, and suggests that realism’s focus on observation is perhaps an overreaction to romanticism’s over-emphasis on imagination.¹⁷⁰ And so we are left with the vague idea that realism desires to produce an honest depiction of things, but he seems more interested in exploring meaningful and concrete ideas of what realism is *not*. It is not subjective. It is not emotional. It does not seek to transcend. But there is this remaining concession that realism cannot be utterly uncontaminated.

This tension between the idea that realism must be anti-romantic, that is to say it must be objective, and the idea that realism might lack for creativity suggests several related issues. The implication is that subjectivity is a more fecund ground for creativity, and that objective truth might make for good realism but poor fiction. This will be

¹⁶⁹ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Yishi renshengguan” 藝術人生觀.

¹⁷⁰ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Wei xinwenxue yanjiuzhe jinyijie” 為新文學研究者進一解.

further explored in the next section as Mao Dun struggles with the presentation of hallucination within a realist framework.

For Mao Dun, issues of subjectivity and objectivity are intimately related to the constraints of traditional culture and the authors understanding of the masses. In his 1921 article, “The Relationship Between Man and Literature and China's Longstanding Misapprehension about the Status of Literati,” Mao Dun explains how traditional education binds authors to a subjective view:

So generally speaking, from antiquity on, the Chinese literati only understand the commandments from the deceased ancient saints and sages. They don't understand the common feelings of humanity. They only understand the subjective; they don't understand the objective. So their literature is cut off from humanity, it is cut off from the era. They don't understand humanity; they don't understand the era!¹⁷¹

Here he explains that it is hidebound submission to the classics that forces authors into subjectivity. This passage is difficult to square with Mao Dun's rather impressive classical education, but his dismissal here is categorical. In any case, the core assumption to the argument is that for literature to be literature, it must be of a universal nature in terms of its humanity, and yet specific in terms of the way it represents the era.¹⁷² These are the broader goals, and the tool to achieve these goals is objective narrative.

¹⁷¹ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Wenxue he ren de guanxi ji zhongguo gulai duiyu wenxuezhe shenfen de wuren” 文學和人的關係及中國古來對於文學者身份的誤認。

¹⁷² Mao Dun's concept of *shidaixing*[時代性] is a component of this framework. For more on this concept, see Chen Jianhua.

In the same article, he goes further in trying to reach the core idea behind his ideal literature:

Literature is now a branch of science. It has its object of study: human life – that is the life of the era. It has its instruments of research: Poetry, Drama, and Fiction... The life expressed by the literatus should be the life of all humanity, expressed by the method of art, without a hint of the self, without any subjectivity. Naturally the people within works of literature have ideologies and emotions as well, but these ideologies and emotions must truly belong to the masses, to all of humanity, and not to the individual author. This type is literature, no matter if it is romantic, realistic, or expressionist-mysticism. Put simply, it will forever be literature of the people – true literature.¹⁷³

Of course, much of this tallies well with our earlier definitions of realism. Literature is a scientific endeavor, with comparable tools and methods at hand. There is also the idea that the characters within the fiction should naturally have their own philosophies, but they should not be tainted by those of the author. His innovation to that concept is that the “ideologies and emotions” [思想和感情] must be that of the masses. This is a contradiction, of course. No character is able to contain the ideologies or emotions of the entirety of humankind without a great deal of simplification. This contradiction will play out explicitly in Mao Dun’s own fiction as will be shown in the following section. The final point to bring out of this passage is to reassert the primacy of objectivity in his ideal literature, or rather the denigration of subjectivity. Even though he asserts that even

¹⁷³ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Wenxue he ren de guanxi ji zhongguo gulai duiyu wenxuezhe shenfeng de wuren” 文學和人的關係及中國古來對於文學者身份的誤認.

romanticist writings can be true literature, to do so they must eschew subjectivity, which for Mao Dun is a defining characteristic of romanticism.

The Narrative Voice in Eclipse

The *Eclipse* trilogy is a realist work of fiction. That is to say that the predominant narrative mode used throughout the novels is a realist mode, in accordance with the broad definition provided above. The characters are presented as individuals with their own points of view and their own motivations beyond any simple symbolic or allegorical reading. The broad action of the novel is based in the historical account as Mao Dun understood it. There are, however, exceptions to this realist mode that speak powerfully to the tension between a theoretic mode and an understanding of the actuality of past events, as well as the constraints of the actual writing of fiction. The tension is most easily seen when the attempted objectivity of the narration gives way to the subjectivity in the minds of the characters.

First we will explore the dominant form that the realist voice takes in the trilogy. The narrative voice in *Eclipse* is particularly realistic if we recall Flaubert's admonition that a realist author enters into the characters and does not force the characters into the author. As explained above, this allows the overarching narrative to be objective in the way events are described and at the same time the subjective understandings of individuals can be explored, ideally without being tainted by any ideology of the author. In practice, this type of narrative mode leads to a bleeding-over of the characters' subjectivity into the narration, thus the author's voice is hidden in description, but the characters' views color the world beyond what they should strictly be able to influence.

This type of narration, where the subjectivity of the character bleeds into the narrative voice, is generally called free indirect speech. I prefer Dorrit Cohn's slightly more limited concept that strictly deals with thought printed as narration and which he terms narrated monologue. He defines it rather succinctly as, "the technique for rendering a character's thought in his own idiom while maintaining the third-person reference and the basic tense of narration."¹⁷⁴ The effect of the style is a wavering between the understanding of the narrator in favor of that of the character. As Cohn puts it, "And this equivocation in turn creates the characteristic indeterminateness of the narrated monologue's relationship to the language of consciousness, suspending it between the immediacy of quotation and the mediacy of narration."¹⁷⁵ This type of tension quite nicely parallels and reinforces the attempted objectivity of realism and the attempted subjectivity of characterization in *Eclipse*.

A prime example of this equivocation comes about in the third novel of the trilogy, *Pursuits*, amid a gathering of the young intellectuals who had attached themselves to the failed revolution. They are all at varying degrees of loose ends, all looking for something to engage themselves – something to pursue. Cao Zhifang asks Zhang Manqing to elaborate on a new way forward that he had mentioned earlier. Cao suggests that he might become a bandit. The relevant text spreads beyond Zhang's reply:

¹⁷⁴ Cohn, Dorrit, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*, 100.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 105–106.

“No.” Manqing replied with exceeding solemnity. “My final vista, my final way forward is education!”

Education? The appearance of that queer noun at this place and at this time was simply too unexpected. And what’s more it was so tedious! Education, education. People had been yelling about that for at least twenty or thirty years, and what has that brought about? A massive refuge. Under the Qing Dynasty, the *juren* and *xiucai*, the students who returned from abroad at the Hanlin Academy, the YMCA greets, even the disappointed politicians, they all ended up in education. For most of those who set out in politics or academia, “going into education” was just like “going abroad for observation.” It had become a euphemism for giving up. Surely Manqing hadn’t learned that trick too? Cao Zhifang and the rest nearly couldn’t help laughing to the point of tears. Even so, Zhongzhao was also slightly bewildered. As the very least, he felt Manqing had become more impractical.

“不是。我的最後的憧憬，最後的出路，是教育！”

曼青却十二分認真地回答。

教育？這個怪冷的名詞在目前的場合出現，真是太兀突了；而且又是多麼無聊！教育，教育；人們嚷著至少有二三十年了，然而有的是什麼？有的是一個極大的逋逃藪。前清的舉人秀才，洋翰林，青年會偉人，甚至失意的政客，都來辦教育。在一般出入政學兩界的人，辦教育也和出洋考察一樣，成爲下臺的代名詞了。難道曼青也學得了這個秘訣麼？曹志方他們想著都忍不住笑到滴下眼淚來。便是仲昭也有幾分納罕，至少以爲曼青是愈變愈迂闊了。¹⁷⁶

Here we have a gradation of narrative voices. The quoted response is simply just that and nothing more, but the first following line on the unexpectedness of the word “education” moves completely out of the observable world of the characters. The screed against education as a form of giving up is at another level of abstraction from the action of the novel. It reads like a commentary that might be inspired by the action, and yet it is not

¹⁷⁶ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Zhuqiu” 追求 1, 681–682.

quite at the level of an intrusive authorial voice. And finally we move back into the scene step by step: first by tying Manqing to the previous comment, and then by the explicit thoughts of one of the characters: Wang Zhongzhao. The abruptness of this passage is jarring and it is made more so by the fact that it is unclear to whom the words ought to belong. The most likely candidates are the narrator/author or the asker of the original question, Cao Zhifang, but the ending of the paragraph presents a third possibility: Zhongzhao, another member of the group of fellow-students and the character most connected in friendship with Zhang Manqing. We will deal first with the authorial voice.

There are certainly hints of the authorial voice here that are similar to other instances of authorial intrusion.¹⁷⁷ The railing against those who sought to leave the revolutionary struggle surely could be seen as a response to those Mao Dun saw among his own colleagues, but as that observation is also particularly touching upon the situation of the characters present, it doesn't seem to be out of place. If the author is to lose himself within the characters, this passage could have come from the consciousness of several characters without subverting their subjective worldviews. Against this possibility is the lack of confidence shown. In other examples of authorial commentary, the voice is positive of the objective facts. Here to the contrary, we have questioning and waverings precisely as Cohen suggests. There is confidence in the idea that going into education is a form of giving up, but the surprise at the word "education," is inconsistent with the authorial voice. Also the final lines bringing the rest of the characters into the

¹⁷⁷ See the following chapter for instances of authorial voice.

paragraph seem to argue that these thoughts belong to one of those gathered around Manqing.

If the comments do not belong to the author as narrator, then they should belong to one of the characters, but it is not immediately clear to which. To make this more definite, the passage moves through four sections that can be divided by the character to which they are attached. In the first section, Manqing speaks in quoted text. There is no uncertainty here. Second, the commentary section is ambiguous. It could belong to the author, with its odd use of the word ‘noun,’ seeming rather to come from an editor than an observer, but the character Wang Zhongzhao is a journalist, so we cannot completely disregard this possibility as an expression of his mindset and vocabulary. The third section is a coherent thought by an unnamed individual and the fourth and final section is an explicit thought by an explicitly named character: Zhongzhao. To whom then can the second section be attributed? The most likely suspects are Zhongzhao and Zhifang. An argument could also be made for others present in the group – most significantly, Zhang Qiuliu and Long Fei.

I suggest that there is another possibility worth exploring and that is that the mind that is most influential on this section of narrative is purposefully unknowable. The main thrust of the reaction is in opposition to Manqing’s decision to go into education, and that could be attributed to anyone there to varying degrees. The fear of “giving up” the revolution and revolutionary ideals is critical and common to each character in a fundamental way – critical even to Manqing, if perhaps only in his subconscious.

Průšek comes close to this type of understanding of Mao Dun's narrative voice when he writes of Mao Dun using a "modern epic first person" point of view, one that is "not bound to a single person or place, but omnipresent, omniscient and allseeing, and with a constantly shifting viewpoint."¹⁷⁸ While this is not exactly the situation in the previous passage – the narration is not omniscient here in any case – Průšek's comment comes close enough to be useful. Mao Dun's narrative voice is indeed not tied to any single character, even within a single scene, and while there is potential elsewhere for the omniscient and allseeing narrator's voice, there is more commonly a view through the subjective eyes of one or more of the characters involved. And in this case, we have an ambiguously sourced voice that speaks for each of the characters involved to a greater or lesser extent, but that also speaks for a broader social understanding that they all share in common.

This serves as an instance of the author allowing himself to step inside his characters in service of a Flaubertian realism. Mao Dun has presented an objective depiction of the subjective views of his group of disenchanting revolutionaries. All of their very subjective emotional responses to Manqing's declaration: desire to find a noble pursuit, fear of giving up, frustration at falling into the failings of the past, disappointment at the most probably quite pedestrian futures they face, all of these are set out in a clinical way, an objective way.

¹⁷⁸ Průšek, Jaroslav, *The Lyrical and the Epic: Studies of Modern Chinese Literature*, 124.

The ambiguity of voice, the inability to discover for sure whose mind is most involved in the narrative, plays a critical role in the definition of Mao Dun's particular version of realism. This shifting in and out of reliability does add to the feeling that these responses are held in common by the social group, but they also bring a disturbing sense of uncertainty. If the scientific task Mao Dun has set out for us is as objective experiment to explore the subjective world that these characters inhabit, what are we to make of the fact that his results are so unstable?

The instability of Mao Dun's realism is perhaps its most characteristic feature. In the overwhelming majority of the trilogy, despite small instances like the above passage, the world is presented with as much Jakobsonian "maximum verisimilitude" as might be wished. But there are significant passages where any attempt at a representation of an objective reality is set aside. These exceptional passages burst forth in hallucinogenic fantasy that is so much more significant because of the staid reality that surrounds them.

All three texts have important instances of hallucination, but the most substantial ones occur in the middle novel, *Waverings*. The first we will examine comes about as Fang Luolan has just seen off guests that are involved in a political entanglement that will soon consume the town. However, Fang's thoughts turn toward Sun Wuyang, a beautiful and liberated political worker.

After Fang Luolan had seen off Lu Muyou and Hu Guoguang, he stood at the long window in the guest room with his hands in his pockets and looked out at the nandina. In the languor of the early evening, everything had lost its color. Two sole beads glittered comet-red.

