

NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN CONVICTION AND COMPLIANCE: THE JOURNEYS OF YANG MO'S INTELLECTUAL CHARACTERS

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Critics all agree that *The Song of Youth* (Qingchun zhi ge), centered on a female petty bourgeois intellectual, is an anomaly in the canon of Chinese socialist realist fiction, a canon constituted otherwise by works highlighting the revolutionary struggles put up by the working classes and their Communist vanguards. A Bildungsroman portraying an educated woman's journey from her pursuit of personal freedom to her enthusiastic embrace of the Communist-led revolution, the novel is interesting not only for its unusual subject matter but also for its revelation of the dilemmas faced by an establishment writer who tried to hold on to a modicum of life experience and self-identity while endeavoring to carry out the ideological dictates of the Chinese Communist Party (hereafter the CCP or the Party). In the first edition of the novel, published in 1958, the author Yang Mo created a main character, Lin Daojing, with obvious resemblance to herself and, at the same time, also made stories out of whole cloth about Lin's exploits, especially Lin's leading role in the December 9, 1935 student rally, the culmination of her political growth. When attacked in 1959 for failing to critique Lin's petty bourgeois mentality and failing to merge Lin with the revolutionary masses, Yang Mo was forced to give Lin not only more imagined experiences but also a new, self-critical voice in an expanded version of the novel. The journey of the novel, and its heroine, however, did not stop there. As we shall see, Yang Mo managed to hold on to some of her core beliefs, particularly her faith in the revolutionary intellectual, even as she was pressured into denouncing her heroine for her inextricable connection to the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, the emergent liberalization of the ideological environment in the 1980s would allow her to repudiate some of the interdictions of the past in *The Song of Beauty* (Fangfei zhi ge, 1986) and *The Song of Heroes* (Yinghua zhi ge, 1990) and, in so doing, regain some of the ground she had lost to her critics in the late 1950s.

Given its canonical status, it is understandable that most scholars in mainland China have focused their attention on *The Song of Youth* as an unusual, and undeniably popular, example of Chinese socialist realism while ignoring or dismissing Yang Mo's later works as artistic failures with little impact on the reading public. On the other hand, Anglophone critics, equally preoccupied with *The Song of Youth*, tend to regard the novel as either concerned with theoretical issues or derived from Western models. For instance, in their readings of the novel Meng Yue and Peter Button perceive, respectively, the displacement of the individual by the state/nationalism and the desire to speak to the "complexity of dialectical materialism's relationship to Chinese socialist

realist aesthetics,”¹ whereas Zhang Hong sees the novel as a “sedulous copy of *Jane Eyre*” as well as an offspring of the Cinderella story from *Grimm’s Fairy Tales*.² However, aside from the lack of textual and biographical support these claims share to various degrees, the discussions of *The Song of Youth* in isolation overlook Yang Mo’s subsequent efforts to grapple with issues recurring in different political environments, chiefly issues related to the relationship between intellectuals and the revolution. In view of the different emphases Yang Mo gave to the intellectual and/or intellectualized characters in her works over a span of forty years, I would argue that, as an establishment writer, she was above all motivated by a desire to stay in the Party’s good graces while trying to negotiate for some room for her fiction by resorting to the ambiguities in Marxism and, more directly, to the Party’s changing policies and orientations. As a case study, Yang Mo’s career can certainly demonstrate the difficulties an establishment writer faced in China as well as the opportunities he/she could utilize.

Yang Mo was clearly mindful of the mandate of thought reform, the centerpiece of the Party’s policies concerning intellectuals in the early 1950s, as she began writing and rewriting the first edition of *The Song of Youth*. To shorten the class gap Lin Daojing has to cross in her transformation she turned Lin into an embodiment of class oppression (being the daughter of a poor peasant girl forced into concubinage), an exploited child and a commodity in the eyes of her bourgeois family. The need to imagine Lin’s genealogical and experiential affinity with the working people, however, did not displace Yang Mo’s autobiographical tendency to the point of preventing her from casting Lin as, by and large, a petty bourgeois intellectual who embraces, in the first stage of her growth, such May Fourth values as love, personal autonomy and freedom from familial and social restraints. More importantly, even Lin’s further growth has little to do with the working people, who, as marginal characters in the novel, only arouse Lin’s sympathy and pity with their extreme poverty and misery. Intellectual in nature, thought reform for Lin means the replacement of May Fourth values by Marxism as the guideline for action and, as such, it has everything to do with books, especially Marxist tracts that enable her to see the world in a new light and find the direction she should take in life. In the meantime, the revolution itself is portrayed as an affair of the educated and the enlightened rather than a broad-based social phenomenon sparked by the suffering of the working people, as can be seen in the depiction of the student rally in Beijing that serves as the climax of the novel.

