VARIATIONS OF SATIRE

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摘 要

諷刺分莊嚴與詼諧兩大類。詩經中之諷刺以及漢魏詩、賦作品中之諷諫多以君主爲對象，故得主文而譎諫。但到了清末諷刺對象已從君主轉變爲科舉制度，儒林，官場等。因諷刺作家不必擔心得罪君主而招殺身之禍，諷刺口氣可以很嚴厲；故魯迅特稱晚清小說爲譴責小說以別於古代溫柔敦厚之傳統諷刺。但在晚清四大小說中，李寶嘉的「官場現形記」口氣最嚴厲；吳沃堯的「二十年目睹之怪現狀」嚴厲的口氣裡出現了滑稽突梯之描寫，並且有正面人物；劉鶚的「老殘遊記」則人物都屬清官，只是各自有他們的缺點，語氣緩和許多；至於曾樸的「孽海花」則更是充滿詼諧之描述，令人發出會心的微笑。從「官場現形記」到「孽海花」諷刺形態也由莊而至諧。

I
Introduction: Criticism, Wit and Humor

According to the definition given in *A Handbook to Literature*, Satire is a "literary manner which blends a critical attitude with humor and wit to the end that human institutions or humanity may be improved" (436). There are two major types of satire in western literature, represented respectively by their ancient Roman practitioners Horace and Juvenal. Horace's satire consists mainly of urbane comments upon vices and foibles of the day, coupled with amusing incidents of personal experience and good-natured raillery at the defects of the prevailing philosophical systems. Hence Horatian satire is gentle, urbane, smiling: it aims to correct by gentle and broadly sympathetic laughter.

Juvenal's first satire explains the reason which compelled him to write. Among them is his disgust with the popular poetry and with the recitations on hackneyed mythological subjects to which he was compelled to listen. He prefers to deal with realities and describe human passions. His purpose is to expose vices and follies of the day, not to attack the individuals who have committed them. Among the vices and follies which he attacks are hypocrisy, avarice, human cruelty, vanity of human wishes,

pride of birth, extravagance of living, the corruption of city life, the folly of gourmands of slender means, and the unloveliness of women. Juvenalian satire is biting, bitter and angry; it points with contempt and moral indignation to the vices and follies of men.

Discussions of the two different types of satirists in Western literature abound. The following one by Gilbert Highet is the simplest and clearest among them:

> One likes most people, but thinks they are rather blind and foolish. He tells the truth with a smile, so that he will not repel them but cure them of that ignorance which is their worst fault. Such is Horace. The other type hates most people, or despises them. He believes rascality is triumphant in his world; or he says, with Swift, that though he loves individuals he detests mankind. His aim therefore is not to cure, but to wound, to punish, to destroy. Such is Juvenal. (*Anatomy of Satire* 235)

The modern Chinese word for satire is "feng-tz'u," which is first found in the Great Preface to *Shih Ching*:

> Superiors, by the "feng," transforms their inferiors, and inferiors, by them, satirized (tz'u) their superiors. The principal thing in them was their style, and reproof was cunningly insinuated. They might be spoken without giving offence, and the hearing of them was sufficient to make men careful of their conduct; – hence they are called "feng," (or lessons of manners). (Legge, *Chinese Classics* vol 3, 36)

As James Liu has explained in his *Chinese Theories of Literature,* "feng" literally means "wind," figuratively means "airs," "moral influence," "customs," and "admonition" (64; 112). The one above uses moral influence to transform those below; and those below use admonition to criticize the one above, and both moral influence and admonition are achieved through music. Thus music is indispensable to "feng-tz'u."

Although the concept of "feng-tz'u" was well established in the Great Preface, somehow poets stopped exploiting the term after the Han dynasty. This phenomenon is also mentioned in Liu Hsieh's *The Literary Mind and the Carving of the Dragon*. He says, "The Han dynasty may have prospered generally, but the poets were weak. The principle of remonstrance was forgotten, and the meaning of 'hsing' lost" (*Literary Mind* 196). "Hsing," according to Liu Hsieh, means "an admonition expressed through an array of parables" (*Literary Mind* 195).

The term "feng-tz'u" did not reappear in Chinese literature until the republican era (1911-), when Hu Shih in his "Wu-shih nien lai Chung-kuo Chih wen-hsueh" (Chinese literature in the past fifty years) claims that the novels by Li Po-yuan, or Li Pao-chia (1867-1906), Wu Wo-yao (1866-1910), Liu E (1857-1909), and others, are modelled on *Ju-lin wai-shih (The Scholars)* and calls them "nan-fang feng-tz'u hsiao-shuo" (satiric novels of the South), to distinguish them from the novels of the North. Lu Hsun in *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction* further distinguishes *The Scholars* from the satiric novels of the South. Thus the term "feng-tz'u" began to assume importance in the history of Chinese literature again. But it is obvious that after a long interval of some fifteen hundred years the "feng-tz'u" of the republican period, or the late Ch'ing period, should be quite different from that of the Great Preface time, both in the nature of satire and in its object of criticism.

The following is a discussion of the *feng-tz'u* literature in the late Chi'ng period. The focus will be on the four major satiric novels of that period, namely *Kuan-ch'ang hsien-hsing chi (The Bureaucrats: a Revelation)* by Li Pao-chia; *Erh-shih nien mu-tu-chih kuai hsien-chuang (Strange Events Seen in the Past Twenty Years)* by Wu Wo-yao; *Lao Ts'an yu-chi (The Travels of Lao-ts'an)* by Liu E; and *Nieh-hai hua (A flower in the Ocean of Sin)* by Tseng P'u (1872-1935).[1]

Although these four are genrally recognized as satiric novels, they differ in terms of their satiric levels, degrees, aspects, phases, and so forth. *The Bureaucrats* is a direct descendent of *The Scholars*, yet its structure is even looser than that of its predecessor. Moreover, there are no positive characters in it. *Strange Events* is the first Chinese novel with a first-person point of view as its center of consciousness. Its framing method is both derived from traditional Chinese novels and reminiscent of the Western novels such as *The Man of Feeling*. Its satirizing of humanity is similar to that in Gulliver's Travels, yet there are no supernatural phenomena as found in the latter. The description in Strange Events is realistic and the range of satire is not limited to the bureaucratic circle. Like the *Shui-hu chuan (The Water Margin), The Travels of Lao Ts'an* has a prologue, but it is allegorical. There are both positive and negative characters in it. *Nieh-hai hua* is a *roman á clef*. Its satire is the mildest of the four novels.

The aim of this study is toward a better understanding of Chinese satire as it appears in these novels. During the following discussion emphasis will be laid on how the satiric effects are built up in each novel. The comparative method will be used so that new light might appear when the Chinese works are juxtaposed with their Western counterparts.

II
The Bureaucrats: Vituperative Exaggeration

Many critics have regarded the style of *The Bureaucrats* as influenced by *The Scholars.* There are indeed many similarities between the two. First of all, both use a framework structure with a series of episodes sandwiched between a prologue and an epilogue. Both novels lean toward realistic description. The authors attack their respective malfunctioning institutions through the exposure of a group of individuals. Wu Ching-tzu, author of The Scholars, exposes scholars in order to attack the civil service examination system. However, *The Bureaucrats*, despite its loose structure, shows more thematic unity than its predecessor.