Fang stood there, immobile in his frustration. The evening brought with it a strange pressure that evoked a vague feeling of unease within him and a vision

coalesced before his dulled eyes. He stood motionless, now face to face not with the nandina, but with a woman's emerald-green gown, dusted with tiny red sparks and exactly the size of the nandina. They moved. Now the red sparks moved over the surface, speeding one after one another like the streaks of fire after a comet. They struggled upward, finally gathering into a large crimson point above the collar of the emerald gown. This crimson point then split and cracked open, revealing two rows of beautiful rice-white teeth! It was a smile, a captivating feminine smile, above which, under delicately arched brows and covered by a pair of black eyelashes, a golden light shown forth.

Fang shut his eyes as if not daring to look, but that smiling mouth, those unfathomably deep eyes revealed under such lush eyelashes forced their way inside his closed eyelids. He fled into the receiving room, and the vision retreated in the flicker of the oil lamp. The flame flickered restlessly. Fang took it to be his own heartbeat, unconsciously removing his right hand from his pocket and placing it over his heart. His hand felt scorched, as if grasped by those burning milky white hands.

“Wuyang, you are the light of hope. I will rush to follow you without a thought.”

Fang clearly heard his own voice in his ears. He was very startled. He hadn't spoken, and there was no one there in the receiving room aside from himself. He settled himself down and sat on the rattan chair facing outside. From the rooms to his left, he heard the sounds of Mrs. Fang and the children that meant dinner was being prepared. At a loss, Fang stood and walked directly toward those rooms. He was conscious of having failed Mrs. Fang, and so he tried to put that alluring and terrible vision completely out of his mind. He was also aware that it seemed he wasn't strong enough, so he could only escape to a place with other people to hide from the vision, if only temporarily.

那天送走了陸慕游、胡國光以後，方羅蘭把兩手插在衣袋裏，站在客廳的長窗前，看著院子裏的南天竹；在昏暗的暮氣中，一切都消失了色彩，惟有這火珠一般的細子兒還閃著紅光。

方羅蘭惘然站著不動。夜帶來的奇異的壓迫，使他發生了渺茫惆悵的感覺。一個幻象，也在他的滯鈍的眼前凝結起來，終於成了形象：兀然和他面對面的，已不是南天竹，而是女子的墨綠色的長外衣。全身灑滿了小小的紅星，正和南天竹一般大小。而這又在動了。墨綠色上的紅星現在是全體在動了。它們馳逐迸跳了！像花炮放出來的火星，它們競爭地往上竄，終於在墨綠色女袍領口的上端聚積成爲較大的絳紅的一點；然而這絳紅點也就

即刻破裂，露出可愛的細白米似的兩排。呵！這是一個笑，女性的迷人的笑！再上，在彎彎的修眉下，一對黑睫毛護住的眼眶裏射出了黃綠色的光。

方羅蘭不敢再看，趕快閉了眼，但是，那一張笑口，那一對頗濃的黑睫毛下的透露著無限幽怨的眼睛，依舊被關進在閉合的眼皮內了。他逃避似的跑進客廳，火油燈的光亮一耀，幻象退去了。火油燈的小火焰，突突地跳，方羅蘭以為這就是自己的心跳，下意識地把右手從衣袋裏伸出來按在心頭。他感覺到手掌的灼熱，正像剛受了那雙灼熱的肥白的小手的一握。

“舞陽，你是希望的光，我不自覺地要跟著你跑。”

方羅蘭聽得自己的聲音很清晰地在耳邊響。他驚得一跳。不是，原來不是他在說話；而除了他自己，客廳中也沒有別人。他定了定神，在朝外的大藤椅上坐了。從左廂房裏傳來了方太太的話聲和孩子的喧音，說明晚飯是在預備。方羅蘭惘然站起來，一直望左廂房走。他自覺對不起方太太，然而要排除腦中那個可愛而又可惡的印象，又自覺似乎沒有那種力量，他只好逃到人多的地方，暫時躲開了那幻象。¹⁷⁹

In this first hallucination, as in the previous passage, the shift in reality comes in waves. After the difficult meeting with Hu Guoguang and Lu Muyou, Fang is looking out at the nandina, a plant that has red bead-like fruit. “In the languor of the early evening, everything had lost its color. Two sole beads glittered comet-red.” The color of the world is drained. This is a function of the fading twilight, but it is also an effect of Fang’s gradual loss of connection with reality. The fruit of the nandina are beads glittering red in the otherwise desaturated scene, adding to the growing unreality. The frustration of the meeting that night brings the narrative back to reality briefly, but only to show that it is Fang’s frustration and unease that leads to the vision he is going to witness. This is key in the overarching narrative in that it reinforces the essential point: Fang Luolan’s wavering is bringing his further away from reality. It is also consistent with the ebb and flow of reality seen in the previous passage.

¹⁷⁹ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Dongyao” 動搖 1, 17–18.

Fang stands immobile as the phantasmal image slowly coalesces before him. This building of the hallucination piece by piece – dress, lips, teeth, brows, eyelashes, and then a bright light where the eyes should be – strengthens the impression of a gradual move from reality into illusion. From a characterization point of view, this is Fang Luolan sinking into a morass of uselessness due to his indecision. He is falling further into his hallucination, but the ebb and flow continues: He fights the illusion, closing his eyes only to find that the illusion is not external to himself – it lies within his mind. He clutches his own heart and seems to be utterly lost. He unconsciously blurts out allegiance to the apparition and the woman it represents, casing aside all other loyalties.

It is then that he snaps out of his hallucination, but it isn't entirely clear what it is that is the cause of his awakening. Is it his hearing his own betraying voice or is it the sound of his wife and children preparing dinner? Both possibilities are plausible. If it is the sound of his wife that awakens him, then we can see a clear tension between his lust for Sun Wuyang and his faithfulness to her, and perhaps even that his faithfulness is stronger than his lust. However, the idea that it is his own voice that awakens him is also creditable. This shock comes from the awareness that he has separated not from his wife, but from himself. On hearing his own unfaithful voice, he becomes aware that he himself is split into two contesting factions. This of course is one of the essential themes of the novel and the model of wavering. In the end, it is certainly reasonable to see both as causes of his awakening from the hallucination.

In terms of the narrative mode, this presents a similar situation as that of the previous example, only with more intensity. The world that all characters can perceive

objectively fades away in waves and for a brief moment, the reader is taken within the subjective vision of Fang Luolan. There is an argument that this is completely in keeping with the task of realism. Without too much stretching of the framework of “bringing the author into the character,” this can be seen a depiction of what Fang was seeing. This depiction then is not fantastic, and certainly not romantic, because it is not corrupted by the “passion” or ideology of the author. It is a clinical depiction of what Fang saw, or seemed to see, and thus no different than a narrative that is influenced by the subjective view of a character as seen in Cohen’s narrated monologue. However, the intensity of the shift is important. Even if the phantasm is completely within Fang’s mind, and there is no reason to think otherwise, we move beyond the narrated monologue in that these are not willed thoughts of Fang’s conscious mind. This is not an unspecified will pondering over the future now that revolution has failed. The intensity of this event creates a new situation, and the core of it is that Fang’s mind is itself losing connection to the reality that is objectively sensed by the other characters. This suggests a problem: can a work of realism present a mind that is losing touch with reality?

An even more extreme example of this phenomenon will be helpful in exploring this question. In the final scene of *Waverings*, Fang Luolan and his wife Meili flee the chaos in the county seat, taking refuge in a deserted nunnery. Sun Wuyang, the source of Fang Luolan’s wavering in the previous passage, arrives slightly after them. The scene in its entirety follows:

“Did you see Miss Zhang?” Mrs. Fang asked.

“No. Oh, I remember – it must have been her. I saw a woman, long black hair covering her face, clothes ripped completely off...”

“Oh!” Mrs. Fang called out in shock. Her husband stopped pacing abruptly.

“Her body was white as snow. One of her full round breasts had been cut off,” Sun continued flatly.

“Where did you see her?” Fang asked in a different tone of voice.

“At the East Gate. She was dead, thrown on a rock, she was bleeding below.”

Fang sighed, then paced back and forth more anxiously.

Mrs. Fang gave a low moan and covered her face with her hands, dropping her head to her knees.

The first thing that jumped into her line of sight when she looked up was the little spider hanging in the air from before. Now it had fallen even lower, almost touching her nose. She watched, watched that little insect slowly growing bigger until it was as big as a person. She clearly saw the bloated, distended body hanging from a gossamer thread, futilely struggling in a cold terror. She also saw the spider’s wrinkled face, stiffly, miserably gasping for air. Right then the face transformed into a legion of faces, flying wildly through the air. From underground came corpses – nude, headless, with huge quivering breasts, and gushing streams of blood. The miserable transformed heads flew atop the bloody necks while emitting a low horrifying moan.

A cool wind blew by and Mrs. Fang pulled in her shoulders involuntarily. It was all gone. It was the desolate nunnery, just as before. She settled herself, looking at the four plain walls before realizing that Fang Luolan and Sun Wuyang were no longer with her. She stood up hesitantly and when she looked toward the dais, she saw next to the pomegranate tree a wide pink sleeve poking out from luxuriant tulip petals. Then it was replaced by a corner of blue clothing. A wave of jealousy rushed from her heart to her nose. She lunged forward, stepped back, and fell dejected back to the bench where she had been.

---Humiliation! The unending humiliation! If she had listened to Miss Zhang, there wouldn’t be this humiliation today!

Mrs. Fang deeply, painfully regretted that at the time she had wavered too much in her thinking. She felt dizzy with vertigo, her body rocked back and forth, floating in the air. She could feel she had become that little spider, hanging alone in the boundless vastness of the air, unable to keep from being swayed.

---Her spider-eyes looked out and the hall of the narrow, low nunnery turned out to be a huge ancient structure. A myriad of ox-headed, horse-faced monsters stretched out in the cracks in vermilion walls, the roof-beams shuddered precariously, the granite walls groaning as if they couldn't bear their load. Suddenly, with a clear sound like the foundering of heaven and earth, that ancient structure completely collapsed! Yellow dust rushed high into the air; smashed bricks, shattered tiles, splintered beams, cracked rafters, and even a cloud of dirt effused with reds and greens – they all scattered wildly before settling over the broad earth with a sound like thunder, but closer to a mournful cry or gasp.

---Soon a curl of green smoke came from the collapsed ruins, wispy then high then broad, enshrouding the ancient decayed pile. A moss-like object struggled to burst forth from the green smoke coming from the ruins; it had all kinds of colors, all kinds of shapes. The little things, shaking back and forth, slowly grew larger, and a face formed on each one. Among them Mrs. Fang seemed to see Fang Luolan, Chan Zhong, Miss Zhang... Every person she saw in her daily life. They were all growing larger as they shook back and forth.

---Then the embers of the ancient structure, prostrate, panting for breath, flew into the air again. They tried hard to coalesce, unite, then fell like a summer torrent with all their strength on that newly born clump of tiny objects. They struggled, fled, surrendered everything swirling around wildly, turning into a ribbon of kaleidoscopic color. In the middle of this, there appeared a dark core, suddenly spreading out, suddenly contracting in, finally jumping incessantly! With every jump, it emitted a black ring that jumped too. The black rings jumped outward layer by layer, jumping faster expanding faster, engulfing everything, destroying everything. filling the entire sky, the entire universe

Mrs. Fang, with a long sobbing moan, fell to the ground.

