

MORTALS ON THE FRINGE: THE CHINESE EXPATRIATES
IN AMERICA AS REFLECTED IN PAI HSIEN-YUNG'S
"NEW YORKERS" SERIES

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Pai Hsien-yung (白先勇 1937-) has been conceded to be one of the most eminent modern Chinese writers today.¹ In point of the subject matter, intrinsic meaning, and technique shown in his writings, he is indeed a writer we should study more in spite of some unfavorable opinions against him and his work.²

Pai's representative works are the "Taipei People (台北人 1971)", a collection of short stories about the Chinese mainlanders stranded in Taipei after the Communists occupied the mainland in 1949, and the "New Yorkers (紐約客)" series, dealing with the Chinese expatriates in America. We find that most critics have focused on the "Taipei People" and there has yet to emerge a comprehensive study devoted to the "New Yorkers". For this reason, instead of exploring the "Taipei People" again, this study will give its attention to the "New Yorkers" in the hope that a broader vision and a further understanding of Pai's works might be achieved, and in addition, that it might make some contribution to developing modern Chinese literature.³

As of December 1979, Pai had published three "New Yorkers" stories: "A Celestial in Mundane Exile (謫仙記 1965)", "Complaints of a Celestial in Mundane Exile (謫仙怨 1969)", and "Nocturne (夜曲 1979)".⁴ All are concerned with the plight of the Chinese expatriates in the United States.

In American writer Ernest Hemingway's famous novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), the expatriate issue is also under focus. At one point, a character in it remarked to one of the Americans living in Paris: "You're an expatriate. You've lost touch with the soil. Fake European standards have ruined you. You drink yourself to death. . . . You are an expatriate, see? You hang around cafes."⁵ So to Hemingway's mind, expatriates are those people who live without a homeland and without an ideal, losing touch with the soil. But in this paper, the term "expatriates" particularly refers to those Chinese who went to America originally for studying, but who later chose to settle down for some reason or another. Gradually they became the New Yorkers portrayed by Pai Hsien-yung, who, without a homeland, got lost in the dilemma of identity, and were often beset with a sense of emptiness and nostalgia.

Reading Pai's three "New Yorkers" stories closely, we discover that they are developed basically around a running motif—the pursuit of identity—which serves as an internal link unifying these stories. This can be testified to by the frequency of its appearance, which often indicates the degree of importance the author intends to give to it. Pai indeed has displayed his deep concern for the Chinese expatriates by describing how they act on foreign soil. Behind his descriptions, there is always a message: there must be something wrong with the Chinese expatriates. And through this message, the motif of identity-pursuit is reflected again and again in his stories.

By "identity" here I include in its definition not only the aspects of who somebody is, or what something is, or the characteristics that mark a person out from

others, but also the meaning and significance of a person's existence. American writer Allen Wheelis has given a definition of identity as follows:

Identity is a coherent sense of self. It depends upon the awareness that one's endeavors and one's life make sense, that they are meaningful in the context in which life is lived. It also depends upon stable values, and upon the conviction that one's actions and values are harmoniously related. It is a sense of wholeness, of integration, of knowing what is right and what is wrong and of being able to choose.⁶

Psychologist Erik H. Erikson has also defined the nature of identity by pointing out that "a subjective sense of an invigorating sameness and continuity is a sense of identity." This sense of identity "involves some sense of continuity, of anticipatory and more inclusive identity, of a future in which meaningful roles can be played."⁷

The above explanation should have conveyed the essence of identity. We can assert that identity is a kind of important personal consciousness correlating with personal dignity, status, and belongingness, which gives meaning and depth to one's life. Its absence will lead one towards a feeling of emptiness and spiritual discomfort. So some people also consider identity to be "self" or "ego" which is generally sought after by a person for the purpose of affirming his position as a human being in society. American scholar Robert Langbaum has noticed that the word "identity" has become a badge of contemporary relevance, that our society has been called an "identity society", and that "the young, to the consternation of their parents, give a higher priority to realizing themselves as human beings than to making a success at careers."⁸ William Glasser even says that identity signifies everything humane and progressive.⁹ All these indicate that identity is really of great relevance to modern people and modern society.