Structurally speaking, *The Bureaucrats* does not have a prologue like that of *The Scholars;* however, the first one and a half chapters may be regarded as such when we consider their content. The book starts with a comical story of parochial jealousy. The Chao and the Fang families of a remote village in Shansi province compete with each other in educating their children to pass the civil service examination. All through the story the main topic of dialogue is the examination. Even the ghosts of the ancestors have a hand in helping their descendants to pass the examination. Tutor Wang explains to his pupil, "After you pass the provincial examination and become a Chu-jen, you go to the imperial capital to take the national examination and become a Chin-shih. Then you can be chosen as a Han-lin in the National Academy. Once you are a Han-lin, you can be an official. After you become an official, you have money; you can sit in court and have people beaten. When you go out on a tour, your arrival will be loudly announced" (3). Tutor Wang's words can be summed up in one sentence: officialdom is the road to wealth and power. This is the theme of the novel. In the novel, all officials, high or low, make their best endeavors to pile up fortunes for themselves.

W. H. Auden has pointed out that "the commonest object of satire is a monomaniac" (in Paulson, *Satire* 202). By monomaniac he means a person with one desire that overrides all others. His example is a miser, whose desire for money overrides even his desire for physical comfort or love for his family. The term monomaniacs perfectly fits Li Pao-chia's characters, who leave no stones unturned in their effort to become officials.

Many personal names of the officials have satiric connotations. Donald Holoch, in his "A Novel of Setting: *The Bureaucrats,*" has also pointed out that these significant names "alert the reader to a personal trait or, less commonly, refer to physical appearance" (see *The Chinese Novel at the Turn of the Century* 81). Examples include:

District Chief of Police Ch'ien, with a family name meaning "money," is a character always after money; He Pao, "wallet," is a greedy treasurer; Mao Teh-kuan, "impostor gaining office, " gets his post by false documents; Hu Li, "a foxy person," Huli T'u, short for "hu-li hu-t'u," or "stupid."

Other obvious punning names include: Mei Yang-jen, "flattering foreigners"; Ch'u Feng-jen, "a fawning person"; Ta K'ua-tzu, "a big fool"; Pang-ch'ui, "a block-head"; Tiao Mai-p'eng, "knave selling friends"; Fu Po-wan, "a millionaire"; Mao Wei-hsin, "fake modernization"; Shen Shou-yao, "to stretch out a hand and ask (for money)"; Chen Shou-chiu, "a genuine conservative," The surnames Chia, Fu are homophonous with the words meaning false, negative and ungrateful.

Sacks has argued that "the objects of satire are external" (Sacks 11), and it is true that the characters in *The Bureaucrats* are not themselves satirized. Each of them represents a certain type of official in the bureaucratic circles of the Ch'ing dynasty. Or each represents a single facet of the hollow personality of an official. Their names are not important in the sense that the names of Lin Tai-yu and Chia Pao-yu in the D*ream of the Red Chamber* or P'an Chin-lien and Hsi-men ch'ing in the *Golden Lotus* are important. In *The Bureaucrats* many characters are referred to by their official titles plus a surname that has a negative connotation. Hence, we have Governor Fu, Magistrate Chia, et cetera. Sometimes even the surname is omitted, such as in the case of the Inspector of Nine Provinces. And in many cases, as mentioned before, the names are given only because they bear satirical homonyms.

As shown in the various homonyms of personal names, all ranks of officials are satirized, and from all aspects. Officials from court ministers to yamen clerks, from job holders to people on the waiting list, from civil officials to military officers all are under harsh criticism.

The first type criticized by the author is the corrupt officials. They are corrupt in numerous ways; the selling of posts, accepting bribes, and exploiting the common people are some of the most notable ones. The book is full of cases as such as the following:

The provincial governor Ho Pao, with the help of his brother San Ho Pao, makes the selling of posts a profitable business. He sets prices on different posts from one thousand taels to twenty thousand:

> Whoever had money got the post, but it was a fair exchange without the slightest favoritism. Those without ready cash could write a check negotiable after appointment and the official would still accept, but they took a back seat to those who had paid cash. Now this provincial governor, after revising his

regulations to mean what they said, actually had a yamen like a market — business flourished. *(Chinese Novel at the Turn of the Century* 84)

Official hypocrisy is also laid bare in Li's novel. His officials know the difference between corruption and honesty. They pretend to be honest and frugal; but actually they are corrupt to the core. The first example of this is the Governor of Shantung. He wears old clothes full of patches and a worn-out hat to office all year round. This gives the impression that he is very thrifty. "In fact, he has a kitchenette in his room; and he is very particular about his meals. However, when he has company, there are only simple dishes, often with vegetables and bean curd" (54). The author's hatred for hypocritic officials makes him depict quite a few such characters with vividity.

In his Introduction to Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling,* Kenneth C. Slagle writes that this novel "was intended merely to display certain incidents which would portray the hero in a variety of emotional experiences. Each event was an opportunity to expose Harley to a relatively separate aspect of the responsiveness of sensibility" (*The Man of Feeling* Vii).

Slagle's words are also true when applied to the four major satiric novels of the late Ch'ing period. For instance, we may say that *The Bureaucrats* was intended merely to display certain episodes which would portray the officials in a variety of settings. Each incident was an opportunity to expose a relatively separate aspect of the officials' hollow personalities.

The episodic structure helps bring out the incremental effect. Every episode either exposes a new aspect of the personality of officials, or reinforces an old aspect already satirized. Fort instance, official corruption is one aspect exposed in the book. And this is further reinforced by episodes which deal with post-selling, bribery, and government exploitation.

Since examples of the corrupt and the hypocritic aspects of the officials, which have been illustrated in the preceding pages, will suffice for our present discussion, other aspects such as incompetence, cruelty, lack of training and poor discipline, perfunctoriness, moral degradation, avarice, which have been repeatedly shown in various episodes, are omitted in this paper. Several techniques are used in this novel for satiric effect. Comparison is one of them. By means of comparison, officials are satirized as whores, beggars, and beasts.

In Western literatures there is a long list of beast stories, depicting men and women as non-human animals in order to satirize human-beings. *Reynard the Fox* is a satiric epic, which "mirrors the world of the Middle Ages, taut, narrow, pyramidal, authoritarian, and unintelligent" (Highet 178). The hero of *The Fools' Mirror,* written

by Nigel shortly before A.D. 1180, is a stupid donkey, whose intelligent monologues criticize wicked, greedy monarchs and lewd hireling bishops. *Penguin Island*, published by Anatole France in 1908, satirizes the history of France from an extreme left-wing point of view. And George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1946) is a bitter attack on the Communist revolution in Russia and on its betrayal by Stalin and the Communist bureaucracy. John Collier's *His Monkey Wife* (1930) is a satire not only on modern womanhood, but on the modern ideal of romantic love.

Swift's Houyhnhnms and Yahoos are quite unique. According to Highet, they are not animals. "Both are types of human beings: the reasoning minority and the ignorant multitude; or else two aspects of the human soul itself, with its cool tranquil idealism and its low bestial impulses" (Highet 183).

Chinese literature also abounds in beast stories. As early as the Shih Ching (The Odes) period, officials were compared to animals. In "*Shih Shu,*" for example, the exploiting officials were called big rats. In the *Li Chi* (the Book of Rites), a tyrannical government is said to be worse than a tiger. *Chan-kuo Ts'e* (Record of the Warring States) is also famous for its collection of animal fables.

In the *Chin Shu* (Chin history), Wang Tun is quoted as telling Hsieh K'un, "Liu Wei is treacherous and a threat to the king. I am thinking of getting rid of the evil persons around the king and helping him to benefit the times. How about that?" Hsieh replied, "Wei will surely start the disaster, but he is a city fox and a rat in the temple (ch'eng-hu she-shu) (*Chin Shu* 1378; chuan 49).

City foxes hide themselves in the holes of the city walls. If you dig the wall for foxes, you destroy the city construction. Likewise if you smoke the rat, you might burn the temple. Both of them are securely protected in their evil actions. Hence city foxes and rats in temples have been used to mean corrupt officials and gentry (educated rascals) who prey upon the common people.