“看見張小姐麼？”方太太再問。

“沒有。哦，記起來了，一定是她。我看見一個女人，又黑又長的頭髮遮住了面容，衣服剝得精光……”

“呀！”方太太驚叫起來。方羅蘭突然止步。

“雪白的一身肉，肥圓的乳房割去了一只。”孫舞陽還是坦然接著說。

“在那裏看見的？”方羅蘭追問，聲音也有些變了。

“在東門口。已經死了。橫架在一塊石頭上，下身淌著血水呢！”

方羅蘭嘆了口氣，更焦灼地走來走去。

方太太低呻了一聲，把兩手捧住了面孔，頭垂下去，攔在膝頭。

方太太再抬起頭來時，首先映入眼簾的，是先前那隻懸空的小蜘蛛，現在墜得更低了，

幾乎觸著她的鼻頭。她看著，看著，這小生物漸漸放大起來，直到和一個人同樣大。方太太分明看見那臃腫痴肥的身體懸空在一縷游絲上，凜栗地無效地在掙扎；又看見那蜘蛛的皺瘦的面孔，苦悶地麻木地喘息著。這臉，立刻幻化成爲無數，在空中亂飛。地下忽又涌出許多帶血，裸體，無首，聳著肥大乳房的屍身來，幻化的苦臉就飛上了流血的頸脖，發出同樣的低低的令人心悸的嘆聲。

吹來一陣涼風，方太太不自覺地把肩膀一縮；什麼都沒有了，依然是荒涼的尼庵。她定了定神，瞧著空空的四壁，才覺到方羅蘭和孫舞陽都不在跟前了。她遲疑地立起來，向佛龕後望時，看見石榴樹側鬱金香的茂葉旁露出一片粉紅色的闊袖，接著就換上了藍布的衣角，一縷酸氣，從心裏直衝鼻尖；方太太搶前一步，但又退回，頹然落在原凳上。

——侮辱！無窮的侮辱！早聽了張小姐的話，就沒有今天的侮辱！

方太太痛苦地想著，深悔當時自己的主意太動搖。她覺得頭腦岑岑然發眩，身體浮空著在簸蕩；她自覺得已經變成了那隻小蜘蛛，孤懸在渺茫無邊的天空中，不能自主地被晃動著。

她的蜘蛛的眼看出去，那尼庵的湫隘的佛堂，已然是一座古舊高大的建築；丹堊的裂罅裏探出無數牛頭馬面的鬼怪，大棟岌岌地在撼動，青石的牆腳不勝負載似的在呻吟。忽然天崩地塌價一聲響亮，這古舊的建築物齊根倒下來了！黃塵直沖高空，斷磚，碎瓦，折棟，破椽，還有混亂的帶著丹青的泥土，都亂迸亂跳地瀉散開來，終於平臥了滿地，發出雷一般響，然而近於將死的悲鳴和喘息。

——俄而破敗的廢墟上裊出一道青烟，愈抖愈長，愈廣，籠罩了古老腐朽的那一堆；苔一般的小東西，又爭競地從廢墟上正冒著的青烟裏爆長出來，有各種的顏色，各種的形相。小東西們在搖晃中漸漸放大，都幻出一個面容；方太太宛然看見其中有方羅蘭，陳中，張小姐……一切平日見過的人們。他們都在搖晃中越長越大。

突然，平臥喘著氣的古老建築的燼餘，又飛舞在半空了；牠們努力地凝結團集，然後像夏天的急雨似的，全身傾撲在新生的那叢小東西上。牠們掙扎，奔逃，投降！一切都急亂地旋轉，化成五光十色的一片。在這中間，

有一團黑心忽然擴大，忽然又縮小，終於是不息的突突的跳！每一跳分生出擴展出一個黑的圈子來，也在突突的跳。黑圈子一層一層的向外擴展，跳的更快，擴展的也更快吞噬了一切，毀滅了一切，瀰漫在全空間，全宇宙……

方太太嚶然長呻一聲，僕在地上。¹⁸⁰

In this passage we have a similar fading in and out of the hallucination, but there are also other aspects that are clearer. The scene within the hallucination is more obviously symbolic. Also there is a specific trigger for the decent into hallucination that suggests a more consistent framework for the shift in narrative voice.

As with the previous examples, the narrative focus wavers from a version of objective reality into hallucination and then back again. The opening conversation reads very simply in line with the majority of the novel: rational and unbiased by author or character. As the focus of Mrs. Fang begins to examine the spider, her subjective character takes over the narrative and the reader is seeing it as she sees it, as she starts to lose her grasp on the reality of the conversation. The spider begins to transform into a monstrosity of flying faces and the ground opens up to hideous creatures. There is no sign of her husband or Sun Wuyang. This is completely within her mind. She then comes back to a seeming sensibility and reality of the nunnery. But then she sees her husband and Sun Wuyang in a compromising position and falls back into the hallucination.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Dongyao” 動搖 3, 373–374.

¹⁸¹ It is important to note here that this is one of the many sections that was heavily edited in the later 1954 edition of the trilogy. As with elsewhere in this work, my analysis here is based on the original 1927 text. As this passage will not be discussed in the following chapter that explores the differences in the two editions, I will briefly explain the main relevant changes here. In the 1954 edition, the sentence “It was all

Only in the last sentence of the novel does the narrative return to an objective view not painted by her consciousness, and this is only because she has lost her consciousness. Her mind is no longer there for the reader to see through.

The symbolic reading of the passage is quite interesting because it seems to run counter to the realist narrative goals. In the passage, the nunnery becomes a “huge ancient structure,” tottering under its own weight. Ox-head and horse-faced demons are age-old common tropes from the Chinese hell of myth. It is no stretch to see these as stand-ins for the evils of tradition. The collapse of the structure gives birth to those she knows – the revolutionaries who would bring down the old order, but of course the dark miasma brought about in the chaos of the collapse engulfs them all and the entirety of existence with them. This is not subtle or complex, but it is rather different. It raises a problem for the type of realism Mao Dun is using. This world, or rather the hallucinations of this world are displayed through the eyes of Mrs. Fang, so for consistency to be maintained, the reader must hold that these are images born of her mind and based on her own psychology. There are hints of her own individuality in the hallucinations. She does transform into the spider swinging by a thread, and it is the people in *her* daily life that she sees born out of the chaos. So if these are symbolic

gone,” is changed to “The illusions were all gone.” Mrs. Fang does not catch her husband and Sun Wuyang in such an obviously suggestive scene, rather she sees them clearly standing next to each other and she even sees them arguing. The first edit is in service of making the shift in narrative more explicit. The spider monstrosity was an illusion. Where the hallucinations are depicted as seeing through the mind of a character, there is a stronger argument for a consistent narrative that can be called realist. The second alteration takes away the potential reading, illusory or no, that her husband is finally consummating his infidelity. This would fundamentally alter the readers’ perception of Fang’s nature, but it would also remove the violent jealous impetus for Mrs. Fang’s return into hallucination.

images, they are still those of the mind of the character, ostensibly presented objectively by the pen of the author without interference.

Finally, this passage is an excellent example of the trigger that causes a shift in narrative, shown more clearly than in previous examples. The trigger for the first lapse into hallucination is Sun Wuyang's relating information about their friend Miss Zhang having been raped, mutilated and murdered. She is brought out of this reverie by a gust of cold wind. It is worth mentioning that there is a very plausible interpretation that Mrs. Fang does not in fact fully come out of this reverie and that her vision of the pink sleeve and blue clothing in the tulips is nothing but a more believable hallucination. The second trigger is seeing what she believes to be her husband and Sun Wuyang together in a tulip patch. In both of these cases, it is emotional trauma that has brought her into the world of hallucination. This parallels Fang Luolan's hallucination above, in which the trauma is his wavering between his fidelity and love toward his wife and his lust for Sun Wuyang. Ordinarily, he is able to keep focused, but he had been distracted by the conversation with Hu Guoguang and Lu Muiyou. In this case, Mrs. Fang is already at the end of her willpower, fleeing the sack of the county seat, she has no reserves of will to confront the atrocity committed to her friend, and then the final disloyalty, real or imagined, of her husband. Her final collapse shows that the hallucinatory narrative has been anchored to her mind by the stark nature of the shift in narrative in that final line. The reader is brought up quickly into a sharp declarative sentence of the non-hallucinatory world.

The hallucinations of the trilogy test the realist framework that Mao Dun has built throughout the trilogy. These are instances when reality fails for the characters. They are

brought out of any shape of reality that could be shared by the consciousness' of other characters. However, by holding to the broadened version of narrated monologue that I propose, the hallucinations do not move beyond that framework. Just as the unspecified mind considering the futility of pursuit in the first example is simply a shifted internal monologue, the hallucinations are internal views of the world, in these cases, by identified characters. The claim to objectivity is defensible through an expanded version of Flaubert's realism: These are the subjective views of the character, but as they are passed through the author's pen unadulterated by the biases or ideology of the author, they are objective. There is no doubt that this is a rather significant broadening of the idealized striving for complete verisimilitude that Jakobson put forth, and yet it is realism.

CHAPTER THREE: TEXTOLOGY

Brief History of the Two Texts

One of the most critical factors in analyzing Mao Dun's *Eclipse* trilogy is to recognize the problem posed by the different editions of the novels. The importance of the two editions is very rarely mentioned in studies of the trilogy, most analyses being based on the 1954 version without explicit consideration of the original. The novels were originally written in haste in 1927 through 1928 while Mao Dun was essentially in hiding in Shanghai after having nominally taken part in the failed uprising brought on by the split between the Chinese Communist Party and Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists. But in 1954, Mao Dun undertook a massive reediting of the trilogy, making significant alterations to nearly all aspects of the texts. Because the edits were made by the author himself they give a unique insight with a retrospective eye into what he wanted the novels to be, at least at the point of editing, and in many cases the changes are so essential they present a dramatically different text. I argue this new creation, the 1954 edition of the *Eclipse* trilogy, is a fundamentally new text that can be beneficial in understanding Mao Dun's authorial voice and his theoretical focus in both periods. The changes highlight what he felt was most important to retain in 1954, as well as show what he felt must be sacrificed. A point of particular interest is that the sacrificed aspects of the novels often contain content for which Mao Dun is praised, and yet, critically, the original edition of the trilogy has not been in print since the 1954 edition was released. This leaves the reader without recourse to much of the power and flavor of the edition that defined Mao Dun as the foremost realist author of his time.

In this chapter, I develop a typology of the changes in the three novels from their original 1927-1928 edition to their 1954 edition. The analysis that follows shows that although many of the changes Mao Dun made were intended to make the trilogy less politically out of step, generally through simplification of characters and elimination of the more explicitly sexual scenes, he also attempted to make his narrative voice more consistent with his theoretical ideals, which had a less direct political motive.

Critical to understanding the significance of the typology of changes in the two editions is an understanding of the environment in which the text was written and how circumstances had changed by the time Mao Dun came to edit his texts.

A Brief Context of the Original Edition of the Novels

Mao Dun became a political actor in a period when a united, democratic China with a viable communist element seemed plausible. However, the rupture between the left and right wings of the Nationalist Party in 1927 made this impossible. It was in the darkness of the aftermath of the purge that Mao Dun decided he must write the book he had been mulling over in his head in order to try and provide a “ray of light” to his colleagues.¹⁸² He wrote the three novels in a rush during the fall of 1927 to the late summer of 1928 and sent them off to be serialized in *The Short Story Magazine*, the magazine he had edited earlier in the decade. These versions were collected first as the individual novels, *Disillusions*, *Waverings*, and *Pursuits*, by the Shanghai Commercial

¹⁸² Mao Dun 茅盾, “Cong Guling dao Dongjing 從牯嶺到東京,” *The Short Story Magazine* 小說月報 19, no. 10 (October 10, 1928): 1138.

Press later in 1928, and then by the *Kaiming shudian* (開明書店) house, which published the trilogy in a single volume in 1930. Although the three novels had always been designed as a trilogy, it is only here that Mao Dun gave the trilogy the title *Eclipse*.¹⁸³

It was this version, in the original serial format and as bound books, that made his reputation. On the one hand, his novels had become very widely read and he suddenly found himself one of the most prominent Chinese authors and the leading voice for realism in fiction in the same pantheon as Lu Xun and beyond contemporaries like Lao She. However, he also found that some doctrinaire communists took exception to his novels, saying that they were not the sort of work to inspire the people and lead them forward to a socialist future.

Qian Xingcun served as a mouthpiece of the Sun Society's attack on realism in general and Mao Dun and *Eclipse* in particular. Those in the Sun Society took up the banner of "proletarian realism" as a way to hold to realism in name, but paradoxically demand an active class struggle in literature that cast aside pretensions to any idealistic objective narrative.¹⁸⁴ Qian wrote three articles almost immediately after the novels' publication. The three articles, along with one more on Mao Dun's later work, *Wild Roses*, were collected and published in 1930. He seems conflicted by the novels in these articles. His overarching critique is naturally political and class-based:

¹⁸³ Although Mao Dun makes it clear that this title was chosen to represent that the failed revolution of 1927 was a brief darkness and that the light of revolution would appear again, the trilogy is very rarely translated into English as *The Canker*.

¹⁸⁴ Anderson, Marston, *The Limits of Realism: Chinese Fiction in the Revolutionary Period*, 45–47.

Although his [Mao Dun's] creation is claimed to be created out of the years when the emergent literature was demanding the right to exist, and it is drawn from the background of the revolutionary era, his ideology isn't an ideology of the emergent class; what he expresses is mostly the disillusion and wavering of the sunken revolutionary petty bourgeois in the face of revolution. He is utterly a petty bourgeois author.

他的創造雖然說是產生在新興文學文學要求他的存在權的年頭，而取著革命的時代的背景，然而，他的意識不是新興階級的意識，他所表現的大都是下沉的革命的小布爾喬亞對革命的幻滅與動搖，他完全是一個小布爾喬亞的作家...¹⁸⁵

Elsewhere Qian does grant that there is literary merit in the novels, particularly in some of the characterizations, but the critical faults of the trilogy are its pessimism and its lack of political clarity. The trilogy has the trappings of a revolutionary work, but only presents the weaknesses of the bourgeois. For Qian, complications of reality get in the way of ideals and inner conflict in characters that should be heroic make the trilogy a failure. Interestingly, in Mao Dun's 1954 revised edition of the trilogy, some of the edits and emendations seem to be drawn directly from Qian's comments. This suggests that Mao Dun did read and internalize at least some of the arguments made by the Sun Society and that in 1954 he still felt the pressure of these political criticisms of the trilogy, or perhaps that the ideas of the Sun Society had become a part of the Maoist literary orthodoxy of the 1950s.

Brief Context of the 1954 Edition of the Novels

After the establishment of the People's Republic, the *Renmin wenxue chubanshe* (People's Literature Publishing House) asked Mao Dun, then the Minister of Culture, to

¹⁸⁵ Qian Xingcun 錢杏邨, "Mao Dun yu xianshi" 矛盾與現實, 101.