Though hampered by the didactic mandate of socialist realism that resulted in the simplification of some important characters, Yang Mo’s realist impulse managed to demonstrate itself not only in the overall trajectory of Lin’s transformation but also in the vicissitudes of Lin’s mind. For all the guidance from her mentors and for all the efforts she makes to follow in their footsteps, Lin’s ideological growth is by no means unidirectional, unhesitant or unproblematic. When faced with danger or setbacks on her revolutionary journey she still cannot help feeling weak, dejected or even nostalgic from time to time. In fact the complexity of her mental state reminds us of “Raging Torrents”

1 See Meng Yue, pp. 130-1 and Peter Button, p. 213.

2 See Zhang Hong, p. 6.

(Nutao), a short story Yang Mo wrote in 1937 about a young activist struggling with her love for her sick child as she answers the call of the Party. Similar to what happens in the prototypical story, Lin's private feelings show that Yang Mo still managed to provide Lin with a range of behavioral options even in the process of merging her into the impersonal force of History and the cause of the Party. More significantly, although the novel ends with Lin's final integration into the collective cause of the revolution, Yang Mo's continuous attention to the common concerns in the Bildungsroman, including the concerns with Lin's inner life, her striving for knowledge of the world and her individual development, highlights rather than erases the role of the self in making its own choices in life. In the end these concerns of the Bildungsroman, essentially a bourgeois literary genre premised on fundamental beliefs such as personal autonomy, potentiality and creativity, turn out to be not entirely compatible with the demand for conformity imposed by the Party to harness individual energy for its own purposes.

As symptoms of what Leo Ou-fan Lee terms the "sincerity of the author," a desire to be true to both external reality and the author's internal self and a crucial characteristic of May Fourth literature,³ Yang Mo's concerns with Lin's personal experience and perspective were harshly criticized by Guo Kai, a worker from Beijing Electron Tube Factory, in an article published in the February issue of *China Youth* in 1959.⁴ Intimidated by Guo's charges made in the spirit of Mao Zedong's "Yan'an Talks" and worried that Guo, who she learned had been repeatedly encouraged to write his article as a class representative of workers, might have political backing from above,⁵ Yang Mo spent much of 1959 revising the novel to emphasize, among other things, Lin's thought reform through her integration with the working people.

The most significant revision in the second edition of *The Song of Youth* was the addition of eight chapters that portray Lin's interactions with poor peasants. Ordered by her Communist mentor Jiang Hua as a crucial revolutionary exercise/test, Lin's stay in the countryside introduces a new element in her consciousness—an awareness of her own inextricable connection with the exploitative classes because of her birth and the necessity of atoning for their sins on her part, as noted by critics such as Jin Hongyu and Gu Peng.⁶ A telling example of this awareness can be found in Lin's guilt toward Zheng Defu, father of a childhood friend and her father's former tenant farmer. Initially puzzled by Zheng's intense hostility toward her, Lin finally comes to understand that she herself deserves the hatred when she learns that her father had not only exploited Zheng economically but also raped his wife and driven her to suicide. The recognition of her own sin of being born into the wrong class produces a lasting effect on Lin's psyche. Even when Zheng warms up to Lin after realizing she is not her father's daughter any more but a daughter of the revolution Lin still cannot forgive herself. No longer seeing herself as related to the working people through her mother, Lin pushes herself into the enemy camp to emphasize the necessity of thought reform.