The biggest problem which most Chinese in America encounter nowadays is also the identity problem, just as American journalist Merv Block puts it in his essay published in *Time* magazine: the Chinese in America are "among the most alien of alien" and "the most perplexing puzzle for all the Chinese, however, is identity."¹⁰ The "New Yorkers" series is literally going on this motif by depicting the Chinese expatriates' different reactions to their dilemma. Hence, on the whole, Pai's "New Yorkers" can be regarded as a case study of how the Chinese search for their identities in an alien world.

As a matter of fact, Pai himself is also a man of the New Yorkers' type. Contending with nostalgia, alienation, and the identity problem from time to time himself, he has created his characters in an empathetic way, sharing in their feelings. His personal background and life experiences are correlated closely with his works. Judging from French critic H.A. Taine's criteria, we can actually view Pai as a product of his own nation, age, and milieu.¹¹

Born in Kweilin, Kwangshi (廣西桂林) in 1937, Pai is the son of General Pai Cheng-shi (白崇禧), a very powerful military leader in the nationalist army from 1927 to 1949. Grown up in such a distinguished family, Pai lived a cozy life during his childhood and had many chances to observe and contact those people and things in his father's circle at first hand. This may account for why many of his characters

are figures of unusual backgrounds who often undergo vicissitude in their lives.

Pai moved to Taiwan as a teenager with his family in 1951 after the Communists occupied the Chinese mainland. After completing his college education at the National University of Taiwan in 1963, he went to America to pursue further studies. This was a great turning point in his life. Before that, he was living under the protection of a secure environment, but after going abroad, his families were no longer by his side and he had to learn to take care of himself when faced with different problems. Under the impact of a different culture and society, he was shocked mentally. As a stranger on foreign soil, a sense of loneliness, puzzlement and drift arose naturally in his heart. This is usually called "identity crisis" by sociologists, and almost all Chinese living abroad have experienced it more or less. It is a time of disturbance and anxiety when people are deeply confused by the questions: Who am I? Why am I here? What do I live for? Pai's New Yorkers are really like that. Their psychological state is similar to Chen Tze-on (陳子昂 661-702)'s depiction in his famous poem, "Song on Climbing Yu Chou Terrace (登幽州臺歌)":

Behind me I do not see the ancient men
before me I do not see the ones to come.
Thinking of the endlessness of heaven
and earth,
alone in despair, my tears fall down.¹²

It is understandable that Pai borrows this poem as an epitaph for his stories for the poem has strongly crystallized the subconscious uneasiness of his New Yorkers: As expatriates, they were surrounded by a sense of aloneness and panic since they had left far behind them their fatherland, and ahead of them, they were faced with a future of uncertainties. In some articles Pai has described how he felt at that time:

During the seven years in the U.S., I was just like a transient. Each time when coming back to my room, I never had the feeling of being home, but still seemed to stay adrift.¹³

.....

During that period, the more important influence upon my writings was the discovery and pursuit of personal identity. Like many other Chinese students, I am shocked by alien cultures upon going abroad, and thus was placed in the so-called identity crisis. My personal value of judgements and conviction had to be re-evaluated.... The longer I left my fatherland, the deeper was my nostalgia for my own culture. And so I began to write the 'New Yorkers' stories, and later, the "Taipei People" stories.¹⁴

Judged from the above self-description, we discover that Pai was driven to write out of the strong impact of circumstance. In order to channel his emotional pressure and melancholy, he realized that the best way was to write them out via the literary arena.

The major characters in the "New Yorkers" resemble Pai himself, more or less, in that they all are students studying abroad, coming from well-to-do families. However, their reactions were quite different when faced with the challenge of the identity

crisis. Obviously, Pai uses them as the representatives of different types of Chinese students abroad.