“edit some certain portions” of the trilogy for republication in 1954.¹⁸⁶ This later version was published by itself in 1954 and then again a part of the *Complete Works of Mao Dun* (*Mao Dun quanji*) in 1958. Mao Dun doesn’t explain this rewriting in his autobiography.¹⁸⁷ However, in an afterward to the 1958 trilogy in his *Complete Works*, Mao Dun does shed a bit of light on the subject. Because of the inner conflict shown, and the dearth of other useful sources, I quote the entirety of the critical paragraph:

The reason I now recount these petty issues not to use this opportunity to claim that my novels were poorly written and how that isn’t my fault. I’ve always had a bit of self-knowledge (For this I should thank my childhood education by my long-deceased mother). In recounting these petty issues, my intention is to make things clear: When I got the opportunity to edit my old works, I had another kind of contradictory mindset. In 1954 when the People’s Literature Publishing House planned to reprint the three novels, they suggested that I edit some certain portions of them. At that time, I felt that if I didn’t edit, readers would say that I was still “passing down errors,” but if I did make edits, the original appearance would be lost. It would no longer be my text of 1927 and 1928; it would be my “new creation” of 1954. This “contradiction” seemed rather difficult to solve. At the time I advocated simply to not reprint, but the publishers felt that wouldn’t do. If I used an impartial method I could make some sentence-level edits in the three novels while leaving the ideological content of the work untouched. There were relatively fewer sentence-level edits in *Disillusions* and *Waverings*, perhaps one percent or less of the entire text. *Pursuits* had more, but not beyond three percent of the entire text. There is no change in the ideological content of any of the three novels; this can be confirmed by comparison with the old printing. They have been printed with the edits for three years. Now the publishers plan to put out a “collection” of authors including me, and again proposed: Is it possible to restore the edits in *Disillusions* and the other books to their original? This time, I decided my answer quickly: don’t bother changing it back! My intention isn’t to paper over the mistakes in the works of my youth because the 1954 edits didn’t alter the ideological content of the original. The intention is to express this: I believe the 1954 suggestions by the publishers (especially regarding the description in a certain few chapters and paragraphs) were fundamentally correct; I felt this way back then, and I feel that way today.

¹⁸⁶ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Xie zai shi de xinbanben de houmian” 寫在《蝕》的新版的後面, 426.

¹⁸⁷ His autobiography, *Wo zouguo de daolu*, ends in 1937, well before the rewriting.

我今天來回述這些瑣屑的事情，並不想借此來辯解自己的小說沒有寫好乃不是自己之過。自知之明，向來還有一點（這應該感謝我的故世已久的母親在我童年時對我的教育）。我回述這些瑣事，用意只在說明：當我有了可能修改舊作的時候，我卻又有另一種的矛盾心理。這就是當一九五四年人民文學出版社打算重排這三本小說的時候，曾建議我修改其中的某些部分；那時候，我覺得不改呢，讀者將說我還在把“謬種流傳”，改呢，那就失去了本來面目，那就不是一九二七---二八年我的作品，而成爲一九五四年我的“新作”了。這“矛盾”似乎頗不易解決。當時我主張乾脆不再中重印，但出版社又不以爲然。如果我採取了執中方法，把這三本舊作，字句上作了或多或少的修改，而對於作品的思想內容，則根本不動。至於字句上的修改，《幻滅》和《動搖》改的少，僅當全書的百分之一或不及百分之一，《追求》則較多，但亦不過全書的百分之三。三本書原來的思想內容，都沒有改變，這是可以和舊印本對證的。這樣修改后，也印行了三年。現在，出版社有出作家們的“文集”的計劃，把我也算一個，而且又向我提議：《幻滅》等三書的修改部分是否可以恢復原狀？這一次，我很快就決定了答案：不必再改回去了！用意不是掩飾少年時代作品的疵謬，因爲一九五四年那次的修改本來沒有變動原來的思想內容。用意乃在表示：我認爲一九五四年出版社的建議（特別對於某些章段中的描寫）基本上是對的；過去我這樣認爲，今天還是這樣認爲。¹⁸⁸

Mao Dun was acutely aware of the problems involved in re-editing his novels.

He even points to the irony of the problem by referencing his pen name in talking about the choice of whether or not to edit the trilogy. In this passage, he explains that if he did the editing, he would lose something of the original, something of the Mao Dun from 1927 that wrote them. If he does not do the editing, then readers might accuse him of “passing down errors.” The potential of being accused of “passing down errors” in 1954 could rapidly veer into the very real hazard of being caught on untenable ideological ground. This is at odds with his assertion that there was no alteration in the ideological content of the original. The danger was very real. Violent political campaigns against

¹⁸⁸ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Xie zai shi de xinbanben de houmian” 寫在《蝕》的新版的後面, 426–427.

ideological enemies, real and imagined, would decimate Chinese intellectuals in this period.¹⁸⁹ This danger outweighed considerations of purity of artistic intent in the original.

What was essential to Mao Dun in this decision then was what he calls the “ideological content” of the trilogy. He claims that this ideological content remained unchanged throughout the edits and even suggests readers can confirm it by comparing the two versions. This is an odd challenge, because anyone looking at the changes made from edition to edition would immediately see the significant changes described in detail below. These are not simply corrections on the sentence level for the sake of grammar and clarity. More revealing is that he mentions there were specific suggestions made to him by the publishers, saying first, “they suggested that I edit some certain portions of them [曾建議我修改其中的某些部分]” and finally that he believed “the 1954 suggestions by the publishers (especially regarding the description in a certain few chapters and paragraphs) were fundamentally correct [我認為一九五四年出版社的建議（特別對於某些章段中的描寫）基本上是對的]. The mention of “certain portions” and even “a certain few chapters and paragraphs” implies that there were suggestions beyond general guidelines or sensitive topics. In any case, even if there were someone in the People’s Literature Publishing House who made specific recommendations, Mao Dun owns the alterations and deletions as his own. It is worth noting that the atmosphere in

¹⁸⁹ Among many others, Ding Ling (丁玲), one of the foremost revolutionary writers, would be labeled a rightist in 1957 and struggled against for years.

1954 would not be as restrictive as it would come to be only a few years later as the anti-rightist movement developed.

Finally, in this passage, Mao Dun claims that the People's Literature Publishing Company wanted to revert the novels to their original state for their printing of *The Complete Works of Mao Dun* in 1958, and that Mao Dun very quickly turned them down. He says twice in the paragraph that he is not trying to cover up any errors that appear in the trilogy he wrote as a youth, and yet he had carefully considered that if he were to not edit the trilogy, readers might accuse him of "passing down errors." His defense is that any error of actual import would be ideological in nature, and since there was no alteration in the ideological content, he should be guiltless, but at the same time it is curious that the same publishing house that suggested he make alterations in 1954 would ask to use the original texts for a 1958 printing. This was also no small printing in 1958 but an exhaustive collection of Mao Dun's writings that would serve as the canonical source of his literature, criticism and polemic, and if we take this at face value, Mao Dun specifically chose for the edited version to stand as the canonical incarnation of the trilogy. In the end, this choice was successful: the original edition is now almost entirely invisible except to academics with access to pre-1954 editions of the texts. The sole exception is that in some of the more rigorous modern editions of the trilogy, including the People's Literature and the French edition, there are footnotes marking a small minority handful of alterations. However, the effect of this is that without seeing the full text of the original, a reader would suppose there were no other alterations except those noted in those footnotes. Making note of only a few of the edits further muddles the issue

and even suggests an intent on the part of the editors of these newer editions to further marginalize the more substantive edits.

Textology or Textual Criticism?

Before entering into the core of the matter, a brief clarification of methodology and terminology will prove useful. What I am doing is setting out a typology of changes in the two editions and examining those changes through close reading in hopes of coming to a better understanding of the novels and the author's methods. Despite the small risk of confusion of terms, this is the study of texts, and so I refer to this method as Textology, and I do so deliberately. This is of course not the Textology of Discourse Analysis; I feel there is no danger of the term being misunderstood here.

There are some precedents for this type of analysis, the most obvious being Textual Criticism. However, what I do here is not exactly Textual Criticism as that term is generally used, despite some commonalities. Textual Criticism is often focused on finding an original text in a disputed arena, most famously in the heated debates over the Shakespeare folios or of religious texts. This problem of textual originality is not an issue in the case of *Eclipse*. The first published instance of the text is not in dispute and while there may very well have been unauthorized printings and certainly must have been handwritten manuscripts that I do not address here, the second publication, which serves as the most authoritative version within and beyond the academy, was edited by Mao Dun himself. So rather than a handful or more of disputed works we are left with the much more manageable situation of having two main editions with significant edits. In addition, Textual Criticism is often interested in the development of language and usage. I do not address those issues in this article.

The key, and as far as I know, only work of Textual Criticism for *Eclipse* is Jin Hongyu's *Xin wenxue de banben piping*, which has a chapter devoted solely to the trilogy. Jin is a prolific author in the field of Textual Criticism, with studies of several pieces of fiction from this era, and he is deliberate in his work. In his study of *Eclipse*, He claims that there were 120 edits in *Disillusions*, 350 in *Waverings* and 450 in *Pursuits*, the majority of which he places in categories of "revolution," "sex" and "the people." He does an excellent job of listing many of the edits and explaining how the use of some of the themes had changed in the twenty years between editions, however as Jin works in traditional Textual Criticism, he is much less interested in the influence edits have on the content and narrative. Therefore, while he gives a good departure point for this study his conclusions are only tangentially related.

Typology of Changes

What follows is a typology of the changes made in the 1954 version of the *Eclipse* trilogy. The edits fall generally into five types of alterations: Clarity and Accuracy, Political Concerns, Narrative Voice, Simplification of Characters, and Problematic Sensuality. The types of changes are fairly consistent throughout the trilogy, but it is telling that the novel with the most edits, *Pursuits*, is also the novel that took the most time to write, and it is the novel he feels most represents his own feelings: “I confess honestly: *Disillusions* and *Waverings* do not contain my own thoughts, they are objective descriptions. Within *Pursuits* however are my most recent – that is during the period in which I wrote the novel – thoughts and emotions. [我誠實的自白：幻滅和動搖中間並沒有我自己的思想，那是客觀的描寫；追求中間卻有我最近的——便是作這篇小說的那一段時間——思想和情緒。]”¹⁹⁰ This adds a circumstantial support for the supposition that what was most important or most emotionally engaged in the trilogy was also that which was most in need of this defensive editing.

As weft to the warp, there are some tropes that cross over the above-mentioned types, the main example being Mao Dun’s treatment of the names of his characters. Some changes are simply for clarity, while others imply political positions, and still others may suggest an authorial critique. These changes will be addressed under each relevant category.

¹⁹⁰ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Cong Guling dao Dongjing” 從牯嶺到東京, 1140.

On a technical note, in an attempt to ease reading and comparing two different but related texts, quotations from both editions will be cited together. This presents a great deal of difficulty in making clear which passages come from which edition. In an admittedly imperfect attempt to clarify the source of each line, any text that appears only in the original 1927-8 edition will be underlined, and any text that was added to the 1954 edition that does not appear earlier will appear in parentheses. The Chinese will be similarly annotated. This allows the changes to be seen quickly and together. Citations for both editions used are listed in footnotes for each quote.

Clarity and Accuracy

The most common and easily understood alterations are simply the edits that correct errors in the text or attempt to make for a cleaner-reading text. Mao Dun claims *Disillusions* was written from mid-September to late October of 1927, *Waverings* from November to December, and *Pursuits* from April to June of 1928.¹⁹¹ It is not surprising that writing such a volume at such speed naturally would lead to inconsistencies and errors in the texts.

In some cases, the edits are nothing more than corrections to obvious typos or errors. There is little reason to spend much time in analysis of these. One prominent example is in *Waverings*, where the date of International Women's Day is mistakenly written as April 8th; this is corrected to March 8th in the later version. In *Disillusions*,

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

three women are sitting on a hill at the Yellow Crane Tower overlooking the industrial landscape of Hankou which is to the east in the original and the northwest in the 1954 edition: “The east (northeast) was awash in lamplight, making the sky crimson; it was Hankou, with her three hundred thousand workers. 東方(西北)一片燈火，赤化了半的天的，便是有三十万工人的漢口。” While there is a potential political and symbolic reading in the original, with the industrial might and labor force naturally rising in the east, and an edit to remove such a reference would be consistent with other alterations to remove overly florid and symbolic phrasings, in this case the simplest reading seems to be more probable. Altering the geography of the city for the sake of an overwrought cliché would be rather cheap. A simple mistake seems much more probable, and in any case, a map will show Hankou is not to the east of the Yellow Crane Tower.

In the first edition of *Pursuits*, the character of Shi Xun is said to have had appendicitis for years. This is the illness that is the source of his depression and cynicism that mark his character for the entirety of the novel. The illness is critical to the plot in that after he and Zhang Qiuliu have an emotionally and physically exhausting assignation at a vacation hotel outside Shanghai, his condition worsens and eventually, as all of their friends gather to enjoy themselves, he dies in the middle of their party. In the later version, each mention of appendicitis throughout the novel is removed and his liaison with Zhang Qiuliu is significantly emended. His illness remains, but it is made vague: an “old illness (老病).” The changes made to his and Zhang’s weekend are significant and will be discussed later, but the specificity of the appendicitis seems to be removed simply because appendicitis is not a chronic condition, and a more vague “old illness” is perhaps

better suited to an allegorical reading without being so specific as to bring to mind any one issue that might cause a character to become depressed and cynical.