3 See Leo Ou-fan Lee, p. 364.

4 See Guo Kai, pp. 405-16.

5 See Yang Mo's diary entry of February 29, 1959, in Yang Mo (1945-1965, 1994a), pp. 352-3.

6 See Jin Hongyu, pp. 28-9 and Gu Peng, p. 67.

Lin's self-loathing, certainly triggered by the Party's distrust of intellectuals because of their class background, is debilitating in that, while highlighting the insoluble problem of Lin's political unreliability due to her birth, it refuses to acknowledge her as a genuine revolutionary agent or grant her the possibility of becoming one. Thus prevented from truly joining the revolution, a preserve for members of the working classes who develop their tendency toward revolution through life experiences rather than books, Lin ends up becoming an observer on the sidelines. Tasked with the job of spying on a landlord and mobilizing the landlord's farmhands at a time when the Party is organizing poor peasants to steal a harvest of wheat, Lin, ironically, plays no important role in the peasant struggle, since the Party has already planted a cart-driver in the landlord's compound as her leader who keeps her in the dark about the specifics of the impending raid. Left with little to do, Lin can only watch (and imagine) from a distance and rhapsodize about the raid to herself as it is launched one night. She even has to depend on a maidservant to steal a blacklist to save her and her comrades on the list. Though billed as a revolutionary test, Lin's stay in the countryside only intensifies her realization of her own inferiority to the peasants in terms of class-consciousness, political agency and leadership. If *The Song of Youth* can be read as a "socialist Bildungsroman" intended to show the "correct" way of a communist youth's revolutionary socialization, as Mingwei Song argues,⁷ Lin's recognition of her own innate otherness vis-à-vis the peasants in the revised edition only makes it impossible for her to truly merge herself with the working people.

No longer a singular, unified psychological entity, Lin in the revised edition is torn in her mind and keeps examining her own thoughts and emotions to remove the mental residues of the petty bourgeoisie. On the other hand, with her social identity already clearly defined by external forces, identity not subject to change or even to critical reflection, she loses the freedom to shape her own destiny or form her own relationships with others. However, instead of putting intellectuals in their "rightful" position in the revolutionary ranks, namely a subordinate position in which they will have to constantly try, and fail, to prove themselves, the spotlight on Lin's supposed deficiency only shows how vexing the questions still remain about intellectuals and their role in the revolution. If, as in Lin's case, the class affiliation of an intellectual is determined once and for all by birth regardless of what he/she does later in life, how can thought reform be successful for an intellectual born into a bourgeois family and, futile as it is, what is the point of thought reform for the intellectual in question? Since few intellectuals come from proletarian families, families with no financial means for their children to earn the title "intellectual" through education, are the vast majority of intellectuals simply disqualified from joining the revolution by their impure class background? To these questions Yang Mo's answers turned out to be rather self-contradictory in that, while forced to acknowledge the crucial importance of birth, she still insisted on viewing revolutionary intellectuals as educators for those with revolutionary potentialities, even though these intellectuals themselves might not have come from a working-class background. After all isn't it true that Lin Daojing would never join the revolution in the first place without being introduced to Marxism by Lu Jiachuan, son

7 Mingwei Song, p. 109, p. 116 and p. 125.

of a schoolteacher and a revolutionary intellectual par excellence? Aren't Lin's three revolutionary mentors (Lu Jiachuan, Jiang Hua and Lin Hong) all intellectuals? And if we agree with Lenin's famous dictum that without revolutionary theory there would be no revolutionary movement, can't we argue that revolution would be unthinkable without its intellectuals acting as carriers and transmitters of revolutionary theory? It is worth noting that, forced by her critics to highlight the ideological insights of the peasants in the expanded version of her novel, Yang Mo failed to discover the peasants' endogenous revolutionary discourse and, as a result, she equipped them with a discourse of class analysis in their education of Lin, the same discourse employed by Jiang Hua and then by Lin herself in her self-reflections. For all the emphasis on the disparity in political consciousness between Lin and the peasants, their only difference lies in the latter's ability to understand an exogenous discourse in a more concrete, personal way. In the meantime, with all their revolutionary potentialities, the peasants still need to be directed by an outside agent, materialized in the novel by Jiang Hua as the organizer and leader of the peasant struggle.