In the drama *Tung Kuo Hsien-sheng Wu Chiu Chung-shan Lang* (Mr. Tung Kuo saves the wolf of Chung-shan by mistake), written by K'ang Hai of the Ming dynasty, all the ingrates, including those who are ungrateful to their kings, to their parents, teachers and friends, are satirized as wolves.

In *Pu Chiang Tsung Pai Yuan Chuan* (the white monkey), written during the T'ang period by an anonymous author, Ou-yang Hsun, a T'ang minister and a famous calligrapher, is derided as the son of a monkey.

Following this tradition, Li Pao-chia calls his officials by the names of all kinds of beasts to express his deep hatred and contempt for them. This is seen in the epilogue of *The Bureaucrats*, which is in the form of a dream by a sick old man, who has vainly followed the examination route instead of the purchase system. In his dream:

> There were all kinds of jackals, wolves, tigers and leopards that would just as soon eat a man alive as look at him.... The hills were full of ratholes; if it was penetrable, the rats were into it, if it was rock or any impenetrable thing, they would keep at it anyway. The dogs would bite a man on sight but were scared of being eaten by tigers; when they saw one their heads would bob, their tails would wag, what a sorry sight. Worst of all were the cats with their climbing: When they saw a leopard or tiger they climbed a tree and when it got far away they climbed down again. Monkeys copied what they saw. The weasels looked ahead and never looked back; if something was hot on their heels they let off a salvo of rotten farts and ran. Besides these there were foxes made up as extraordinary women strolling in full view, enough to make you die of love. The pigs and sheep were the peak of uselessness, and though the oxen were big it was just for show....hills and plains were full of them. It was a world full of animals and there was no getting away. (*Chinese Novel Turn of the Century* 91)

The second common technique is contrast. For instance, both Huang San-liu-tzu and Liu Ta-k'ua-tzu wear brand new clothes and hats with a lot of very expensive ornaments, yet their glamorous outfits are in sharp contrast with their muddled heads.

The third technique which is often used is to reduce to absurdities. The purchase of office is often satirized with absurd examples. In Chapter 34, Yen Erh buys his nine-year-old son a title. On the day when Yen Erh celebrates his mother's birthday in advance, the child is dressed in an official gown, wearing boots and an official hat. In Chapter 56, Fu Po-wan is nicknamed Born Intendant, because his father bought him the title of an intendant of circuit when he was still a baby. In Chapter 60, when Magistrate Pan buys official posts for his two sons, his second and third concubines, one just pregnant and the other not even pregnant, both nag him into buying official titles for their future sons.

The technique of exaggeration is used in many places. The Chekiang administration building under Governor Fu's reform puts on a new apperance:

> The Chekiang administration, ever since Acting Governor Fu had taken office, spared no effort to purge itself and although it wasn't absolutely effective, still there had been a change in the situation. He must have appeared to an outsider as a truly honest official: the outer wall was old but he didn't paint it; the entry gate collapsed but he didn't fix it; the audience hall was

> shabby but he didn't paper it. Under orders from him, the prefects didn't dare undertake these jobs. A dignified Governor's Mansion was now looking like an old whorehouse. Around the major building the tall grass had gone to seed-no one cut it down; horseshit was piled several feet deep — no one sweep it out. (*Chinese Novel Turn of the Century* 83)

Authorial intrusion is often employed as a means of creating satiric effects. At a first glance, authorial intrusions are nothing but descriptive remarks, yet they often alert the reader to its satiric undertones. The author points out the vices and follies of the officials with contempt and indignation. Hence the tone he assumes is a harsh one. The reason for this harsh tone is explained in the old man's dream. In his dream the old man also encounters people editing a textbook. The first part of it is an admonitory expose of the prevailing inhuman bureaucratic behavior; and its second part is positive proposals for the making of good officials. Unfortunately a mysterious fire consumes the second part but leaves the first intact. Thus "with only the first part, the book does not read like a textbook, it reads rather like *Feng-shen Pang*, and *Hsi-yu chi*, goblins, devils, demons and monsters appear at the same time" (780).

Although *The Bureaucrats* is inspired by *The Scholars*, it shows more unity than its predecessor does in the objects of its attack. In the novel officials alone are the center of description. The book is crowded with deformed figures of officials, each of them possessing one or more undesirable personality traits. Their corruption is seen in the selling of posts, accepting bribes and exploiting the common people. Their hypocrisy is seen in their private lives of dishonesty, and their public show of virtue. They are cruel to the innocent and servile to the foreigners. They shirk responsibilities, but fight for every opportunity to gain money. Their foolishness is represented by Yin Tzu-ts'ung's selling the mining rights of Anhui province to foreigners. Their greed, cunning, and defraudation are seen in Tiao Mai-p'eng's seizure of his friend's property.

The scene of Li Pao-chia's bureaucratic world with all these vile figures resembles very much Alvin P. Kernan's scene of satire. For Kernan, "the scene of satire is always disorderly and crowded, packed to the point of bursting. The deformed faces of depravity, stupidity, greed, venality, ignorance, and maliciousness group closely together...." ("A Theory of Satire" in Paulson ed. *Satire* 253-4).

There is not a single good official in the whole book. Every one of them is exposed without the slightest reserve. For such figures, the author's tone is biting and harsh like that of Juvenal's. In the first section we have mentioned that Juvenal's purpose is to expose the vices and follies of his day, not to attack individuals who have committed them. What Li Pao-chia attacks are also the vices and follies of his day, chiefly

represented by the most corrupt group of that society — the officials. Like Juvenal, what Li Pao-chia attacks most are also hypocrisy, avarice and human cruelty. Thus, The Bureaucrats could be called a Juvenalian satire.

III
Strange Events: Human Frailties Blown Large

Strange Events Seen in the Past Twenty Years (hereafter, *Strange Events*) was written between 1903 and 1909. This novel by Wu Wo-yao, like *The Bureaucrats*, also has the bureaucratic circle as one of its butts of attack. However, owing to his unique personal experiences, Wu Wo-yao's satiric range is wider than that of Li Pao-chia's. His anecdotes treat all aspects of life, in all sorts of moods. In addition, Wu Wo-yao shows a deeper understanding of human nature; hence there is more subtlety in his satire.

Structurally speaking, this is the first Chinese novel that has a first-person narrator. Using this narrator as a thread, the author ties up all the stories the narrator picks up during his business trips, and events that have happened to the narrator himself. Without the narrator, this is only a random collection of tales. The narrator's trips and his hobby of collecting gossips and stories give the book a framework. All the episodes and anecdotes are fitted into this framework.

The satiric butts of this novel range from bureaucrats, scholars, hypocrites, swindlers to Manchus and businessmen. The objects of attack include fathers, sons, relatives, friends, husbands and wives. In short, people of all walks of life are under attack.

Like *The Bureaucrats*, officials in this book are criticized from every imaginable aspect. But unlike the officials in *The Bureacrats*, who are condemned as money maniacs, the officials in *Strange Events* are attacked from a moralistic and humanistic point of view.

First of all, the officials are satirized as thieves and their wives as prostitutes. This motif of the moral degeneration of officials is reiterated throughout the book. Cowardice in the officials is another aspect which the author attacks severely. Official corruption in this novel is even worse than what is described in The bureaucrats. In *The Bureaucrats*, post-selling is described in a matter-of-fact manner; whereas in *Strange Events* the emphasis is on the brazenness of the officials. They are depicted to be completely devoid of a sense of honor. The most brazen-faced official in the whole book is Kou Ts'ai.