Political Concerns

In all three texts, there are instances in text and in style that needed to be altered due to the political situation in 1954. Jin Hongyu covers this material fairly well from the point of view of Textual Criticism, listing several instances of alterations with political motives. Mao Dun, who had become Minister of Culture in 1949, certainly had to be more circumspect in anything that might be taken as an attack on the new People's Republic and those who were in charge. These were by and large defensive edits to protect himself.

Two changes in the trilogy that were most obviously going to need alteration in terms of the new political situation in 1954 are issues that Jin Hongyu rather delicately describes as those that are, “encroaching on foreign policy.”¹⁹² In *Disillusions*, Doctor Huang Xinghua is a better patriot than physician, and thus he tends to Miss Jing's political wounds more than her initially illusory medical condition. As they discuss the battlefield situation, the original text has him cry out:

There will absolutely come a day when China raises her head. All we need is a government that is a republic in truth as well as in name that can develop industry, propagate education, and train a strong army and navy to defeat the foreigners, completely take back Korea, Vietnam and Siam, and then China will be a first-rank strong nation.

¹⁹² Jin Hongyu 金宏宇, *Xin wenxue de banben piping* 新聞學的版本批評, 208.

中國一定有抬頭的一日。只要有一個名副其實的共和政府，把實業振興起來，教育普及起來，練一支強大的海陸軍，打敗了外國人，把朝鮮、安南、暹羅統統收回來，便成為世界第一等強國。¹⁹³

Hainan Island would not be under complete control until 1950 and the Korean armistice was only finalized in 1953. Clearly these are topics too sensitive to mention, even in the mouth of someone who is not entirely an ideological model character. Defeating the foreigners is something that would still play well, but Mao Dun had this doctor express these areas as being part of China – they were in need of being “taken back” – and this territorial recovery was a prerequisite to becoming a “first-rank strong nation” on a par with development of industry and propagation of education. That Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, or other potentially disputable places are not also listed in the territorial areas that must be taken back from the foreigners further confuses the list. While it would be stretching analysis to claim that the words Mao Dun put into the mouth of this doctor could represent anything more than charged words of a patriot obsessed with news of the battles of the time and to come, it is certainly valid to say it suggests the notion of what exactly China was and was to become were still fluid at least to some extent on the fringes in 1927, and again, that such ambiguities were settled but still sensitive enough in 1954 to demand the edit.

A similar instance in the original text of *Pursuits* has Wang Zhongzhao despairing: “He thought to himself mechanically, “China, China, whose embrace (which side) will you end up_(on)_in? To the left or the right? Is there a middle road for you? 心裏機械的

¹⁹³ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Huanmie” 幻滅 1, 24.

想：中國，中國倒在誰的懷裏(那邊)呀？向左呢，向右？有你中間的路麼？”¹⁹⁴ In 1928 it was not unthinkable to suggest that China might be forced into one or another sphere of influence to have any hope of surviving as a nation, and although in 1954 the Sino-Soviet Split was several years away, the idea that China should be completely beholden to another nation would certainly have been distasteful in the New China. Also, in 1954, after having survived the revolution and the Korean War, the suggestion that China would be able to survive and remain independent was unquestionable. Moreover, the image in the text reinforced the passive, slightly sexualized language of colonialism. China had stood up; it was no weakling to seek safety in the embrace of another. What remains in the 1954 edition, the left, right and middle, are categories more amenable to classify as ally and enemy, and more to the point of the uncertainty, hopelessness and lack of resolve toward the future of not only Wang Zhongzhao, but of all characters in *Pursuits*.

In other cases, certain politically sensitive terms needed to be rephrased or replaced. Again in *Pursuits*, Cao Zhifang is giving a speech on the street on the Jinan Incident while Zhang Qiuli stands by lost in her own thought. She is brought out of her daze by a nearby shout, “Feh, the reactionaries are bold (What bold Communists)! Do they even dare to throw the rear into disorder? 呸，反動派好大膽！ (好大膽的共產黨) 敢來擾亂後方秩序麼？”¹⁹⁵ This alteration is slightly more muddled. In the original,

¹⁹⁴ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Zhuqiu” 追求 3, 962.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 971.

Cao Zhifang is labeled a reactionary, which, despite his many imperfections, is perhaps unfair. However, in the later edition, he is labeled a communist. In both cases, the comment is clearly negative, the speaker accusing him of daring to destabilize the rear in a military campaign. However, the word “communist” was a dangerous one to put into print in 1928, while “reactionary,” meant simply one who opposed the revolution – in this case the revolutionary Nationalist government. Mao Dun replaced the vaguer “reactionary” with the more specific “communist” in 1954.

There are also places in the novels that have been or could be read as criticisms against political leaders and even Mao Zedong himself. Near the end of *Pursuit*, after Zhang Qiuliu lets Wang Zhangzhao know that she has contracted a venereal disease and has no real hope or even desire to live long, she explains that she wants to live what life she has left to the fullest and in the least “ordinary” way. She adds to this that, “...I don’t believe in any passionate life as dictated by some great scholar, I only act on my own convictions.” 我也不相信什麼偉大的學者所指示的何者是熱烈的生活，我只照我自己的信念去干。¹⁹⁶ There is no reason to believe that this was leveled at any specific “scholar,” and it seems quite doubtful that in 1928 it could be read so, but in 1954 of course, there was a leader who styled himself a scholar after a fashion, and it was surely the better part of valor to remove this line lest anyone suggest that Zhang Qiuliu was speaking for Mao Dun against Mao Zedong. By 1954 of course, the Chinese Communist Party was just beginning its rule of China, but very soon Mao Zedong would spearhead

¹⁹⁶ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Zhuqiu” 追求 4, 1081.

the Anti-Rightist Movement where intellectuals would be singled out and punished for their incautious words. Aside from the suggestion of the personal reference, there is something more fundamental that is removed here. The strong position of individuality and the ability for someone to come to their own understanding of what a “passionate life” might entail are ideas that are more suitable to the chaotic late 1920s than the 1950s when the entire population had to follow the dictates of the leadership. It is better that the fictional character serve as a type or model, and that type or model is proscribed by the guiding line of ideology passed through the filter of the leadership. This reduction of the individual is consistent with the simplification of characters that we will see below.

On the issue of the politics of character names, there is one problematic usage that is completely eliminated in the 1954 edition. In *Disillusions*, Bao Su,¹⁹⁷ Dongfang Ming, and Long Fei,¹⁹⁸ are each given the sobriquet “*jun* [君]” (i.e. Bao Su-jun, Dongfang-jun and Long-jun). This is not a terribly uncommon title for young intellectuals and while it might have Chinese antecedents, the clear flavor of the name is Japanese, where “*-kun*” is a common affectionate diminutive. It is not surprising at all that in the late 1920s Mao Dun’s characters would adopt verbal trappings of the modern Asian power that so many Chinese intellectuals saw as a potential model for China’s future. It is also not surprising at all that after the horrific devastation and humiliation China suffered at the hands of the Imperial Japanese forces in the Anti-Japanese War, Mao Dun would simply delete the character from the text. What is lost in this alteration is a sense of the internationalist

¹⁹⁷ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Huanmie” 幻滅 1, 4.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

mindset of the people in the story. As a counterexample, the English “Miss [*misi* 密司]” remains and, although used very sparingly, is used throughout the trilogy, suggesting either that “Miss” had penetrated the Chinese language as least in Shanghai to the point that it did not carry the foreign feeling, or that the English flavor of the word wasn’t as offensive as the Japanese “-*kun*.” The latter seems more likely, but there is no need to insist on one exclusive cause.

Narrative Voice

A more consistent and clear category of editing in the trilogy is Mao Dun’s struggle with his narrative voice. His understanding of realism in *Eclipse* was at best an evolution of his thinking at the time, but when he set to edit the texts in 1954, it is clear that he planned to trim away instances of narrative voice that were inconsistent in his mind with realism at that time. He would almost entirely eliminate the “I narrator” in explicit mentions and in most cases of narrator commentary. He also attempted to tone down some of the more elaborate flourishes that might seem too much aligned with romanticism.

The majority of the instances of the “I narrator” occur in *Waverings*. In some cases, they seem quite reminiscent of the oral teahouse storytelling tradition. That is to say that there is a presentation of the narrator as an individual who is actually telling the reader a story, occasionally offering opinions or explanations that generally function to draw the reader into the action of the narrative. The narrator is often opinionated, and

this functions at odds with the task of realism.¹⁹⁹ These are mostly edited out with a simple removal of the direct reference to the author or reader. In *Waverings*, when Lu Muyou becomes entangled with the Widow Qian and is unable to send off the county representative, the text reads, “The author would like to speak up for Lu Muyou. It wasn’t that he was so crude as to forget sending off the Special Representative... [但是作者卻要替陸慕遊表白，並不是他荒唐到忘記了歡送特派員...]²⁰⁰²⁰¹ This is a very explicit instance of authorial intervention, even to the point of calling attention to the author, above and beyond an unnamed or unknowable narrator. Moreover, the author speaks on behalf of one of the more degenerate characters in the novel. The reason for deletion is fairly straightforward from an ideological standpoint – Surely Mao Dun did not intend to defend Lu Muyou, as well as from a narrative point of view – there is no place in a realist novel for such direct address by the author.

The next example also deals with commentary on Lu Muyou’s indiscretions. In the 1927 edition, the line reads, “We shouldn’t laugh at Lu Muyou for being so dissolute, for “spring” had truly arrived. [我們不要笑陸慕遊做事荒唐無聊，委實是‘春’已經到了。].²⁰² The edited 1954 edition reads, “(Lu Muyou persisted in his dissolution, but

¹⁹⁹ See Patrick Hannan’s chapter, “The Narrator’s Voice Before the “Fiction Revolution”” in *Chinese Fiction of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*. His section on the “Personalized Storyteller” is most relevant here.

²⁰⁰ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Dongyao” 動搖 1, 243.

²⁰¹ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Shi 蝕 (Eclipse)*, 128.

²⁰² Mao Dun 茅盾, “Dongyao” 動搖 2, 246.

“spring” had truly arrived.) [(陸慕遊做事固然荒唐，但委實‘春’已經到了。)]²⁰³

Again the narrator is placed in a position of defending Lu Muyou and his actions, but here the facetiousness of the defense is much more clear. The narrator is not actually on Lu’s side. We are not privy to the inner thoughts of Lu Muyou here. The tone is also condescending in a way that fits a spoken tale. In the edit however, the narrator is removed, but we are left with a slightly incongruous line. Lu Muyou is still dissolute, but spring has arrived. The logic of the sentence falls apart: where the original was suggesting that the season was partially responsible for Lu’s actions, the new line condemns Lu’s intransigence, then uses the counter “but [但]” to introduce spring’s arrival which would seem to belong to another sentence. This first sentence ends there with a full stop and the next line continues on to describe spring coming through the town. This digression serves to show that although Mao Dun took a great deal of effort in most of the editing work, there were cases in which he made simple edits based on principles, in this case the principle of removing the I narrator, without further attention to cleaning up the sentence afterward.

To show the narrow blade Mao Dun used in his cuts, following very close after the previous example, the original text reads, “So if you see “spring” in the city only from the delicate flutter in peoples’ hearts, but in the countryside it is the rumbling of a volcanic explosion of passion, you should know that it is not strange. [所以如果你看見“春”在城裏只從人們心中引起了遊絲的搖曳，而在鄉村中卻轟起了熱情的火山般的

²⁰³ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Shi 蝕 (Eclipse)*, 130.

爆發，要知道是不足為奇的。]”²⁰⁴ and the edited edition: “If “spring” in the city (is) only [noticeable] from the delicate flutter in peoples’ hearts, but in the countryside it is the rumbling of a volcanic explosion of passion, that is not strange. [如果“春”在城裏只從人們心中引起了遊絲般的搖曳，而在鄉村中卻轟起了火山般的爆發，(那)是不足為奇的。]”²⁰⁵ Unfortunately the translation here is a bit forced due to the English language’s disinclination to allow for missing subjects, but the issue at hand remains clear. Laying aside the removal of “passion” and the “So,” which would fall into other categories of the typology, the “you” that Mao Dun was careful to remove here is what seems to be a direct call to the reader. In fact, however, it is not functioning in a way that calls to the reader explicitly. It is less a “you” than a hypothetical “one.” That is to say that if a person only knows what spring feels like from experience of reading the subtleties of young people from the city, that person might think the rumbling volcano of passion seen in the countryside is extraordinary, but in fact it is not strange at all for people in the countryside. The edit then is a nice case of Mao Dun making an overly-cautious extraction of the second person pronoun again on principle, presumably the principle of realist narrative not allowing for such things, when the function of the pronoun in this instance was not in conflict with that principle.

There are a few phrasings that fit the previous model but are not deleted in the later edition. One particularly difficult example is in the beginning of *Disillusions*. Bao

²⁰⁴ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Dongyao” 動搖 2, 246.