Although Yang Mo's revision of *The Song of Youth* has been criticized by some scholars as her hasty capitulation to political pressure that results in an incoherent, unrealistic plotline and impoverishment of Lin Daojing's mental world,⁸ it is clear that political pressure fell short of forcing her to abandon the belief in the enlightening role revolutionary intellectuals could play. Indeed this belief remained a fundamental article of faith for her, as can be seen in *Dawn Is About to Break in the East* (Dongfang yuxiao), a novel she drafted in the early 1970s and revised twice in 1978 and 1979. Basing the novel not on her personal experience but on articles Mao Zedong wrote during the War of Resistance against Japan and, especially, doctrines such as the "Three Prominences," the official cultural guideline during the Cultural Revolution, Yang Mo created Cao Hongyuan, a revolutionary knight-errant, as the main hero of the novel.⁹ Interestingly, even in this ideologically strait-jacketed work traces of the belief in revolutionary intellectuals still remain visible. First, the hero, though a poor tenant farmer's son and a worker himself to boot, is intellectualized by his auditing of college courses in philosophy, literature and medicine and it is obvious that these intellectual activities enhance his revolutionary abilities as well as his worldview. More importantly, though a knight-errant embodying the virtues of altruism, justice and courage, the hero is by no means a *deus ex machina* capable of solving his problems all by himself. Instead, he always seeks advice from his mentor, a former law student, at times of difficulty. The refusal to grant total self-confidence and self-sufficiency to the main hero on the one hand and the concretization of the wisdom of the Party in the intellectual mentor on the other indicate that even when the exaltation of proletarian heroes was the order of the day Yang Mo still tried to call attention to the indispensability of intellectuals and intellectual qualities in the revolution.

Having recognized what she considered to be the defects in *Dawn Is About to Break in the East*, Yang Mo began to remodel the novel into *The Song of Beauty* in the early

8 See, for example, Hong Zicheng's comments on the revision in Hong Zicheng, Li Ping, pp. 156-7.

9 See Yang Mo's diary entry of November 5, 1978, in Yang Mo (1966-1990, 1994b), p. 104.

1980s by, among other things, expanding the portrayal of Liu Ming, a medical student, and reviving Lin Daojing and Lu Jiachuan. In many ways Liu Ming is Lin Daojing's double, since she not only looks exactly like Lin but also behaves like Lin, frequently absorbed in her own conflicting thoughts and emotions, especially her thoughts and emotions about her mentor/lover Cao Hongyuan. There are, however, some significant differences between the two. First, compared with Lin, Liu is marked not just by her critical attitude towards a flawed social order and an eagerness to change the flawed social order but also by her medical expertise, a feature bearing witness to the new respect for scientific knowledge in the campaign for the Four Modernizations the Party launched in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. To emphasize Liu's medical know-how as an essential part of her contribution to the revolution, Yang Mo makes Liu a skillful surgeon as well as an internist despite her incomplete medical training (two years in college), stretching the limit of credibility even as she acknowledges the complexity of modern (Western) medicine. Secondly, Liu is characterized by her reliability despite her sentimentality. Of all the comrades she is the only person to whom Cao Hongyuan tells about his secret mission in occupied Beiping and, as it turns out, she never wavers in her faith in Cao, even when her comrades believe the rumor that Cao has gone off to surrender to the enemy. Once again the hero's total trust in a worthy intellectual is a sign of the times, when intellectuals in China became partners in socialist construction rather than subjects of thought reform. Significantly, while setting Liu up as a model of knowledge, rectitude and dependability Yang Mo contrasts her with her foils in the revolutionary ranks, namely those hypocritical, calculating cadres who pursue their selfish goals in the name of revolution and, when thwarted, would go to any length to take vengeance. When Liu rejects a personnel director's attempt to match her with a commander, couched in remarks that stress her need for thought reform from the commander, she is labeled as a "Trotskyite," a false charge that eventually lands her in a harsh, lengthy investigation in *The Song of Heroes*. Adopting a moral, rather than political, perspective now, Yang Mo shows the existence of human weaknesses in the revolutionary ranks. Hence reform is still needed, just not for Liu but for her flawed comrades and superiors.

In addition to her attention to the moral complexity of the revolutionary camp, Yang Mo also sees love in a new, more positive, light in *The Song of Beauty*. Whereas in *Dawn Is About to Break in the East* Cao Hongyuan provides an example for Liu Ming by showing her how to sacrifice love for the revolution, in *The Song of Beauty* Cao realizes he should not ignore his feelings and inspires Liu with his pledge of eternal love for her. That Yang Mo details Cao's pangs of love at all shows that this hero is no longer molded as a "Bolshevik man" who consciously defines himself solely with his sociopolitical missions and refuses to let his personal desires or emotions deflect him from his historical role. Instead of functioning as a harmful distraction or impediment, love is now seen as an emotional force that binds the lovers together and helps them support each other through thick and thin on their revolutionary journeys. Contrary to the common criticism in Communist China that the feeling of love between a man and a woman was a symptom of petty bourgeois intellectuals' mentality, Yang Mo rehabilitates love as an indicator of emotional richness and an important part of revolutionary life. In the meantime, as she depicts their emotional vicissitudes she also brings her hero and heroine closer to human size.