Bribery in this novel is done in a grand style. At a stationer's in Tientsin, the narrator finds on the table two red sandalwood boxes. Opening them, he sees in one box fifty Chinese brushes in the other ten inksticks, all made of pure gold. The shop owner informs the narrator that those are on special order by a customer, to be offered as presents on his first visit with Minister Chou. When the narrator says that those are too expensive to be offered on first meetings, the owner says:

> When they are given with a purpose, it is hard to say whether they are too expensive or not. It is just like the way we do business. The higher the price, the better the quality of the merchandise. You know that last year on the imperial uncle's birthday, Viceroy Hsiao of Fukien and Chekiang gave him a very special present. It was a pair of tree peonies, three feet tall. The pot was made of white jade. The earth was of coral pieces. The tree was of white coral; the flowers were of cornelian; the leaves were of green jade. Yet those were nothing compared with the twelve flowers on the trees. The pistils were of diamonds framed by fine gold. The present was estimated to be worth ninety thousand taels. Within six months, the viceroy was assigned to the post of Viceroy of Kwangtung and Kwangsi provinces. The worst post is of Fukien and Chekiang; the best is of Kwangtung and Kwangsi. Do you think it worthwhile to give such presents? (334)

Besides official corruption, fear of or servility towared foreigners is harshly criticized. Although this is also satirized in *The Bureaucrats*, it is exposed here in more detail and to a larger extent. This attitude toward foreigners does not restrict itself to the official world only. Having spent many years in Shanghai, Wu Wo-yao must have seen or heard many such stories. The settings of many of his incidents are the Shanghai foreign concessions.

Hypocrites are also condemned by Wu. They are represented by philanthropists, and those scholars rigidly adhering to principles. The greatest hypocrite in the book is Fu Mi-chuan (chs. 73-74). In addition to hypocrites, all types of swindlers are exposed. They include bureaucrats, scholars, businessmen, fortune-tellers, doctors and so on. Two stories are used to show that the world is but a plot of swindling, confidence game (chs 85-86; ch. 56).

Wu Wo-yao's swindlers are very different from those of Li Pao-chia's, or Wu Ching-tzu's. In *The Bureaucrats*, all the swindlers belong to one type; they all try to defraud the post-seekers of their money. In *The Scholars*, the swindlers are characterized by their foolish pursuit of fame and their uncontrollable desire for wealth. In *Strange*

Events the swindlers are characterized by their degenerating morality.

Moral deterioration is shown repeatedly in degenerating human relations. One of the *fin de siècle* phenomenon found in the late Ch'ing society is the collapse of human relations. This is also what Wu Wo-yao tries to expose in his novel. He satirizes five relations in his novel; namely, those between parent and child (chs. 29, 53, 69, 88, and 105), between husband and wife (chs. 95-6; 103-4), between brothers (ch. 36), between friends (ch. 23), and between relatives (chs. 90 and 82).

A Ying in his *Wan-Ch'ing hsiao-shuo shih* (A History of the Late Ch'ing Novel) thinks that *Strange Events* includes a new book of *The Scholars* (ch. 2). There are in this novel many chapters with scholars as their central figures. These scholars are satirized as pretenders to refinement and elegance. The scholars often make friends with the editors of the local newspapers. They then send poems to their editor friends to have them appear in the newspapers. They act as if they were as famous as the T'ang poets Li Po or Tu Fu. Some of them even pay people to write poems for them in order to send them to the newspapers. Likewise, some scholars pretend to be good painters but they actually ask someone else to paint for them (ch. 9). The scholars are described to be opium smokers, incompetent officials, and skinflints who show reluctance to pay for their books (ch. 22).

The Manchus are a chief butt of Wu Wo-yao's satire. This is seen in his making the Manchu official Kou Ts'ai's story the second plot of his novel. While the poverty-stricken Manchus will do anything to wheedle and cheat people of their money, the rich Manchus among the imperial guards are described in a ridiculous way. Each of them is followed by a servant, who helps to hold his gun and his pipe for opium-smoking. When a battalion of five hundred come out for their daily drill, there are actually one thousand people present with five hundred guns, and five hundred pipes:

> Furthermore, the guns are held by the servants. In their own hands they are either holding quail bags or eagles. They come out for drill. When they reach the places for their eagles. They will not return to ranks until they have stuck iron bars into trees or walls for their eagles to perch on. During the drill, their eyes are on the eagles. Occasionally, bars fall from the trees. Then in the middle of the drill, they put down the guns and go fix the birds. They even fix their feathers before they return to ranks (106-7; ch. 27)

The above passage, though exaggerated like all satire, reveals the undebatable fact that the Manchu government is approaching its end. Citing many historical documents, Lin Jui-ming in his *Wan-Ch'ing ch'ien-tse hsiao-shuo te li-shih yi-yi* (historical

significance in Late Ch'ing fiction of social critique) also believes that Wu Wo-yao's repeated attacks on the Manchus shows his sardonic attitude toward the Manchu government.

As Milena Doleželová-Velingerová has mentioned in her "Narrative Modes in Late Qing Novels," the dynamic yet repulsive picture of Shanghai at the end of the nineteenth century given in the prologue of the novel is a powerful introduction in the best spirit of exposure fiction:

> Shanghai – what a bustling hub of trade and commerce! Chinese and foreigners mingle together, crowds fill the streets. Ships and junks come and go, goods and things flow in and out. Fallen beauties from Soochow and Yangchow are drawn to the smell of money and flock to set up their shops around Fourth Avenue. To succeed you must attract attention, so they put up their dazzling signs. The merchant princes find their way to the courtesans of the upper ranks; for gourmandizers of lesser taste willing to sup from a more common pot, there are girls of a lower rank. And so, what sixty years ago was a stretch of reedy beach became a bustling spot which has no rival in the whole of China.
>
> But alas! Pomp and wealth easily turn to pride and folly. It didn't take long. In all the swirling crowds of Shanghai no one would open his mouth but to put himself forward. Everyone is on the make. In life, one has to meet people. Not for them the normal meaning though; for them 'meeting people' is drinking, gambling, and whoring. The gay bustle and debauchery never cease for a moment. The stream of carts and horses never stops, day or night. And then there are those whose wallets are empty — though down at heel they still act like swells, joining the crowd who seek pleasure. It seems there is nothing better to do than spin around and around in the social whirl. That's why overnight these phony 'highrollers' became a regional specialty of Shanghai.
>
> But that's not all. Rackets, kidnapping, gambling, and all the strange things which one never dreamed of before cropped up in Shanghai. And so, this place, charming and innocent some sixty years ago, turned into a shelter for sinners and swindlers. (*Chinese Novel Turn of Century* 66-7)

The above picture plus the self-introduction of the narrator set the tone of the novel. In the the second chapter, the narrator calls himself Chiu-ssu Yi-sheng (a man

with nine lives). He then explains that it was his cruel experiences which imprinted his strange name on him:

> When I look back on those twenty years since I became a man, I can recall only three kinds of creatures which I met: vermin, predators, and vampires. Yet - during these twenty years - no snake or insect, no rat or ant has bit me; no wolf or tiger or leopard has seized me. I escaped them all! Am I not a Man with Nine Lives? That's why my name is a memorial of myself. *(Chinese Novel Turn of Century* 67-8)

Thus the prevailing harsh tone is set at the very beginning of the novel. All through it, the positive figures such as the narrator himself, his friends Wu Chi-chih, Wen Shu-nung, and especially his relative Wang Po-shu all criticize with a tone which even the narrator sometimes notices as being K'o-po (acrimonious). Whenever the narrator speaks of the officials, his tone becomes severe. Although there are episodes with a touch of humor, the over-all tones of these episodes are mocking, ironical, or sarcastic. These reveal the author's contempt, rather than his sympathy, toward his characters.

The author's bitterness is also seen in the fates of all his positive characters. None of the positive figures comes to a good end: the narrator goes into hiding after the failure of Wu Chi-chin's business, operated in the narrator's name; Wu Chi-chih himself is in bereavement; Wen Shu-nung loses everything in a fire; and Ts'ai Lu-sheng is discharged for his efforts to relieve the people during a natural disaster.