²⁰⁵ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Shi 蝕 (Eclipse)*, 131.

Su is teasing Miss Jing, saying that other students think she is depressed over her love life. Her reaction follows: “Our “Miss” was stunned. [我們的“小姐”愕然了。]”²⁰⁶²⁰⁷ The line remains unedited in the 1954 edition. The use of “our” here is very different from the “you” in the previous example in that “our” brings the narrator and the reader together in a shared joke at Miss Jing’s expense. This is more in line with the attitude toward Lu MUYOU in the previous “We shouldn’t laugh at Lu MUYOU...” line that was cut from *Waverings*. This instance of commiseration with the reader survives the editing, while others do not. A potential explanation lies in the density of I narrator-related edits in the middle of *Waverings*. It could be as simple as an issue of focusing on that novel in the editing process. Mao Dun was acutely aware of the narrative voice issues in *Waverings*, but perhaps simply less so in the other texts. It is difficult to have any real degree of confidence in this conclusion, especially in that many of the themes in the edits are inconsistently applied. If the quality of Mao Dun’s writing is often inconsistent, his editing at least is of a similar kind.

Simplification of Characters

Mao Dun is rightly praised for the complexity and believability of his characters, and in particular, the inner conflicts of his female characters are much more explicitly rendered than anything of his time in Chinese literature. He claims that much of this comes of the time spent with the friends of his wife, who was very active in the women’s

²⁰⁶ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Huanmie” 幻滅 1, 6.

²⁰⁷ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Shi 蝕 (Eclipse)*, 12.

liberation movement.²⁰⁸ One of the types of edits that makes the most fundamental changes to the novels of the trilogy is that many of his characters are systematically made more simple: their contradictions, so critical for Mao Dun, are eliminated or made less prominent. It is possible that these changes were made to make the novels more suitable to a Socialist Realism reading in that the characters become more types of people-as-political-actors and less representations of believable individuals who act in response to individual circumstances. Despite the many edits of this type, the character harboring deep inner conflict remains central to Mao Dun's fiction.

One of the most significant deletions in *Waverings* is made in the seventh chapter where the character of Qian Suzhen is all but eliminated. Qian Suzhen is a problematic character. She was widowed after only one year of marriage. She is illiterate. Her feet had been bound. As she is introduced in the story, she is under financial pressure from her in-laws as well as pressure by government regulations that will not allow her to shut down her near-bankrupt linen shop. The degenerate Lu Muyou happens to be in charge of investigating shops that have requested the government allow them to close. He uses his authority and her difficult position to seduce her. By all accounts, from the point of view of an egalitarian revolutionary or the normalized characterization of Socialist Realism, she should be a sympathetic character and would seem to be a good candidate for either a tragic victim in the style of Lu Xun's Xiang Lin's Wife or a potential revolutionary set for revenge like the White-Haired Girl of opera. But the reader discovers later that the Hu Guoguang faction has put her in charge of the Women's

²⁰⁸ Mao Dun 茅盾, "Cong Guling dao Dongjing" 從牯嶺到東京.

Safehouse – an institution charged with teaching job skills to recently liberated women – and the Safehouse has been turned into a de facto brothel under the aegis of the Party, where the widow is said to keep several lovers, one of whom is rumored to be Hu Guoguang himself. She is severely beaten during a melee at a mass meeting that is broken up by troublemakers – presumably Hu Guoguang’s thugs, and yet in the following chapter Lin Zichong hears a woman’s tittering laughter and what sounds like Hu Guoguang’s voice coming from within her old linen shop. She is clearly a complex woman in very difficult straits.

What is deleted in the 1954 version is the bulk of the chapter in which she is active: her initial negotiation/seduction with Lu Muyou. Below is a representative selection of what was removed:

The woman came before Lu’s eyes in a pale but distinctive and very fashionably-cut dress. She attentively thanked Lu for helping out with her family’s affairs and then inquired whether or not the party would allow her little linen store to close. Lu’s felt his heart swinging like a pendulum. Distracted, he could only see the two neat rows of teeth under tittering red lips, her tender white forearms, and beneath her trouser legs a pair of feet that yet bore the traces of having been bound.

“Mr. Lu, did you not hear me clearly?” she asked, pursing her lips with a smile, “will our shop be able to close?”

穿著一身素色的然而鮮明的裁製入時的衣服，那婦人出現在陸慕游眼前。她般勤的謝過陸慕游爲了他家的事奔走，就詢問黨部裏究竟准不准她那小布店兒閉歇。陸慕游那顆心像鐘擺似的蕩著，眼光繚亂的只看見笑嘻嘻的紅嘴唇下兩排細白的牙齒，白嫩的手臂，不穿裙的大褲管下的一雙半大的纏而又放的腳。

“陸先生沒有聽清楚麼？”婦人抿著嘴笑了笑說。“我們的鋪子能收麼？”²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Dongyao” 動搖 2, 244.

After he suggests that he could help her close her shop, she responds:

The woman smiled as if she didn't quite understand, paused, and replied, "Of course I'd have to show my appreciation. How could I have you go to such trouble for nothing? But when could it be done?"

婦人像不很懂得似的笑著，少停，他接著說：“謝是一定要謝的。怎好白費神？只是什麼時候可以辦好呢？”²¹⁰

The image of Qian Suzhen is rather ambiguous here. Her initial description is colored by Lu Muyou's lust, and so the focus is on her tittering red lips, her white forearms and her feet. While the impetus for any quid pro quo clearly comes from Lu Muyou, she does not show any surprise or hesitation, only anxiety about the timing, and this only because she is still living with her mother-in-law and needs to get her out of the house before any assignation can take place. There is no doubt that Lu Muyou is taking advantage of her, but she is an active party to the negotiated seduction.²¹¹ Also deleted later in the chapter are descriptions of her as “In her sexual prime,”²¹² and “a ball of fire.”²¹³

What is lost is a more nuanced but still incomplete understanding of Qian Suzhen. In the original text, she is a complicated and troubling character. Her response to Lu Muyou's seduction removes the opportunity for her to be a positive character in terms of ideology. She is also explicitly a sexual creature, playing on the old stereotype of lusty widows. However, the question of why she was edited down so much is not simply

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ The notion of women being active in their own seduction is mirrored in Miss Jing's night with Bao Su in *Disillusions*. There as here, it is a troubling complication to a character that otherwise could serve a cleaner didactic purpose.

²¹² Mao Dun 茅盾, “Dongyao” 動搖 2, 245.

²¹³ Ibid., 246.

answered. Why does she not simply become another reactionary agent allied with Hu Guoguang? One explanation, mentioned above, is that she has all the makings of a progressive character and thus cannot be easily demonized. She owns a store, making her a property-owner, but Mao Dun writes of the bourgeoisie without bile: Wang Rongchang is not portrayed as reactionary, simple and cowardly perhaps, but not as a reactionary. The Widow Qian is a victim of the systematic economic and gender oppression that leftist authors rail against. Her illiteracy, her crippled feet, her inability to survive on her own, these all stem from forces beyond her control. The only method of agency she is able to field is that of her youthful sexuality, and she uses that to ignoble ends. In this she is different from any other woman in the trilogy, and this leads us perhaps to another reason for her near-disappearance: Mao Dun's female characters are sympathetic and hold the potential for progress, and the Widow Qian, even when battered by Hu Guoguang's thugs, elicits little sympathy.

Jin Hongyu suggests that this major deletion is for the sake of "fitting the aesthetic and moral demands of the new society,"²¹⁴ but this reads far too facilely when so much of dubious moral and aesthetic content remains. In what he calls one of a few "small flaws," the critic Qian Xingcun says explicitly, "It seems the affair of the little widow shouldn't take the whole of chapter seven; that should be incorporated [into other chapters]. 小孤孀的事件似乎不應該占七章一章的分量，應歸并。" Qian provides no more specific reasoning for this suggestion, but seems to argue that the story of the

²¹⁴ Jin Hongyu 金宏宇, *Xin wenxue de banben piping* 新聞學的版本批評, 211.

widow should be cut simply because it takes too much space. This suggestion seems so very prescient in hindsight; it is by no means impossible that Mao Dun simply made the emendation exactly based on this comment, but the loss of Widow Qian as a significant and complicated character is consistent with the simplifications of many other characters in the trilogy.

Bao Su, Miss Jing's first lover in *Disillusions* is also simplified, but in a more subtle way. Bao Su is the reactionary spy who is first driven to distraction by Miss Jing's roommate, Miss Hui, but as Miss Hui turns out to be much better able to turn his lust against him, he turns to the much more innocent Miss Jing. The simple reading of their relationship and their single night together is that he played on her emotional distress and biological needs for his own pleasure. This reading comes though clearly in the 1954 version of the novel and fits Socialist Realism mode cleanly.²¹⁵ In the original edition however, Bao Su is not entirely so one-dimensional.

In the 1927 edition, there is no doubt that Bao Su is not a positive character, and Miss Jing losing her virginity to him is to be read as a failing, hopefully to be overcome as she gains ideological understanding. The most damning pieces of evidence are the letter and photograph that she finds after he leaves her. In the letter, she discovers that he has been tasked with infiltrating and reporting on student groups at the school. The photograph is of a woman, inscribed with love to Bao Su and dated the same day that he was still trying to get closer to Miss Hui. All this evidence taken as read, there remain

²¹⁵ There is also a potential allusory reading following Chen Yu-Shih which will be dealt with in the following section.

portions of the text that show Bao Su as being rather swept up in the time and not simply an inhuman agent of mysterious unseen authority set in opposition to Miss Jing. Or rather there would remain such portions had they not been cut from the 1954 edition.

As Miss Jing and Bao Su talk about Miss Hui returning home, there are a few edits that muddy a simple reading. Bao Su says that he doesn't hate or fear Miss Hui, but rather pities her. Miss Jing's response is loaded with meaning: ““What you pity her for in the end is that she violated her own body.” Jing smiled like before, her eyes sparkling. You could say this revealed passion. [“可惜她到底是糟蹋了自己身體。”靜仍舊微笑著，眼睛裏射出光來，你可以說這就是熱情的流露。”]²¹⁶²¹⁷ Of course, this could simply be Mao Dun editing out another instance of the “You could say” as a form of the “I narrator,” but the effect it has on Miss Jing's attitude toward Bao Su is significant. That she is thinking about Miss Hui's sexual experience while talking to him is retained in the later edition, and even the surviving “eyes sparkling” allows for an adventuresome reading. What is lost is the explicit acknowledgement of Miss Jing having passion of her own, possibly repressed, but revealed in this line. Whether Miss Jing is active or passive in this seduction is very important for her own character as well as any potential allusive readings. This line suggests that she is not entirely passive, and the deleted portion brings her own sexuality to the fore. In this case, it is the character of Miss Jing that is diminished and simplified through editing.

²¹⁶ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Huanmie” 幻滅 1, 19.

²¹⁷ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Shi 蝕 (Eclipse)*, 31.

The description of the two having sex is problematic and will be dealt with in the next section, but there are also edits after their night together that eliminate Bao Su almost entirely and touch again on Miss Jing's agency. After making love, she passes out and on waking, she finds herself lying in bed, face to face with Bao Su:

“You fainted.” he said softly.

No reply. Jing turned over and buried her face in the pillow. Bao Su placed innumerable kisses on the back of her neck.

The evening sun's red rays reflected off the window for a while, then slowly departed. The room gradually became dark.

“你发晕去了！”他低低地说。

没有回答，静翻转身，把脸埋在枕头里。抱素在她的后颈上印了无数的吻。

夕陽的紅光在窗上影射了些時，又慢慢地偷偷的走了。室中漸漸黑起來。²¹⁸²¹⁹

Even at this point, Bao Su is completely edited out as an actor in his own right. In the original there is a clear interaction: she turns away from him and he tries to engage her by kissing her neck. In the 1954 edition, the readers see only her turning away, her “No reply” hanging powerfully in the air as she hides in her pillow. In the 1927 version however, Bao Su's kisses are suggestive of his continued desire to interact. It is fair to say his intentions are entirely suspect, but any potential for him to become a sympathetic character is removed. With the kisses remaining, there is a possibility for tenderness and

²¹⁸ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Huanmie” 幻滅 1, 20.

²¹⁹ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Shi 蝕 (Eclipse)*, 33.

genuine feelings beyond lust in him, even if she does not respond. The final line on the room becoming dark extends the awareness of the time they spend together.

Furthering this dramatic elimination of Bao Su, the next chapter opens on the following morning:

Early the next morning, right as one of the sub-lessor's daughters was sweeping the living room, Bao Su came downstairs and quietly left. Ms. Zhang was afraid someone might see, so she urged him to leave as early as possible. The next day, she (Ms. Jing) didn't get up until after ten o'clock.

第二天清早，二房東的小大姐正在客堂裏掃地，抱素從樓上下來，悄悄地走了。章女士怕人家看見，所以催他一早就走。她自己(靜女士)直到十點多鐘才起來。

After she rises, she begins a soul-searching inner monologue on the loss of her virginity and in particular whether or not she was active or passive in the event. She admits that although part of her reason was in not wanting to refuse Bao Su, the greater part was an instinctual drive and curiosity. With this line of thought, she comes to feel her conscience clear. Then there is another edited section:

Moreover, that Bao Su wasn't only not loathsome, he could be said to know her heart. This convinced her even more than the previous night was only natural.