As requisites for true heroes and heroines, signs of emotional richness are also evident in Lu Jiachuan and Lin Daojing, both making a few cameo appearances under assumed names in *The Song of Beauty*. To be sure emotional complexity already exists in the minds of both Lu and Lin in *The Song of Youth*, most notably in Lu's struggles to suppress his attraction to Lin and in Lin's sentimentality and, especially, in her mixed feelings of joy, pain and wistfulness at the pivotal moment when she agrees to Jiang Hua's request to upgrade their relationship a step beyond that between two comrades. However, in *The Song of Youth* emotional complexity, though recognized as a natural phenomenon in mental life, is still considered a flaw to be corrected so that mental energy can be more pragmatically and efficiently channeled. This is borne out in the example of Sister Liu, a former worker who for a while works underground with Lin as Lin's leader and, obviously, role model. Seeing how shaken and impulsive Lin becomes at the news of Lu Jiachuan's execution (which turns out to be untrue in Yang Mo's later works), Sister Liu proceeds to tell Lin how she lost her husband and son for the revolution in such a calm tone as if she were telling a story about someone else. It is precisely this total triumph of will over emotionality that enables this model revolutionary to devote her whole being to the cause she embraces. As it turns out, part of Lin Daojing's growth in *The Song of Youth* involves subjecting personal feelings to the demands of the revolution and, so required, she feels she has no reason to reject Jiang Hua, a true Bolshevik, even though she still remains deeply in love with Lu Jiachuan. In *The Song of Beauty*, however, instead of surrendering love to the demands of the revolution, Yang Mo directs her attention to the moral and ethical complications of love with a description of a meeting between Lin Daojing and Lu Jiachuan at the end of the novel. Still in love with each other but with Lin now married to Jiang Hua, the two are thrilled by the unexpected meeting but remain reluctant to express their true feelings, only holding hands and looking into each other's eyes as tears stream down their faces. Given its illicit nature, the lingering love between the two is of course inexpressible in the normative moral discourse governing personal conduct in the revolutionary ranks, yet the revelation of its very existence exhibits a yearning for true love that refuses to be contained by moral precepts. Whereas Lin Daojing's acceptance of Jiang Hua in *The Song of Youth* affirms an eclipse of love by obligation her reunion with Lu Jiachuan in *The Song of Beauty* legitimizes true love as an ideal in defiance of the conventional restraints on marriage and, in so doing, hints at the troubles lurking in Lin's duty-bound relationship with Jiang Hua.

Already discernible in *The Song of Beauty*, a tendency toward realism, namely a willingness to acknowledge what has actually transpired in the revolution, becomes stronger in *The Song of Heroes*, the last novel Yang Mo wrote in her career. Unlike its predecessors that focus on either a heroine's political growth or a hero's stirring exploits, *The Song of Heroes* is taken up to a considerable extent by the disturbing "Elimination of Trotskyites Campaign" among the Communists. Historically Chinese Trotskyites did not form an influential, widespread movement, yet, as Michael Dutton points out, Trotskyism played a key role in the iconography of the CCP as an important link in a chain of enemies. As it blurred the distinction between friend and enemy, it became the organizational manifestation of all Party fears and doubts about itself and its force.¹⁰ Incorporating what she had learned about the Huxi Incident, a notorious

10 See Michael Dutton, p. 100ff.

purge in a Shandong Communist base area that resulted in hundreds of executions and imprisonments of guiltless Communist cadres in 1939, Yang Mo offers stories about the detentions of Liu Ming, Cao Hongyuan and Lin Daojing on trumped-up charges as well as stories of unjustified executions of some most dedicated Communists, making clear how paranoia, machination, self-preservation and blind obedience all contribute to the tragedy of the revolution devouring its own. To further discredit the baseless campaign, she even goes so far as to make Lu Jiachuan use personal observation and historical evidence to claim, in a debate with Jiang Hua, that the vast majority of Chinese Trotskyites are patriots and that Chen Duxiu, the spiritual leader of Chinese Trotskyites, did not commit treason, as alleged by Kang Sheng, the Communist police chief in Yan'an and a main architect of the anti-Trotskyites campaign. Here the exoneration of the Trotskyites by the most perspicacious and courageous hero is indeed a far cry from a caricature in the revised edition of *The Song of Youth*, in which the Trotskyites are ridiculed as secret agents funded by the Nationalist government to sabotage the student movement from within. Emerging from the political environment of the late 1980s, the depiction of the anti-Trotskyites campaign in *The Song of Heroes* begins to set some historical records straight and admit some of the mistakes the Party made in the past.