Strange Events exposes officials, scholars, businessmen, Manchus, and people in a decaying society for their bribery, cheating, toadying, flattery, philandery, and hatred. Wu Wo-yao's butts are very similar to those of Li Pao-chia's, yet his emphasis is quite different. Wu's satire dwells on the collapse of human relations due to deteriorating morality. Although there are positive figures, the prevailing tone is still quite harsh.

IV
The Travels of Lao Ts'an: A Contrast of Fact and Fiction

The Travels of Lao Ts'an (hereafter *The Travels*), with China at the turn of the century as its setting, was completed in 1907. Its prologue consists of two allegories. One is the strange disease of Mr. Huang Jui-ho of Shantung. This disease causes Mr. Huang's whole body to fester in such a way that "every year several open sores

appeared, and if one year these were healed, the next year several more would appear elsewhere. Now for many years no one had been found who could cure this disease. It broke out every summer and subsided after the autumn equinox" (Shadick 4).

The allegorical representation of Mr Huang becomes clear as we read on, for Lao Ts'an, in answering the question if he has a cure for the disease, says, "All we need to do is to follow the ancients whose methods hit the target every time. For other diseases we follow the directions handed down from Shen Nung and Huang Ti, but in the case of this disease we need the method of the great Yu" (Shadick 4-5). Since the great Yu Was the first institutor of flood control, Mr. Huang is no doubt a metaphor for the Yellow River.

Here Lao Ts'an is the author Liu E himself. Liu's idea of flood control is reflected by the method which Lao Ts'an advocates. And this method is said to be very successful because "for the first time in more than ten years Mr. Huang had had no open sores" (Shadick 5). This allegory foreshadows the flood caused by the bookish River policy in Chapters 13 and 14.

The second allegory is a dream, in which Lao Ts'an is invited by two of his old friends Wen Chang-po (leader in literary composition) and Te Hui-sheng (student of morals and wisdom) to see the famous view from the P'englai Pavilion. The three catch sight of a sailing boat among the great waves:

> It was a fairly large boat, about twenty-three or twenty-four chang long. The captain was sitting on the poop, and below the poop were four men in charge of the helm. There were six masts with old sails and two new masts, one with a completely new sail and the other with a rather worn one, in all eight masts ..... Countless people, men and women, were sitting on the deck.... Beside each of the eight masts were two men to look after the rigging. (Shadick 7)

The description of the boat is symbolic of the Chinese ship of state. The twenty-three or twenty-four *chang* represent the twenty-three or twenty-four provinces into which China was divided before the revolution of 1911. The captain is the Emperor. The four helmsmen are the four Grand Secretaries of the Chun-chi Ch'un (ministry of council). The eight masts symbolizes the eight government departments. The men looking after each mast are the two governor-generals, one a Chinese and the other a Manchu. The "countless people" on the deck are described as being "wet and cold, hungry and afraid...and with no means of livelihood." The condition of the ship is further explained:

> On the east side was a gash about three chang long, into which the waves were pouring with nothing to stop them. Farther to the east was another bad place about a *chang* long through which the water was seeping more gradually. (Shadick 7)

"The gash three *chang* long" represents Manchuria, or the Three Northeastern Provinces. At the beginning of the twentieth century these were already threatened by Japan and Russia. The other "bad place to the east" is Shantung, already threatened by Germany and Great Britain.

To the indignation of Wen Chang-po, the crowd of navigators spend their time maltreating the decent people on board the ship instead of trying to prevent it from capsizing. Lao Ts'an, after observing the boat, remarks that its navigators "are accustomed to sailing on the "Pacific' Ocean and can only live through 'pacific' days...they do not have a compass" (Shadick 8-9).

The three then overtake the ship to present them with a compass. But to their great surprise, they are regarded by the seamen as traitors, for they have "a foreign compass." Finally they have to run away from the angry crowd on board the ship.

The prologue foretells the theme of *The Travels*: flood control and politics, as well as its satiric tone. Although of all the chapters the second chapter is the only one devoted mostly to the description of Lao Ts'an's sight-seeing and the recital of drum tales, there is still a passage showing vividly how the chair-bearer of an official knocks down a child without stopping to pick him up or apologize:

> There was a blue felt sedan chair carried by two bearers and behind the chair a yamen runner wearing a hat with a red tassel and carrying a folder full of letters under his arm. He was running with his head down as though his life depended on it and mopped his brow with a handkerchief as he went. Several five-or six-year-old children in the road did not know how to keep out of people's way. One of them was accidentally knocked over by a chair-bearer and got up crying, "Wa, Wa!" His mother quickly ran up asking, "Who knocked you down? Who knocked you down?" She asked him again and again. At last through his tears he got out the words, "The chair bearer!" The mother raised her head and saw that the chair had already gone two or three li. (Shadick 23)

This small incident is a humorous way of showing how officials keep themselves in a lofty manner (like the one inside the sedan chair), and how they let the innocent folk

be trampled on without showing the least sympathy.

Besides this incident, and the one in Chapter 4 where two would-be officials offer Lao Ts'an money to buy a post, there are no other episodes that are reminiscent of scenes in *The Scholars, The Bureaucrats,* or *Strange Events.* As a satiric novel, *The Travels* has a rather unique object of attack. Instead of exposing corrupt officials, Liu E castigates in his novel two of the most capable, incorruptible officials: Yu Hsien and Kang Pi. The former is even well-known to people of the Shantung province.

Just as one of the guests Lao Ts'an once met at a dinner has pointed out, that "tyrannical government oftenlooks well on the surface," Yu Hsien wins his great name of an "honest and capable" official by killing innocent people in his prefecture. In less than a year he has choked to death more than two thousand people in his "standing cages," an unauthorized instrument of torture.

According to Lao Tung, the innkeeper, at first Yu Hsien does arrest a number of bandits, but soon the bandits catch on to him and turn him into their tool. Once when a rich villager Yu Ch'ao-tung's family was robbed by bandits, he reported the robbery. As a revenge, the bandits concealed some stolen articles in the Yu's place and caused the capture of Yu Ch'ao-tung and his two sons Yu Hsueh-shih and Yu Hsueh-li. Yu Hsien's cruelty in settling this case even made the bandits remorseful.

> When the three men of the Yu family are taken to the hall. Yu Hsien orders them to be put in cages. The chief guard for the day reports that the cages are full.
>
> When Prefect Yu heard this he said angrily, "Nonsense! I do not remember having put anyone in these two days. How can there be none empty?' The guard answered, 'There are only twelve cages. They were filled in three days. Will Your Excellency please check in the register?'
>
> The Prefect checked the list, moving his finger down the register and saying, 'One, two, three; yesterday there were three. One, two, three, four, five; the day before yesterday there were five. One, two, three four; the day before that there were four. There are none empty; yes, you are quite right.' The attendant again asked, 'For today shall we put these in the jail? Tomorrow there are bound to be several dead. When there are vacancies in the cages, we can put these into their places. Is that all right? Will Your Excellency please decide?'
>
> Prefect Yu frowned and said, "How I hate these creatures! If we put them in the jail, won't that mean that they will live a day longer? That won't do at all! Go and take down those four who were put in three days ago. Bring

them here for me to see.'

The attendant went and had the four men taken down and brought into the hall. The Prefect himself came down from his table. He felt the noses of the four men with his fingers and said, 'There is still a little life!' He went back, sat down and said, 'Give each one two thousand blows; we'll see whether they'll die or not!' When they had received not more than twenty or thirty blows each, all four were dead.