況且，抱素這人不但不討厭，並且可說是知心；這更使她承認昨天的事是當然了。²²⁰²²¹

The original edition opens with a scene in the sub tenant's house where the women had previously been tied to the disappointment and bondage that young women feel in marriage. And the woman we see is laboring in the early morning. This is a relatively

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Mao Dun 茅盾, "Huanmie" 幻滅 1, 21.

minor thing, but it is worth mentioning if only to show how a small edit can remove a very effective resonance, in this case, the hovering threat of domestic burden that Miss Jing feels. This domestic scene, along with Bao Su's rather ignominious flight also brings the outer world into the scene, which will quickly focus on Miss Jing's soul searching on the loss of her virginity. Bao Su in particular is intrusive, because Miss Jing directly urged him to leave when he might not be seen, so there must have been interaction we was not privy to after his kisses and her burying her head in the pillow. Miss Jing was able to exert control in getting him to leave, and there is clearly some discomfort or shame about him being there in the morning.

When she wakes up and begins to try to frame her understanding of the previous night, she follows a very logical scientific train of thought: curiosity and biological instincts led to them having sex, but she also comes to the conclusion that she was not passive. What is removed from the equation is the possibility that Bao Su could "know her heart," and this being further cause to show the events of the night were simply a matter of course. In the main, this is a simplification of Bao Su: another layer that might make him more sympathetic is stripped away. If Miss Jing were to admit that he might know her heart, then clearly he cannot be completely abandoned. And yet, the next time his name is mentioned, it is as a two-timing spy.

The chief result of these cuts is that Bao Su and all that he represents is marginalized and forced into a narrower category. He is the philandering spy and no more. If Chen Yu-shih's allegorical reading of the trilogy from her *Realism and Allegory in the Early Fiction of Mao Tun* holds, this provides a much cleaner break with those who are politically anathema. Before the cuts, there was slightly more shading to his character.

He was despicable, but less a two-dimensional tool for moving the plot forward. Miss Jing is also diminished in these cuts. Her own agency in the affair is lessened, and she becomes a less emotionally developed character, less realistically engaged in the affair.

Problematic Sensuality

Another issue raised by an examination of the two versions that Jin Hongyu rightly highlights is that of explicit sensuality. It is not the case however, that each explicit reference to sexuality is eliminated, nor is it that sexual situations are deleted solely because of their sexual nature. In *Pursuits*, this passage describing Zhang Manqing stumbling in on Zhang Qiuliu as she is changing clothes seems at first glance to have been deleted because of its explicitness:

He pushed open the door to Miss Zhang (Qiuliu)'s bedroom. He had stepped halfway in when there was a sudden flash of light before his eyes: displayed naked before him was Miss Zhang (Qiuliu)'s snow-white body. Manqing unconsciously turned himself around, but heard laughter from within:

“Sorry, wait just a second.”

Remaining before his gaze hung two trembling nipples like ripe cherries. He thought back to having caressed them, recalled the feeling: warm, soft and smooth. Then he quickly reprimanded himself for such a shameless reminiscence.

他推開章女士(秋柳)的臥室的小門，剛伸進了半個身體，猛覺得眼前一亮，裸呈在他面前的，是章女士(秋柳)的雪白的肌膚。曼青下意識的縮回身子來，卻聽得裏面笑著說：

“對不起，等一下罷”

眼前還挂著兩顆熟透櫻桃一般的顫動的小乳頭；他想起從前曾捫過喚回了溫軟，滑的感覺。但他隨即又自責這個感念太無賴。²²²²²³

The scene has Zhang Manqing coming up to her room. Without this passage, he opens her door and sees her naked, with only mention of her “snow-white body.” He instinctively turns around and waits for her to call him in. As it stands in the 1954 edition, seeing Zhang Qiuliu’s body is a transgression, but her laughter makes the transgression seem prudish on Manqing’s part. She takes it lightly, reinforcing the impression of her as a libertine. Manqing seems timid and chastened.

What Zhang Manqing loses without this passage is a sense of the past, and particularly of his romantic past with Zhang Qiuliu. The description is explicit, but it clearly illustrates and reinforces the theme of attempting to overcome the past and the romanticism that is tied up in it. The image of her breasts remains before his eyes even after he has turned around. This evokes a feeling similar to the other hallucinations in the text. He rebukes himself for having remembered the past because he is trying to move beyond it. As with so many characters, the past is traumatic and the future is uncertain, so he wishes to live only in the present. His shame here does not read as shame in seeing her physical body or at least entirely as such, but more as shame in being brought back to the past. Without this portion of text, Zhang Manqing is a less conflicted character. He has more completely mastered his past which suggests that this too is at least partially an edit to simplify the character.

²²² Mao Dun 茅盾, “Zhuqiu” 追求 2, 834.

²²³ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Shi 蝕 (Eclipse)*, 233.

The deleted section is more explicitly sexual in that there is implied sexual action, Manqing's memory of having caressed her breasts, but as this action is tied directly to his nostalgia and struggle with the past, the sexuality of the scene is not of primary importance. The physical description of her body is irrelevant without his reaction to the past. That is to say that both sections, the struggle with the past and her physical description, must either remain or be cut. If Mao Dun were to leave the description of her body without Manqing's reaction, it would seem needlessly prurient, and perhaps there is a shadow of this remaining in the 1954 version. On the other hand, if he were to remove the description of her body, any explanation of his struggle with the past would lack power. Unfortunately, with both portions removed, the visceral nature of his struggle with the past and the struggle itself are entirely lost.

Another deleted section that also carries significant meaning aside from the salacious comes from *Disillusions* when Miss Zhang loses her virginity to Bao Su the reactionary agent:

A flash of electricity flowed from the palm of Jing's hand throughout Bao Su's entire body. He was struck numb. He couldn't think of anything. He instinctively (suddenly) seized her waist and (embraced her) pulled her into his embrace. She closed her eyes, and her body went limp, no resistance, but not active either. In a haze, she felt the burning masculine stroking of her breasts pause then move lower. A numbing tingle she had never experienced took over her whole body. She distantly felt her limbs, torso and joints slacken, dissolve, and little by little, they were taken away. Finally, she completely lost herself. (It was as if all of the bones in her body had gone slack, dissolved, and finally she lost consciousness.)

從靜的手心裏傳來一道電流，頃刻間走遍了抱素全身；他麻木了迷惘了，他不能想什麼了，他本能地(突然)挽住了靜的腰肢，擁抱她(在懷裏)。靜閉著著眼，身體軟軟的，沒有抵拒，也沒有動作；昏迷中她感覺得男性的灼熱撫摩在她胸部停留了片刻，便向下移，未曾經驗過的麻癢支配了她的全身，她恍惚覺得自己的肢體骨節都鬆開了，解散了，知覺一點一點地被奪去，最後

完全失卻了她自己。 (她仿佛全身的骨節都鬆開了，解散了，最後就失去了知覺。)²²⁴²²⁵

Again, in what might seem to be simply a deletion of explicit sexuality, Mao Dun also removes a great deal of meaning. In the original edition, the description of Miss Jing's orgasm starts from Bao Su's caress, but ends with an unreal and prolonged dissolving and scattering of her body, ending with the complete elimination of her very self. The edited version removes Bao Su from her orgasm entirely and adds a critical "it was as if" before the description of the unreal before she loses only her consciousness.

If we were to follow Chen Yu-shih's reading of the novel, Bao Su represents Chang Kai-shek's Canton faction of the Nationalist Party and Jing is representative of an aspect of the Communist Party focused on moral responsibility. Their night of passion then represents the attempted cooperation between the two factions.²²⁶ In this reading the removal of Bao Su from the description is a removal of an uncomfortable reminder of the Chiang faction's involvement. It also meshes with Jing's focus on her role in the night. In this passage she is not active, but not resisting. The next morning she muses on her role and comes to the conclusion that she was indeed not passive. In this way the involvement of the Communist Party is admitted, but presence of the Chiang faction is downplayed, and the Communist Party retains its "self."

²²⁴ Mao Dun 茅盾, "Huanmie" 幻滅 1, 20.

²²⁵ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Shi 蝕 (Eclipse)*, 33.

²²⁶ See Chen Yu-Shih, *Realism and Allegory in the Early Fiction of Mao Tun*, 58–67.

This allegorical reading is possible, but a narrative reading is equally plausible and to my mind more relevant. In the original reading, the impression of losing touch with reality is quite strong with the movement from Bao Su caressing her to the dissolution of her self. This slipping out of reality fits well with the critical role of hallucination elsewhere in the trilogy. It also suggests the difficulty she will have reconciling her action or non-resistance. The style of the edited version retains the break in reality by skipping the act almost entirely and setting what was unreal off with the “it was as if,” in order to set it at a remove from her reality. In both versions the break in reality is reinforced by her inability to remember much the next morning, but the impression is different. If the hallucinations, as in other instances in the trilogy, are expressions of realism’s failure to capture the actualities of reality, her disintegration meshes well with a reading of her inability to come to terms with her burgeoning awareness of her lust.

As in the previous example, there is explicit sexuality in this passage, but the importance is well beyond any mere titillation. Miss Jing’s loss of self is directly tied to her attempt to discover who she is and how she can move forward, which is one of the core themes of the novel. There are other minor implications in the edits. It is telling that Mao Dun removes the “instinctively,” which would seem to be a marker of a naturalist voice. The edited text cleaves closer to a more realistic voice, and this is as powerful a reason for editing as is overly-explicit content. Finally, we see again that Bao Su is being diminished. The reader is taken out of his mind with the elimination of, “He was struck numb. He couldn’t think of anything” and we are left only with his embracing her. The

intimate physical connection to her orgasm is also lost which again complicates the issue of Miss Jing's struggle between activity and passivity.

One of the largest deletions could also be taken as a deletion simply because of the passage's sexual content, but it is also tied to more fundamental issues. In *Pursuits*, Zhang Qiuliu takes it upon herself to heal the cynicism of Shi Xun after rescuing him from his own attempted suicide. Her plan is to show him the sexual pleasure that he lost when he lost his earlier girlfriend in hopes that it will renew his enthusiasm for life and cure him of his pessimism and cynicism. This search for a way of recovering the enthusiasm of disillusioned leftists is much more than idle salaciousness. The crushing defeat of the failed revolution was emotional as well as physical and for those who still saw revolution as the only way forward, the emotional scars of the veterans needed to be tended to.

Zhang Qiuliu and Shi Xun go to a resort hotel and eventually retire to their room. He retreats behind a screen to take off his "outer clothing," and comes out to see Zhang Qiuliu next to the window, "revealing her pure body with pride, but from the back [很驕傲地呈露了瑩潔的身體，但卻是背面]." He rushes to her. She turns around, but as he sees her "buxom and healthy body [豐腴健康的肉體],"²²⁷²²⁸ he also catches sight of his emaciated skeletal image in a mirror and is thrown into the depths of hopelessness. The contrast of her health and his weakness is too much for him.

²²⁷ Mao Dun 茅盾, "Zhuoqi" 追求 4, 1069.

²²⁸ Mao Dun 茅盾, *Shi 蝕 (Eclipse)*, 293.

He collapses onto a sofa and buries his face in his hands. After this, the two editions differ quite dramatically. In the 1954 edition, he stands up, looks at her with a chuckle and very calmly says:

(Going only as far as proper – Ah, Qiuliu. Before I was utterly opposed to anything like going only as far as proper. I demanded all the happiness I could get, pleasure. And the result? Cold in the furnace, falling into the abyss of cynicism and pessimism. But now, your exuberant life force has led me out of that abyss. I think perhaps you and I have not yet gone beyond what is proper. Let us slowly drink from the cup of happiness, one mouthful at a time!)

(適可而止 -- 哎，秋柳，從前我是極端反對什麼適可而止的，我要求盡興，痛快；結果呢，熱機而冷，跌進了懷疑和悲觀的深坑；但是現在，既然你的旺盛的生活力引導我走出了這深坑，我想，你我之間還是適可而止罷？快樂之杯，留著慢慢地一口一口地喝罷！)²²⁹

After this, he leaves her alone in the room. She gets dressed and tries in vain to find him, coming back to the room only to find a note saying that he taken another room downstairs and that he will see her tomorrow. The next day, his “old illness” flares up and so they return to Shanghai to get his medicine which completely eliminates the pain: “After taking the medicine, Shi Xun’s pain in the side lessened quite a lot. By the next day it was completely better. [服藥以後，史循的肋痛就減輕了許多。第二天，已經完全好了。]”²³⁰ The phrasing, both of the above passage and this specific line, is particularly awkward, here implying that the illness itself has actually been cured, and that his psychic trauma as well has been removed simply by Zhang Qiuliu’s “exuberant life force.”

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid., 294.