As Yang Mo acknowledges the Party's fallibility, a new feature begins to appear in the heroes of *The Song of Heroes*, namely their fearless intellectual independence and, consequently, their readiness to question, or even challenge, the Party on specific issues, if not on the Party's overall authority. Insisting on seeing, thinking and judging for themselves, true heroes such as Lu Jiachuan and Lin Daojing stand in pointed contrast to servile Party apparatchiks, most notably Jiang Hua, who in the novel turns a blind eye to reality and even permits the arrest of his own wife in the anti-Trotskyites campaign, even though he knows her innocence only too well. Finally Jiang Hua pays for his obstinate adherence to the Party's united-front policy with his own death at the hands of a treacherous landlord's henchman and provides a lesson in blood. Here Yang Mo's patent criticism of Jiang Hua reflects a sea change in her conception of what the relationship should be between the Communist and the Party. From a Leninist viewpoint Jiang Hua, with his unquestioning loyalty to the Party, his dedication to his assigned task of the moment and his self-discipline, can easily be held up as a model Communist. In *The Song of Heroes*, however, he is depicted as an unthinking cog that embodies an ethic of subservience to patriarchal authority, an ethic reflecting not only the authoritarian orientation of the Party but also the legacy of China's long feudal tradition. Coupled with the glorification of Lu Jiachuan and Lin Daojing for their independence, the criticism of Jiang Hua for his servility in effect endorses a new image of the model Communist, an image characterized by, first and foremost, hallmarks of the modern intellectual such as critical reason and personal autonomy. Meanwhile the center of perception is also subtly but unmistakably shifted from the external political authority of the Party to the individuals in possession of intellect and determination to maintain their integrity even at the cost of their own self-interests. In the end self-realization is achieved in spite of, not because of, the higher hand of the Party.

Serious as it is, lack of intellectual independence is not Jiang Hua's only problem in *The Song of Heroes*. Perceived sometimes from the perspectives of his comrades such as Lu Jiachuan but mainly from Lin Daojing's viewpoint as his wife, Jiang Hua's flaws also include jealousy, stubbornness and, above all, his aloofness as a husband who

always puts work above love. Where do these deflationary characteristics come from? In *The Song of Youth*, if we recall, Lin Daojing accepts Jiang Hua's request for love primarily because he is a Bolshevik and, busy as they both are with their duties, they do not get to spend much time together. Even when they do most of their time is spent on political edification, with Jiang as an eloquent teacher and Lin an eager student. In other words the need for love, though recognized, is certainly not prioritized. In contrast, in *The Song of Heroes* Lin Daojing is not engrossed in her work to the point of neglecting her emotional needs as a wife and, as she takes a closer look at Jiang Hua, she realizes that this Bolshevik man, physically absent most of the time and, more importantly, lacking in consideration and affection, is simply not available for her emotionally. Largely modeled on Yang Mo's real-life husband Ma Jianmin,¹¹ the changed image of Jiang Hua reflects an attempt to humanize a previously idealized hero and, at the same time, signals the comeback of love as an essential condition for marriage. In a way the validation of love connects *The Song of Heroes* to the social imaginary of the self in modern China that, as Haiyan Lee points out, heralds the rise of the private, the personal, and the everyday.¹² Specifically, it amounts to a criticism of the excessive intrusion of politics into private life, since Jiang Hua's emotional unavailability is a direct result of his blind faith in the Party and his wholehearted devotion to his work. In other words Jiang Hua's lack of love is, after all, closely related to his lack of independence. In the meantime, the image of Lu Jiachuan, a hero idealized by Yang Mo throughout her career, is injected with not just love but also his compassion for his unjustly persecuted comrades, a virtue that stands in poignant contrast to Jiang Hua's excessive *partiinost* and makes Lu a better human being and a kinder Communist.