The first type of students can be represented by Li Tung (李彤) in "A Celestial in Mundane Exile". The Li Tung type refuses to compromise with the reality of living in and adapting to American society, clinging on, rather, to the "bygone good old days". Thus, in a society of whites, this type fits the outsider, unable to assimilate into the surrounding society, feeling rootless and living without a definite goal. Li Tung was a typical character of this kind. She was born in a noble and distinguished family. Her father was a high ranking government official, residing in a magnificent German-style villa in Shanghai. As her parents' only child, she was spoiled since her childhood days. But in 1946, upon going to America to study, Li Tung found herself far from her parents and homeland. Everything seemed all right for her in the first few years; however, in 1949, the situation was drastically changed when the mainland fell to the Chinese Communists. Her parents lost all their fortune and were drowned during a shipwreck at sea when they tried to flee the mainland. That was a terrible blow to Li Tung. From then on, she was forced to stay in America to begin her bitter wrestling with her dilemma.

The title, "A Celestial in Mundane Exile" is deliberately used for the story, which alludes to the "Fallen Angel", or the "banished celestial".¹⁵ Here it refers to Li Tung, who was originally like an angel living in a paradise without a worry. But shortly after going to America, she seemed to become a banished celestial, having fallen down from Heaven to the mundane world where she had to face different troubles. On the surface, Li Tung led a kind of colorful life: playing mahjong, dancing, gambling, doing everything as she liked. She enjoyed moving, changing her jobs, and arguing with her white superiors. It seemed that she was very compulsive and capricious, but as a matter of fact, these were only her ways of ignoring the reality in a search to find her own personal identity. Inside herself, her heart was permeated with sadness, emptiness, and the memories of her good old days. She usually called herself "China", and even before drowning herself in Italy, she still signed "China" as her name on a postcard sent back to her friends, which no doubt, should have revealed her psychological hang-up: she could never forget her homeland and her personal as well as national identities. That had become a haunting sadness to her.

Li Tung always impressed people with her proud, untameable and capricious character; but later, she appeared terribly haggard and exhausted during her revels. At one point, she had fallen asleep in a rattan rocking chair, her head "inclined to her right shoulder, her hands were on the armrests, her long slender fingers dangling limply, her long dark red skirt almost touched the floor."¹⁶ It reflected here that after her long contention with reality, Li had become bitterly disappointed and disillusioned and intended to give up her useless struggle.

Li Tung's death was so sudden that some readers have felt it almost unacceptable. But actually it is nothing strange if we realize the shifts in Li Tung's inside feelings: how she was changed by struggle to disillusionment. Not a few Chinese students immersed in the slough of dilemma behave like this. Many finally become prey to their tragic circumstances. Li Tung is just a typical character among them.

The story appears more tragic when Li Tung chose to drown herself to get rid of

her dilemma. Since her parents were drowned at sea with the ship the "S.S. Peace", we may guess that perhaps Li Tung wished to reunite with them through that way. For her, this choice was better than the alternative of wasting her life as an outsider on foreign soil. From this angle, Li Tung's committing suicide can be viewed as a sad but significant action, not a despondent resignation. Could it be that her ending her life actively was another one of the ways in which she sought to acquire her identity?

Huang Feng-i (黃鳳儀), the heroine in "Complaints of a Celestial in Mundane Exile", is the representative of the second type of students. She was also a girl of the Fallen Angel's kind. Her father had been a very important Kuomintang official living in a splendid French-style villa in Shanghai. After she and her family moved to Taiwan with the government in 1949 as a result of the political situation, her father died and the family's plight changed. Nevertheless, her mother still did her best to send her abroad to study for the purpose of honoring her family name and gaining face. The students of this group are actually not interested in study. But in Taiwan since "everyone has his eyes set on America, from college students to cooks. . . . Everyone wants to get out of this place",¹⁷ they are forcibly pushed to go abroad due to their parents' vanity and the social pressures around them. They are placed on foreign soil without even knowing what their purpose really is.