The attendants could do nothing but take the Yu father and sons, and put them in the cages. (Shadick 51-2)

The above passage is a vivid depiction of Yu Hsien's cruelty, and his taking great pleasure in persecuting the defenseless. Later when the clerk of the court tells him that Yu Hsueh-li's wife has died for her husband and begs him to set Yu Hsueh-li free, his reply states obviously his intention to secure his future by means of killing:

Whether this man is unjustly punished or not, if I release him he certainly won't rest content, and in the future even my position will be endangered. The proverb says right: 'To cut down weeds you must get rid of the root.' That applies here. (Shadick 53)

Talking about the satirical strategy, W. H. Auden says that

At the moment of yielding to temptation, the normal human being has to exercise self-deception and rationalization, he requires the illusion of acting with a good conscience; after the immoral act, when desire is satisfied or absent, he realizes the nature of his act and feels guilty. He who feels no guilt after transgressing the moral law is mad, and he who, at the moment he is transgressing it, is completely conscious of what he is doing is demonic. (Paulson ed. *Satire: Modern Essays in Criticism* 203)

Thus, Yu Hsien fits perfectly the description of Auden's 'demonic' character, for he is completely conscious of what he is doing. This demonic official, just as described in Lao Ts'an's poem, does indeed stain his hat-button with the blood of the people of Ts'aochow Prefecture.

Ambition pervades his flesh and marrow
He zealously strives to make a name.
Injustice smothers the city in gloom.
Blood stains his hat-button red.

Everywhere a rain of ill-omen,
In all the hills a tigerish wind;
He kills good people as though killing bandits:
This prefect who acts like a captain of troops.
(Shadick 66)

As a satirist, Liu E has acquired his reputation by his originality in exposing 'honest officials.' In Western literature, the focus of satire has always been a fool or a knave. Contrary to this Western conventional practice, the Chinese satirist Liu E takes aim at Yu Hsien precisely on account of his great ability.

In addition to Yu Hsien, *The Travels* also exposes another cruel official by the name of Kang Pi, whose story is related from Chapter 15 to Chapter 18. To use Auden's term, Kang Pi is also a 'monomaniac.' He has a perfect mania for being an honest official. Because of his hatred for bribery, he feels anyone who bribes should be presumed guilty. This mania of his causes the death of many poor innocent people.

In short, the officials satirized in *The Travels* are those who have been considered good officials by the government. Yu Hsien is strict and capable; Kang Pi is incorruptible. But beneath their reputation they are cruel, stubborn and tyrannical. Because of their great names, these officials can in fact do more harm than their corrupt colleagues.

In addition, the weaknesses of these men lie in their lack of common-sensical judgement. The lack of common-sensical judgement causes Yu Hsien to have the innocent people choked to death in the cages; Kang Pi's miscarriage of justice is also due to his lack of common-sensical juidgement. Governor Chuang's lack of judgement makes him recommend Yu Hsien and give Kang Pi and important assignment. Owing to lack of judgement, the bookish River policy is carried through and multitudes are deprived of their lives.

V
Nieh-hai hua:
Roman Á Clef as Satire

Peter Li concludes his study of Tseng P'u by saying that "His novel *A Flower in an Ocean of Sin* will remain a landmark in Chinese literature, not so much for the influence it had on later writers, but for its marking the end of an era and a literary tradition" (Peter Li 125). As Li says, *Nieh-hai hua* is the last well-written novel that modeled itself

on *The Scholars*, and reflected "the *fin de siècle* decadence and revolutionary social aspirations during the last years of the Ch'ing dynasty" (Peter Li 125). Although like its predecessors, this novel also takes the scholars and the officials of that period as its target of satire, there is a marked difference in the author's tone. Instead of the harsh castigation found in *The Bureaucrats,* or *Strange Events*, what we find in *Nieh-hai hua* is pretty much like Wu Ching-tzu's good-humored exhibition of the follies and foibles of his scholars. Tseng P'u often relates his anecdotes with a sense of amusement.

Nieh-hai hua is a *roman á clef.* A large number of its characters were real people in history. According to Ch'eng Yi-chi's calculation, out of the two hundred and seventy some characters in the novel, 94 have their names recorded in Chinese history. However, in this discussion, the historical personages will be treated as fictional characters, regardless of their real identities.

The novel starts with an allegorical description of an island called Nulo (Island of Enslaved Happiness). The people on this island have enjoyed heartily the happiness of enslaved freedom, to the ends of their lives. In the year of 1904, all of a sudden, accompanied by deafening sounds as loud as the falling of heaven and cracking of earth, Nulo Island sank right down the Ocean of Sin. What was surprising about this event was the discovery of the fact that Nulo Island was connected to China.

Thus, the satiric mode is set from the very beginning of the novel. From this allusion of the doomed state of China illustrated by the allegory, the scene then changes to Shanghai, the biggest commercial port of China. In this city the Lover of Freedom is puzzled to see people still lead a life of debauchery by playing mahjong, visiting brothels, and going to various places of entertainment. Suddenly, amid the seeming time of peace a few panic-stricken people cry out, "Disaster! Disaster! Japan and Russia are at war. The Three Northeastern Provinces are in danger." An outsider puts in with a sarcastic smile, "Not only the Three Northeastern Provinces, the eighteen provinces of China proper have also been in danger for a long time." This is the climax of the prologue. From here the satiric tone is also set; satire is to be expressed with a smile.

Tseng P'u's satire aims mainly at the officials and the intelligentsia, in other words the elite of his society. But he attacks first of all the examination system, through which the elite group distinguish themselves. We get our first glimpse of Tseng P'u's humor in his explanation of the term "*chuang yuan*":

> I think those of you who have not seen an explanation of the *chuang yuan* do not know its true worth. China is the one and only nation in the world that has this institution, and there is only one *chuang-yuan* selected every three years. Only a person who has accumulated generations of merit, who is unmoved in

> the presence of beautiful women, who has close friendships in the capital, whose essays are dazzling with elegance is qualified. He is the most outstanding among the immortals and a disciple of the Son of Heaven himself. He has such an air of nobility and wisdom about him that even Su Tung-p'o and Li Tai-po must step back ninety *li* in deference. How much more so must Bacon and Rousseau! (Peter Li 70)

The narrative proper begins with the 1868 examination. This examination took place right after the quelling of the Taip'ing Uprising. No matter what happened to the country or its people, the intelligentsia of that time would hold on to their preparation for the examinations. Their only dream was to succeed in the examinations, to become scholars, to win the title of *Chujen*, and best of all to obtain the highest honor of *Chuang yuan*.

As a result, in the year 1868, regardless of the bloody corpses lying on the ground, their sobbing orphans and weeping wives, there appeared, among the ruins caused by the internecine war, a group of smiling scholars, lost in the ecstasy of passing examinations, and of becoming *Chujen* and *Hanlin*. It seemed that enjoying the rank and wealth that came with passing the examinations and learning the secret of passing them were the whole life of those scholars. They did not know anything but these, and they did not feel the need to know anything else.

Tseng P'u's favorite method of presenting his dunces is the same as Wu Ching-tzu's, displaying them at dinner parties. Parties in *The Scholars* play a very important role. For instance, many of the characters brag and bribe by means of food. Wu Ching-tzu manages to gather all his dunces around the dinner table on various occasions to be ridiculed. Once in a while he also manages to have a few paragons appear at a party to perform some examplary deeds.

Tseng P'u is no less skillful than his predecessor in utilizing such occasions of satire. The party held in honor of a famous Kung-yang commentator of the Hang dynasty, Ho Hsiu (Ho Shao-kung, 129-182), and the birthday party for Li Ch'un-k'e are among the most notable ones.