Looking back on Yang Mo's career, we notice that, while making significant adjustments and even reversals in her fiction in response to the changes in the political environment, Yang Mo managed to uphold her belief in the revolutionary intellectual. I would argue that her maintenance of this core conviction even in adverse circumstances was made possible not by personal courage but by, first and foremost, Marxism's ambivalent attitude toward intellectuals. While noticing the lack of "revolutionary steadfastness" among the students, writers and other educated people involved in workers' movements, Marx in his early work believed that scholars and philosophers must guide such movements toward socialist revolution, even though he never explained how these individuals, normally from privileged families, would develop a revolutionary consciousness stronger than that of the oppressed workers. Similarly, while attacking "bourgeois intellectuals" for their individualism, complicity in class exploitation, and incapacity to submit to political discipline, Lenin also believed the "theory of socialism" would arise among the "revolutionary socialist intelligentsia," who in turn would bring revolutionary thinking to the working class, a class only capable of developing at most a "trade-union consciousness" on its own.¹³ Clearly the

11 See Yang Mo's diary entry of December 18, 1987, in Yang Mo (1966-1990, 1994b), p. 296-7.

12 Haiyan Lee, pp. 9-10.

13 For a brief discussion of the ambivalent views on intellectuals held by Marx and Lenin, see Eddy U (2009), pp. 618-9.

emphasis put by Marx and Lenin on the revolutionary intelligentsia as “the ultimate guardian” of socialist revolution would provide a strong theoretical foundation for Yang Mo’s abiding faith in the revolutionary intellectual. To say the least, aside from the confident statements about the revolutionary intelligentsia by Marx and Lenin, the personal stories of both the founders of Marxism and the vast majority of the Communist leaders in China, including Mao Zedong himself, would lend support to Yang Mo’s belief that a non-proletarian class background was not necessarily an insurmountable obstacle for the revolutionary intellectual. Secondly, as Eddy U points out, what exemplified the Party’s united-front policy of the early 1950s and justified the Thought Reform campaign was an assumption that intellectuals, no matter how careerist or anti-revolutionary they had been, could turn over a new leaf through diligent study and reflection.¹⁴ In fact what we see in the transformation of Lin Daojing in the first edition of *The Song of Youth*, finished in 1956, is an illustration of the belief in the educability of intellectuals, a belief that guided Yang Mo’s portrayals of the majority of the intellectuals, including senior professors, in her novel. Thirdly, caught between its deep-seated suspicion against intellectuals and its need for intellectuals in socialist construction, the Party often wavered in its dealings with intellectuals in the 1950s. Even when it insisted on the necessity of thought reform its top leaders sometimes offered rather upbeat assessments of intellectuals. For instance, at an important Party conference on intellectuals in January 1956 Zhou Enlai claimed, in a report he delivered on behalf of the CCP Central Committee, that intellectuals in China had gone through fundamental changes in the previous six years and the vast majority of them had become part of the working class.¹⁵ Three months later the CCP Central Committee issued a directive calling for the recruitment of one third of the country’s senior intellectuals into the Party in the next seven years, a directive immediately followed by a nation-wide drive to urge senior intellectuals, such as college professors, to join the Party. Zhou’s claim and the recruitment drive show that the Party’s assessment of intellectuals was not always negative. Of course the Party’s view on intellectuals turned dramatically positive after the Cultural Revolution, when intellectuals, especially scientists, were needed more than ever for the journey toward the Four Modernizations. Historically coinciding with the two active phases of Yang Mo’s career, one in the early 1950s and the other lasting from the 1970s to the late 1980s, these positive views can certainly be seen as cues for her portrayals of intellectuals.

Yang Mo’s works show how an establishment writer negotiated with the ideological environments in China in the 1950s and in the reform era of the 1980s. For her part, Yang Mo certainly remained alert to the Party’s policy changes and tried to keep abreast of the latest political trend. For instance, to show her support for the drive toward the Four Modernizations, from 1979 to 1982 she not only wrote a glowing reportage work but also made a motion to the National People’s Congress and sent letters to numerous top Party and government leaders on behalf of a young microbiologist whose

14 See Eddy U (2007), p. 978.

15 For the CCP top leadership’s wavering views on intellectuals in the 1950s, see Yang Fengcheng, pp. 109-16.

work she believed had been unjustly neglected, even though she did not even have the rudimentary knowledge to make any credible scientific judgment. Given the need to keep and improve her standing with the Party, standing that had a significant impact on her reputation and material well-being, she would be compelled to make continuous adjustments in her fiction to catch up with the Party. Finally, as the Party began to allow, or even encourage, intellectuals to look for historical truths in certain areas in the 1980s, she managed to rebut some of the propaganda she had helped to spread in the past. The changes and inconsistencies in her fiction show how the political environments she faced conditioned and constrained her ideological negotiations.

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