When faced with the pressure of identity crisis in America, Huang Feng-i gave way to the reality quickly. Since she found herself "no stuff for a scholar" (p. 91), the most important thing for her was to know how to survive in this society of whites. Her attitude toward life was revealed in a letter she wrote to her mother:

Walking among the torrent of the crowd in Times Square and being pushed forward by other people with my head upturned to see those rows of backward skyscrapers, I felt myself as petty as a pin-point. Obliterated in this cosmopolitan city of millions of people, I felt a real freedom: to and for freely without being interfered by anyone.... A great advantage of living in New York is that you will gradually forget your own identity....

Now I begin to take up a full-time job and drop out from school....After suffering two years at New York University, I come to a realization. Since America is the paradise of young people, then why not enjoy myself in this paradise when I am still so young? I like my present job in the Saloon because of the good pay. Here, making money is the chief aim of life.¹⁸

In order to survive the pressure in American society, Huang tried to ignore her past and personal dignity, and yielded to American realities. She assumed that a new identity for herself could be acquired by money. With this assumption, she even debased herself to make money by being a call girl waiting for the calls of different customers. That is far from her mother's original expectation of her, but she did not care since the pay was high. With a belief that if the problem of existence could be solved first, then everything would gradually become all right, many Chinese students pursue money even at the expense of their studies and dignity. But day after day, as

the years go by, their ideals and ambitions will be completely given up due to their resignation to the new plight. They become spiritually paralyzed and their existence is measured in terms of money. When this happens, the question of how to earn a living becomes the dominant motivation of their lives. Perhaps they still imagine that some day their distorted identity might be restored by means of the power of money, but in the long run, they will be disappointed because, after all, material life can never compensate for the loss of identity. Hence it can be foreseen that Huang Feng-i will inevitably fall a victim to circumstances since, under that condition, it is very difficult, almost impossible, that the identity she quested for would come to her.

Even for those Chinese who have achieved material success in America, identity is still an obsession. Wu Chen-to (吳振鐸),¹⁹ the protagonist in "Nocturne", is a good example. Comparatively speaking, "Nocturne" is the best-written story among the "New Yorkers" series. Wu Chen-to can be considered as an example of the third group of Chinese students, those who are ambitious and absorbed in their studies most of the time. After completing their education, they are eager to distinguish themselves in the society of whites through different approaches in the hope that some day they may acquire a new identity to signify their existence. In order to gain their ends, they are willing to conform thoroughly to white America, even at the expense of their Chinese descent.

Wu Chen-to is typically a man of this type. Coming from a doctor's family, he went to America to study before the Communists took over the mainland. His father had solemnly asked him to "master medicine and come back to China to save his own people upon completing his studies." (p. 9)²⁰ At that time he, too, had a noble dream: to set up free clinics for the poor in the countryside of northern Kiangsu. (p. 11) But later, instead of returning to China, he settled in New York for almost thirty years and turned out to be "a deserter from the front." (p. 28) During that period, in order to find an entry into New York's upper crust, he tried to forget his past and married a Jewish girl who was the daughter of a world-famous heart specialist. After his marriage, he didn't associate with Chinese at all, nor did he ever read anything in Chinese. All his friends were Americans. In this way, he thought he could achieve his identity. On the surface, he made it. He assumed his father-in-law's mantle, became an outstanding heart specialist himself and lived in one of the splendid apartments on Central Park West. But his "making it" was only materialistically, not psychologically. In fact, Wu Chen-to had been unhappy ever since, often obsessed with a sense of guilt and emptiness, which resulted in his divorce from his wife. In the long run he had to live by himself, alone once again as a miserable divorcé. But what was wrong with him? What caused his annoyance and uneasiness? The reason is that he could never forget his father's wishes to him, his own noble dream in those early days, and his inborn Chinese origin. Only when these were fulfilled could he really regain his personal and national identities and thus feel that his existence was significant. Otherwise, he would unavoidably be oppressed by a sense of guilt for his disconnection with Chinese people and things, and this haunted thinking gave him no peace. It is no wonder that when he confided his inward secret in New York to Lu Fang (呂芳), his sweetheart twenty-five years ago, his face twitched and his voice quavered:

"Lu Fang, sometimes when I thought of Kao Tzung-han, Liu Wei, and you, I couldn't help admiring you people. After all, you all went back; no matter what, you've done something for the country." (P. 24)

"I was jealous of Kao Tzung-han for another reason, too — I never admitted it. He had the courage to return to our country, and I didn't. It's weighed on my conscience for so many years. I felt I was a deserter from the front.