To save space we will skip several episodes in which the examination system is attacked in a humorous manner. Next to the examination system itself, the object of satire is the scholars and officials who have distinguished themselves through the system. These people, though occupying important posts, are vulgar and stupid as Tseng P'u depicts them. Their life is a mixture of textual criticism, curio examination and appreciation, poetry reciting, wine, women and boy-actors. At a superficial glance, these scholar-officials seem to be rather refined, graceful, and tasteful. They are totally

different from the philistine scholars of Wu Ching-tzu, from the money-maniac officials of Li Pao-chia, the morally degenerate officials of Wu Wo-yao, and the demonic officials of Liu E. However, a closer examination will reveal their foolish nature behind their stupid behavior.

First of all, these intelligentsia never meet but call for courtesans or boy-actors. It has become a habit for them to drink wine and compose verses in the presence of these people. Even in his period of mourning for the death of his parent, Chin Wen-ch'ing cannot refrain from the call girls. He actually falls in love with courtesan Fu Ts'ai-yun, and marries her as his concubine despite the fact that it is against the proprieties to do so in the period of mourning.

Yet compared with his failure to keep his promise, Chin Wen-ch'ing's secret marriage with Fu Ts'ai-yun during the period of mourning becomes nothing. Before Wen-ch'ing's success in the examination, he fell in love with a courtesan, Hsin-yen, who sold her belongings to help him go to take the examination. He promised to marry her after the examination. But when the examination results were out, and he became a *Chuang-yuan,* Wen-ch'ing changed his mind. Thinking that the marriage with a courtesan would bring disgrace to the honorable title, he deserted her and married a girl from a decent family instead. Later Hsin-yen hanged herself.

The depiction of these two episodes concerning Chin Wen-ch'ing is a clear illustration of Tseng P'u's mild tone. If these two had been written by Li Pao-chia, or Wu wo-yao, Chin Wen-ch'ing would have been criticized with the most severe words imaginable. At least he would have been called a beast for violation of moral decency. But in *Nieh-hai hua*, Chin Wen-ch'ing does not receive even a single word of reproof from the author.

As a satirist, Tseng P'u's being tender and gentle expresses itself in his relating the story of Wen-ch'ing's deserting Hsin-yen, the prostitute whom he had promised to marry after the examination. This incident is never recounted in detail. Hsin-yen's name is only mentioned a couple of times in passing. The name is first brought up by Lu Feng-ju when they are at courtesan Ch'u Ai-lin's place.

Ai-lin happens to know their affairs; therefore, she assumes that Wen-ch'ing has already married Hsin-yen. But when she enquires about her, Wen-ch'ing says, "she once came to Peking, and I was too busy to see her then. I have not heard from her since." Ai-lin asks in surprise, "then you did not marry her after you passed the examination?" The author then stops to write something else by mentioning that Wen-ch'ing changes color and wishes to dismiss the topic.

When Wen-ch'ing meets Fu Ts'ai-yun, the author says that he is stricken by her resemblance to Hsin-yen, and shocked to see a red line around her neck. This is the

second time Hsin-yen is mentioned. The last time is when Wen-ch'ing is at his deathbed. He talks in delirium about Ts'ai-yun's being an incarnation of Hsin-yen, coming to punish him for his sins. It is only by gathering all these hints bit by bit that the reader realizes the big breach of faith Wen-ch'ing has made.

Many of Tseng P'u's characters have a mentality that belongs to the past. This makes them more at home with things of the past, and thus rendering their behavior incongruous with their times. It is often from this incongruity that the humor of Tseng P'u's satire springs.

Tseng P'u not only satirizes the diplomats, he also satirizes their wives. Ts'ai-yun is chosen by the author as representative of this group. She is depicted as a woman on the loose. After she becomes the wife of a Chinese ambassador to Europe, she still leads the life of a courtesan. Both on their way to Europe and on their way home by the *S. S. Saxon*, she has affairs with the captain of the ship. In Europe, she has rendezvous with Count von Waldersee. At home she carries an affair with a young servant, A Fu. Every time when Wen-ch'ing locks himself up in his study downstairs, she flirts with A Fu in her room upstairs.

If we say that Liu E in his *Travels* preaches a reformist idea, Tseng P'u in his *Nieh-hai hua* certainly advocates a revolutionary thought. Firstly, the ideology of the nihilists revealed to Wen-ch'ing on the *S. S. Saxon* by Pierre is revolutionary enough to make the Chinese ambassador shudder:

> The aim of his [Saint-Simon's] organization is to turn this false equality into genuine equality, to break down all national, social, racial, family, and religious barriers. Rulers are enemies of the people, governments are bandits and robbers. National affairs should be decided upon and managed by all the people. (Peter Li 88)

Tseng P'u then uses Pierre as his mouthpiece to satirize the Chinese in their submission to monarchical authority and in their ignorance of human rights. Pierre says:

> The common people of your country are like toddlers, ignorant of world affairs. All they know is that thy belong to the Emperor. They will not even imagine the existence of human rights, nor the universal principle of all God's creation being equal. (*Nieh-hai hua* 95; my trans.)

Thus Tseng P'u advocates the revolution as a much needed

> Pearl of thunder which will awaken the Chinese from their two-hundred-year-old illusory dream and sweep away the hundreds of thousands of foul-smelling barbarians. Stand on the rooftops, and let us yell out and all our shackles will be broken. There is no question that we will become the leader in all of Asia! (Peter Li 99)

J. Průšek in "The Changing Role of the Narrator in Chinese Novels at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century" criticizes Tseng P'u's "attempt to insert into this unified and romantically conceived narrative incidents showing the struggle of different nations for freedom" as "an utter failure" (*Archiv Orientalni* 38, 175). In making such criticism, Průšek neglects one important method Tseng P'u uses, and that is contrast. It is interesting to note that Tseng P'u's paragons are all foreigners. Wu Hsiao-ju in "Shuo *Nieh-hai hua*" (on *Nieh-hai hua*) also points out that, "Besides the innocent love of the Russian female nihilist Sarah Aizenson, all the relations between the men and women in the novel are rather ugly and scandalous." This is also for contrast. Tseng P'u's satiric message often comes through his contrasting the Chinese with the foreigners.

When Tseng P'u makes Sarah Aizenson point to Ambassador Chin Wen-ch'ing with her shining pistol, and say, "I want to ask you since we have no grudges against each other, why have you played this trick on me? Don't you realize that I am a well-known figure in Russia, and totally unlike your submissive Chinese woman who feels no shame on being treated as a toy..." (peter Li 87). Tseng not only satirizes the Chinese men for ill treating their female citizens, but also tries by contrast to prod the Chinese women into a sudden recognition of their rights.

In conclusion, Tseng P'u satirizes the examination system for its being a monarchical tool of binding the intelligentsia, and for its not being a perfect method of selecting talents. He satirizes the scholars for their being willing slaves of the imperfect examination system, for their ignorance of current affairs and modern knowledge. The scholar-officials are satirized for their passion for antiquity, their lives of decadence, their incompetence, their impracticality and their ignoring the dangerous state China was in. He also satirizes the lawless condition of the late Ch'ing society so that justice has to be upheld by a Robin Hood figure. In addition, post-selling and buying, low clerks who try to climb up to the top of the ladder are also satirized.

Despite a couple of places told with harsh castigation, the prevailing tone of Tseng P'u's satire is mild and gentle, with a touch of humor. Although basically all his satiric objects are fools, Tseng P'u does not express his personal contempt for them. He only endeavors to show their weaknesses and let the reader judge for himself. His criticism is oblique. He avoids dwelling his depiction on the undesirable spot of his dunces for too

long. He has an unusual ability of discovering the incongruity of things, of seeing things from a humorous angle, of creating humorous situations for his satire, and of telling them with a sense of amusement. His satire is quite different from the harsh criticism of Li Pao-chia and Wu Wo-yao. It is closer to Wu Ching-tzu, Obviously, Tseng P'u's satire belongs to the Horatian.