The 1954 edition cut nearly three pages of narrative in the original magazine format. In the original edition, after Shi Xun sees himself in the mirror, he also sinks into the sofa and buries his head in his hands. But rather than display a miraculous recovery right there, he leers at her, then suddenly lunges at her, grabs her by the waist and kisses her. She is frightened by the abruptness and violence of his actions to the point she yells out and thinks he will bite her. She struggles to get away from him, finally making it to the door before seeing herself in the mirror. Realizing she cannot leave the room in the nude, she clings to the door, eventually allowing Shi Xun to convince her that she had misunderstood his advances and she had nothing to fear. He then explains in great detail his attempted psychological recovery, how he now feels more awake than ever before, and that he thought he had overcome his internal struggle of emotion and reason:

When I am intoxicated by emotion my actions, whether they be before others or before you, seem reasonable, but my actions need explanation. Qiuliu, I've always been a man of an equal mixture of emotion and reason. Emotion makes me pursue all types of joy in this life, and reason issues harsh criticism from the sides, without pause, pointing out that my so-called joy becomes nothing but sadness afterward. So my life has been unceasing pursuit, but also inexhaustible disillusion. I have always suffered torment from the conflict between emotion and reason. I have always been ground down by them. A month ago they both advanced together, and the result became my suicide. Qiuliu, this is my analysis of my own past. But the suicide failed, naturally, the second suicide wasn't hard in coming. But you rushed into my life again and eliminated any thought of trying to commit suicide again. Your intense lust for life led me away from death and to life! ... You said that I'm reborn now, and I have that hope too. But the precondition is that my emotion and reason cannot come into conflict again. It seems that this is already impossible. I hoped that the two had died out and I could rely on a pure lust for life to go on living. But, Qiuliu, look, this turned out to be wishful thinking. When actual issues arise, emotions and reason will certainly take over and do what they please, rising freely in my heart with no regard for my sovereignty!

當我被感情迷醉的時候，我的舉動，或者在別人，在你，看來是合理的；反是
我的行動需要解釋。秋柳，我向來是感情和理性同樣強烈地混合著的一個人。
感情驅使我去追求人生的種種快樂，理性卻從旁加以嚴酷的批評，不斷

的指出我的所謂快樂只成了事後的惆悵。所以我的過去的生活是無休止的追求，卻也是無窮盡的幻滅。我永遠忍受著這感情和理性衝突的痛苦。我永遠受牠們的磨折。一個月前牠們居然得了步調一致，結果成爲我的自殺。秋柳，這是我對於自己的過去的分析。可是自殺失敗了，自然不難再來第二次的自殺，可是你又闖進我的生活裏，把我的再自殺的意思也消滅了。你的強烈的生活慾引我離開了死，再回到生！。。。你說我現在是新生了。我自己也這樣盼望。但先決條件是我的感情和理性不再起衝突。看見這已是不可能，我又希望兩者都歸死滅，依著單純的生活慾去生活。但是，秋柳，你看，這又成了妄想。實際問題來到時，感情和理性一定要擅作威福，不顧我的主權，在我的方寸中自由行動起來！²³¹

He is trying to explain that it was her lust for life that showed him he could overcome his feeling of being trapped between greedy emotion and scornful reason. He wanted to follow not emotion or reason, but lust for life in approaching her in the hotel room, but when faced with actual issues [實際問題 *shijiwenti*], in this case the attempted seduction of a completely willing Zhang Qiuliu, he was unable to deny the authority of emotion and reason. He acted wildly in what might be a mockery of the lust for life that he sees in her, unable to see clearly the situation before him and act accordingly. This is the fundamental argument that runs through the whole of the *Eclipse* trilogy – the tragic result of blind ideology when it comes in contact with reality. All main characters in the trilogy face this struggle, almost always failing in their attempt to force their ideals onto their actual circumstances. However, after understanding his inner struggle, Zhang Qiuliu gives him another chance. They order room service and after drinking to restore his courage, “under the aegis of alcohol, they forgot the past, and had no anxiety for the future, their entire heart and soul sinking into the sensual revelry of that instant of the

²³¹ Mao Dun 茅盾, “Zhuoqi” 追求 4, 1069–1070.

present. [於是在酒力的掩護下，他們忘記過去，也不焦慮未來，全心靈沉浸沉現在的剎那的肉感的狂歡]²³²

Continuing through another page of deletions, as in the edited version, Shi Xun's "old illness" flares up and they return to Shanghai to get his medicine. Zhang Qiuliu worries that they should cancel the picnic, but Shi Xun convinces her they should go ahead with the plans. There are many minor but interesting points that are edited out here: more usage of English words ("picnic" and "port wine"), Zhang Qiuliu putting on perfumed hair oil (the oil is called "Pandora," also written in English), as well as a note arriving from Cao Zhifang, each of which deserves more attention than space allows here.

What is more to the point at hand however is the lost sense of passion and the connection made between Shi Xun's resurrection and that passion. In the original version, the two return to the resort and the same room they previously had. "Nothing special happened, save that Shi Xun was especially excited. The night gently passed under the force of alcohol in a vortex of passion. And in a muddle of exhaustion, they drifted into unconsciousness. [沒有特別事故發生，除了史循是出奇的興奮。這一夜，也是在酒精的暴力下，在熱情的旋渦中，輕輕的就過去了。也是疲極的迷惘中，昏昏的失了知覺]," and the following morning, "Shi Xun felt like he had focused all the past three or four months' worth of accumulated life energy on the previous night's two or three hours. It was a record-breaking achievement. [史循覺得三四個月來退隱似的生活所儲蓄的

²³² Ibid., 1070.

生活力，都集注在昨宵的二三小時內，有了突破記錄的成績]。”²³³ These make clear that she, in a cathartic act of sexual abandon, has cured him of the cynicism that had infected him for the past months. The project of rehabilitating him through sex has worked. Also deleted is the parallel description of Zhang Qiuliu at this time: while Shi Xun is reenergized and enthusiastic, she is suddenly weary, tentative and torpid. This hints at a sexual vampirism that enriches Zhang Qiuliu’s final moments in the novel.

The crucial difference in the two editions is the mode of rehabilitation. In both cases, Shi Xun is reenergized by Zhang Qiuliu, and becomes a character with a hopeful future. The original shows a tortured and stumbling man struggling with the fundamental issue of the novel only to be saved, not actually by Zhang Qiuliu’s idealized “lust for life,” overcoming his internal struggle of emotion and reason, but by that “lust for life” made actual in the physical act of sex.

The 1954 edition replaces troubled internal characterization with troubled and rather awkward prose. While Zhang Qiuliu remains relatively believable, Shi Xun’s sudden epiphany and the “going only as far as proper” are utterly without foundation and incomprehensible in terms of the generally well-founded characterization that marks Mao Dun’s fiction. It seems that the reader is either to suppose that her “exuberant life force” is the power that caused this about-face, or that he pulls himself out of despair by himself just in time to avoid sully himself by sexual relations with Zhang Qiuliu, but in either case, the scene falls flat, nonsensical.

²³³ Ibid., 1071.

The place of sex in this selection is a critical plot device that has been removed. Again, it is possible that it was removed simply out of a puritanical streak in 1954 that didn't exist in 1928, but the content that was stripped out along with the sex suggests that there is more at work here. Much as in the previous section, Shi Xun becomes a much flatter, more simplified character and even Zhang Qiuliu becomes less complex. We also lose another practical manifestation of Mao Dun's central theme of the trilogy: the struggle, and in fact the failure in the attempt to apply ideals, or reason, or emotion in the face of reality.

CONCLUSION

To point out the contradictions in a writer who wrote under the name Mao Dun might seem a supreme effort of proving the self-evident, but the depths of Mao Dun's fiction still remain unplumbed, and the contradictions within are the core of its genius. This dissertation has as its goal the illumination of a small portion of these depths, and yet there is still a great deal of work to be done.

Mao Dun is without doubt one of the most important writers of Chinese modernity and of Chinese realism. One cannot begin to write the history of Chinese literature of his era without coming to terms with his works. His deep understanding of the western literary world was unsurpassed in his colleagues, and his education and sympathy with the Chinese literary tradition further marks him as exceptional. And yet it is his political ideology that drives him to write fiction. No one else was writing with such a command of these fields, and despite some grouching by more doctrinaire ideologues, no one could deny the quality and power of his fiction. While his later works, particularly the novel *Midnight*, are often promoted as being representative of his best work, I would argue that comes mainly from the later fiction being more politically acceptable as time went by. It is Mao Dun's earliest work that shows his genius at its most raw and most conflicted. The *Eclipse* trilogy, being his first attempt at fiction, shows these aspects most clearly, and again, the most emblematic of these aspects are the contradictions.

The trilogy is a realist novel written to give hope to an ideological struggle founded in idealism. The author is a man who believes in an idealistic future, but the

novels are about the greatest failure of the cause to date, and the characters are stymied at every turn. Mao Dun chooses realism as the narrative mode more suitable to the Chinese circumstances based on foreign theories of literature despite his conviction that China needs more advanced modes of literature like neo-romanticism. The realism of the novels is broken repeatedly by incredible episodes of hallucinogenic fantasy that play critical roles in the narrative. This is of course, not an exhaustive list of the contradictions in the trilogy, but rather a starting point for a drive for a deeper understanding of the author and his literary context. This dissertation is an attempt to begin that drive.

In order to establish the context of the man who wrote the trilogy, chapter one serves as an abbreviated biography of Mao Dun. This chapter describes his early education and his years as a literary critic, editor, and translator. It also provides a sketch of his growing focus on political work up to the time when he had to flee the failed Great Revolution of 1927. The chapter shows how Mao Dun attempted to fuse the disparate parts of his mind: especially his literary debt to western theory and his faith in a Marxist salvation for China. By the time he was driven to write fiction, the political ideology to which he had committed himself had been maturing for several years within the framework of his earlier work in literature theory.

The second chapter describes the nature of Mao Dun's conception of realism. Mao Dun is a realist author and *Eclipse* is a realist trilogy. But the word "realism" is only particularly helpful as a starting point in understanding any realist work. With that in mind, this chapter looks at the formation of the realist movement in fiction as Mao

Dun in China would have seen it. It suggests a conception of realism in general before moving into specifics and the practicalities of putting the ideal of realism into practice as fictional writing. Most relevant to Mao Dun's work are the notions of the author writing an objective account of the character's subjective reality, and the removal of the author's subjective biases.

We are fortunate that Mao Dun wrote a many critical essays on literary theory and he does have a good deal to say about narrative modes including realism and naturalism. We are less fortunate that he declines to speak with more specificity in those articles. This should not be surprising however, and is completely in keeping with Mao Dun's contradictions. His very real faithfulness to the ideals of realism is not hampered by any hint of a zealot's hidebound insistence on clear definitions unthinkingly applied or consistency in ideals which he does promote explicitly. It is worth noting that the same could be said of his political ideals.

The final section of the second chapter presents a few examples of the way in which Mao Dun presents his form of realism in *Eclipse*. By focusing on the point of view and objectivity of the text, the chapter suggests that despite Mao Dun's more fantastic passages, there remains an attachment to the most fundamental tenets of realism as he sees them. The subjectivity of the author is not allowed free reign in the novels to the point that he is frustrated by the inability of his characters to find positive solutions or a "way out" of their problems.

The third chapter of the dissertation exploits a nearly unnoticed reediting of the trilogy to further our understanding of the aspects of the novels that Mao Dun felt were

most important. The novels were written over the year from the autumn of 1927 to the autumn of 1928. However, in 1954, when Mao Dun had become the Minister of Culture for the People's Republic of China, he was approached and asked to edit the novels for a new publication and inclusion in a set of complete works. Although he was aware of the danger of significant editing, he took to the task, making major edits throughout the three novels to the extent that critical portions have been completely rewritten, particularly in the third novel, *Pursuits*. Today, despite Mao Dun's fame as an author coming primarily from the original editions, it is this edited version of the novel that is the canonical edition of the trilogy.

The core of the third chapter is a typology of the edits that Mao Dun made throughout the trilogy and analysis of specific passages. Analysis of the passages show that while Mao Dun was willing to remove or rewrite a great deal of potentially troublesome parts of the novels, he makes an incredible effort, with varying degrees of success, to salvage and maintain the core of what he finds important – mainly the complexity of his primary characters and objectivity in narration. In this way he is willing to remove almost entirely the complex but peripheral character Qian Suzhen in *Waverings*, but he tries desperately to retain the contradictions in one of the primary characters in *Pursuits*, Zhang Qiuliu.

The dissertation provides a much clearer picture of Mao Dun and the style of his realism used in the *Eclipse* trilogy, but it also provides openings for future research that can build on its foundation. Firstly, expanding the scope of the analysis within Mao Dun's other works would add greatly to our understanding of Mao Dun and Chinese

realism. By looking at an evolution of his style of realism over time through close textual analysis, a trend line could be plotted that would show how his maturing as an author and political actor changed the focus of his writing. In particular, looking at his major novels, *Rainbow* and *Midnight* would serve as excellent touchstones for the development of his style. Furthermore, an analysis of all of the later edits he made to his fiction would provide a final touchstone.

The second major area for further research is in the usage of textology for the analysis of other authors. A cursory search shows that many important authors made significant edits and alterations to their works that were written before the 1949 revolution. Qian Zhongshu, Ba Jin, Guo Moruo, and even Eileen Chang are just a few of the more famous authors that have works of fiction that were significantly reedited after the revolution. This allows for a great deal of room for individual studies of interesting cases as well as broader analysis of textology as a research method.

It is my hope that this dissertation may serve as encouragement for such further work.

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