You know, my father, who was also a doctor, has been dead a long time....He always wanted me to go back to cure the illnesses of the Chinese people. You see, Lu Fang, I am a famous doctor now, but I never treated any Chinese patient, not one —" (pp. 28-29)

The passages above have fully disclosed the real reason why Wu Chen-to was so melancholy and unhappy during those years. "I never treated any Chinese patient, not one—" should be his hang-up which caused his suffering. It means that he had betrayed his father's solemn expectation to him and that he had cut ties with his people. Despite the fact that he was admired by people as a well-known doctor in New York, he still suffered emotional exclusion from his white friends. The emptiness and nothingness which his bitter reminiscences inflicted on him could never be removed by his materialistic success. Thus the identity he acquired through materialistic success is only a superficial illusion which could be broken easily any time like a bubble. Once the bubble was broken, a deeper infliction would ensue. In that case, he could not help but continue to act as a mortal on the fringe, leading an empty and disappointed life.

On that account, as far as the three major characters in the New Yorker stories are concerned, we can see that what obsessed the Chinese expatriates basically was the identity problem. Their difficulty does not lie in material things but in their imbalance spiritually and psychologically. The fact which the three New Yorker stories underline is: for a Chinese in the alien world, the best way to find his identity bringing him contentment and dignity is by living with his national character and consciousness. In addition to sticking to his original ideals, he should try to make himself into a cultural carrier instead of a sojourner whose existence is sustained only by the faded dreams of the bygone past. The misery of the three protagonists discussed in this paper results from their inability to follow this practicable way. Li Tung tried to paralyze herself spiritually to have a moment of satisfaction by playing Majong, gambling on horses, drinking, and so on, which led her to abandon all her ideals and live a life of purposelessness. Huang Feng-i made money at the expense of her dignity and identity. The pursuit of money had taken hold of her mind and soul. She was reduced to a call girl from a daughter of distinguished descent. Wu Chen-to tried to cut ties with all Chinese things, conformed himself with American society, and did his utmost to pursue money and "success." As a result, the three all failed the test of reality and became materialistic people, subsisting in a world of material with no spiritual contentment and often plagued by their painful awareness of their marginal situation as an outsider in white America and their departing from

their original ideals and identities day after day. Thus, on the surface, the New Yorkers stories are about the lives of Chinese students, but beneath the surface lies literally an overriding motif: the struggle for identity among the Chinese in the United States.

Perhaps Westerners may wonder why the Chinese are so obsessed with the identity problem. Why are they so immersed in a slough like that? The answer essentially lies in the national character and ancient cultural background of Chinese people. Nurtured by a historical culture of five thousand years and influenced by their conservative education and living circumstances, most Chinese appear very sensitive when subsisting in a foreign country; moreover, they tend to demonstrate a particular self-consciousness and a clinging to their own nation and their own cultural heritage. Pai Hsien-yung's life in the United States is a good illustration for that. In an interview he has recalled:

In America, I was terribly longing for home. That was not a concrete 'home', a house, a place, or any place --- but all these places, a combination of all the memories about China. It is hard to explain, but I really longed for it.

.....

Indeed, I did not feel that when I was in Taiwan, but after going abroad, when I looked back, I was aware how great and profound our culture is. Whenever I looked back, I felt the heavy burden upon my shoulder. Maybe some people consider this to be ridiculous. But my case was really like that. I myself, or anyone, can never change it--- nor do I want to change it.²¹

His plight as a stranger abroad should have been clearly depicted by the aforesaid statements. Both the "Taipei People" and the "New Yorkers" series were written in America. This is an important fact for studying Pai and his case. Apparently, Pai was aware that, as a writer in an alien country, to him, his life could not merely stay at subsistence level. He had to manage to remake his identity. And one of the effective ways to do that was to write in his own mother tongue. As a Chinese by birth and as a student whose major was Western literature, he realized, indulgence only in the study of Western literature is not enough. In addition to learning the Western writing skills and literary theories, he had to be a spokesman for his people to leave a vivid record for a unique era. In this way, on the one hand, he would be able to maintain strong ties to China spiritually despite the geographic distance, while on the other hand, he would be able to relieve the heavy pressure which nostalgia and the identity crisis brought to him.