VI
Conclusion:
From Juvenalian to Horatian

Although structurally speaking each of the four novels has a framework to mold all the anecdotes, allegories, discourses, enigmas, riddles, tales, jokes, and parodies together into a thematic whole, and although all of the four authors take the same late Ch'ing society as the target of their satire, each novel has its own emphasis, and each satirist takes a tone different from the other three, either in nature or in degree.

Modeling his novel on *The Scholars*, in which Wu Ching-tzu satirizes scholars in order to attack the civil service examination of the Ch'ing dynasty, Li Pao-chia exposes officials in order to attack a deteriorating political system. His officials are what W. H. Auden calls Monomaniacs, people with one desire that overrides all others, as they leave no stone unturned to secure office and to climb up to the top of the ladder. They are money monomaniacs, going to great lengths to become officials only for the sake of gaining money. Many of these monomaniacs have names with satiric homophones that reveal their personal traits. Many allude to real people of the day.

As Dr. Johnson and Fielding's satires are on the general not the particular, on species not individuals, each of Li Pao-chia's characters in *The Bureaucrats* either represents a certain type of officials in the bureaucratic circles of the late Ch'ing period, or a single facet of the hollow personalities of an official. All ranks of officials are satirized, and from all aspects. Officials from court ministers to yamen clerks, from job holders to people on the waiting list, from civil officials to military officers, all are under harsh criticism.

Wu Wo-yao's *Strange Events* exposes officials, scholars, hypocrites, swindlers, businessmen, Manchus and others in a decaying society for their bribery, cheating, toadying, flattery, philandery, and hatred. Wu's satiric butts are very much similar to those of Li Pao-chia's, yet his emphasis is quite different. His focus is on the deterioration of morality.

Wu's hypocrites like Fu Mi-hsuan are people who violate moral principles. In *The Bureaucrats,* all swindlers are satirized as money monomaniacs; in *The Scholars*, swindlers are characterized by their foolish pursuit of rank and their uncontrollable desire for fame; however, the swindlers in *Strange Events* are attacked for their moral deterioration. Throughout the novel, Wu Wo-yao assumes a bitter, acrimonious tone, yet touches with humorous ridicule. Although there are positive figures, none of them comes to a good end.

Unlike the Western satiric tradition in which an object of attack is always described as a fool or a knave, the officials satirized in *The Travels* are depicted as capable and incorruptible people. Despite his great ability, Yu Hsien is satirized as a demonic figure, consciously doing harm to the people he is supposed to protect in order to secure his own position. As an incorruptible figure, Kang Pi is satirized for excessive self-righteousness and for his lack of any common-sensical judgement in his monomaniac endeavor to be incorruptible.

Yu Hsien is based on a real person while Kang Pi is a fictional figure. Liu E cannot do much about Yu Hsien, but he can criticize Kang Pi to his heart's content. This contrast of the realistic with the imaginary is an illustration of parallelism as means of satire.

Although Liu E satirizes officials, he does not advocate drastic political changes. He believes in saving China with modern technology. Liu's tone is mostly mild with a warm touch of the narrator's compassion for mankind.

Tseng P'u's satire aims mainly at the intelligentsia and the examination system. The examination system is criticized as a monarchical tool for binding the intelligentsia. He uses humorous incidents to show his doubt about the examination as a means of selecting talents for the country. He also shows that a scholar who has distinguished himself through such a system is utterly ignorant of current affairs. Along with the examination, Tseng P'u satirizes the scholars who have become willing slaves of such a system and held on tenaciously to their preparation for the examination even before a national catastrophe.

Most of the time Tseng P'u exhibits his dunces around a dinner table on occasions such as a celebration for someone's success in the examination, for a birthday, or for a departure or arrival. Thus Tseng P'u, like Wu Ching-tzu, ridicules his scholars by showing rather than by telling. A feast with its relaxing, comfortable atmosphere is perfect for Tseng P'u to show his self-complacent, examination-oriented, and absurd men of letters of the day.

Tseng P'u's scholar-officials are totally different from the philistine scholars of Wu Ching-tzu, from the money-mad officials of Li Pao-chia, the morally degenerate

officials of Wu Wo-yao, and the demonic officials of Liu E. However, a closer examination reveals the foolish nature behind their stupid behavior. Besides the scholars who bury themselves in pursuit of the past, and scholars who are busy memorializing, there are other scholars who live in dream-lands. They are often satirized as talkers rather than doers.

As a satirist, Tseng P'u is tender and gentle in his exposure of the follies and foibles of his dunces. He tries to find excuses for the follies they commit, and he never dwells on their foibles for too long a time. Whenever possible, his satire is expressed through good-humored railleries.

The satires of Li Pao-chia, Wu Wo-yao, Liu E and Tseng P'u as we have seen in the four late Ch'ing novels *The Bureaucrats*, *Strange Events, The Travels of Lao Ts'an* and *Nieh-hai hua* vary in degree, aspects, tone, and attitudes. A juxtaposition of these four reveals that Li Pao-chia is the severest critic. Though he satirizes with a tone similar to Li's in its harshness, Wu Wo-yao has positive figures. Liu E's tone is warm with compassion, and his butts are positive figures with individual weaknesses. Tseng P'u is the most humorous of the four. Thus we may say that Li Pao-chia's satire is Juvenalian, Tseng P'u's is Horatian, and Wu Wo-yao and Liu E are in between. Wu leans towards the Juvenalian, and Liu leans towards the Horatian.

Thus the Chinese satiric novel develops from the Horatian of Wu Ching-tzu into the Juvenalian of Li Pao-chia and Wu Wo-yao, finally returns to the Horatian again. From Li Pao-chia, Wu Wo-yao, Liu E to Tseng P'u, the variations of satire are from the Juvenalian to the Horatian. They do not exhaust all the possibilities of the genre, yet obviously the four works discussed did a good job of exploring the different shadings of this particular spectrum in their strategies as well as in their representations.

Note

1. Recent scholarly attention to the four major Ching novels are distributed rather unevenly. Over the past fifteen years nothing has been done on both *The Bureaucrats* and *Strange Events*. There are two articles on the author of *A Flower in the Ocean of Sin* and one paper on the heroine of the novel. All three are biographical. No interest is detected in the novel proper. However, several papers have been written on Liu E and *Lao Ts'an yu-chi*.

Hsu Ching-hsien's "The Deep Structure of *Lao Ts'an yu-chi*" gives the novel a structural analysis. She shows the lack manifested in China at the end of the century. Liu E's sense of duty toward himself, his country and his people makes him weep. He sees too well the serious state his country is in. He also realizes keenly his personal limit. His tears symbolize both his exasperation and despair.

Chao Hsiao-hsuan discusses the point of view in Liu E's novel. Although third person restricted point of view is employed most of the time, there is the lack of consistency. Sometimes the third person restricted

point of view is shifted to the third person omniscient point of view. And the first person point of view is also employed when the minor characters talk about themselves.

Hsiao Chih-hua's "Hsiao-yu chang-chu ch'ing-kuan sha-ren" (Hsiao-yu Singing; Incorruptible Officials Killing) singles out two unique qualities of Liu E's novel. One is the respect for women; the other is the indignation against incorruptible officials. Chou Chih-kuan's "Lao Ts'an yu-chi and Tai-ku Philosophical School" is an attempt to interpret the novel by Thomas Kuhn's theory of paradigms explicated in his *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*. Lu Ming-hsiu focuses his analysis on the character Tsui-huan in *Lao Ts'an yu-chi* in relation to her time.

In 1993, in commemoration of the ninetieth anniversary of the novel's publication, an international symposium on Liu E and *Lao Ts'an yu-chi* was held in Chinan. The city is famous because its scenery is celebrated in the novel. Kuo Yen-li's "New Materials, New Methods, and New Perspectives" offers a glimpse of the occasion.

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