Hence, not surprisingly, resorting to the act of writing in their own native language to express their people's inward voice has become one of the most feasible approaches for many Chinese writers abroad to make over their identities today. Chen Jo-si (陳若曦), a well-known woman writer in America, when asked about her future plans, has claimed firmly: "I am sure of only one thing: I will continue to write on, in my mother tongue, to write on about Chinese people and for Chinese people."²²

The writer's case should be applicable to the Chinese in other fields as well. When faced with the shock of an alien culture and society, they feel the need to find

the balance for their lives again. But on condition that they try to be cultural carriers with strong national consciousness rather than mere sojourners without ideals, then, it will be much easier for them to cope with the challenge of the identity problem. In fact, not a few well-known Chinese in America have acted like that. I.M. Pei (貝聿銘), an eminent architect, Dr. C.S. Wu (吳健雄), the world's foremost female experimental physicist, Dr. T.D. Lee (李政道), and Dr. C.N. Yang (楊振寧) who shared the 1958 Nobel Prize in physics, and Wang An (王安), an outstanding computer expert, are all very good prototypes. After having achieved international renown, they never forget their Chinese origin and heritage even after they have lived in America for thirty or forty years. They work very hard in their field, but they always try to keep ethnic ties to their people and homeland in every possible way. They thereby have been able to cope admirably with the identity issue and live with self-assurance and dignity. Today America is no longer regarded as a great melting pot assimilating different peoples, but rather, a "mosaic" which is orienting itself to cultural pluralism day after day since many Americans realize that the cultural diversity will contribute to enrich the substance of their society.²³ So keeping one's national character and cultural characteristics has been counted as a strength, not a weakness of an emigrant.

From Pai Hsien-yung's creative writings and his personal performance in the United States, we see that he has shown he is no longer an ivory tower inhabitant. As Yu Kuang-chung says, he "has already walked out from the dilapidated and weed-tangled Takuanyuan"²⁴ and faced the reality with an open mind. Through the ordeal of overseas study, he has successfully made himself into a competent cultural carrier, revealing for his people a practicable way on how to regain their lost identities. Perhaps the characters he portrayed are tinted with the color of nostalgia and sadness, but through them, his readers have also been alerted and enlightened to a certain degree. Viewed from this angle, it can be said that the motif and intrinsic meaning of his stories are still quite significant, serious, and related to ourselves and our epoch.

Some people assert that the current trend of Chinese literature today is Homeland Literature (鄉土文學) and the works concerning Chinese abroad will be rejected by readers since they have grown out of date.²⁵ But evidence indicates that their assertion is not correct. The fact is that there are still a substantial number of readers who favor the works about the expatriate Chinese.²⁶ The expatriate Chinese themselves are especially eager to be the recipients of their own people's concern, and eager to read the writings concerning themselves because that will enable them to be linked psychologically to their own nation and culture.

Homeland Literature is relevant to the homeland and nation, which of course is worth our acclaim, but Expatriate Chinese Literature is concerned with the numerous Chinese abroad, and it should be given equal attention. Nowadays, overseas study has become a way for the young to develop and grow. An ever-increasing number of young men and women leave their hometowns and go abroad to strive on foreign soil year after year. To these people who are widely spread everywhere and who have the same blood as ours, how can we ignore them and just regard them as marginal individuals? For this reason, we can surely claim that literature about expatriate Chinese is absolutely not out of date. It is still serious literature pertinent to our

society and age. As a matter of fact, literary works should never be assessed by the so-called terms "out-of-date" or "up-to-date". A really excellent work remains timeless and will endure forever.

The "New Yorkers" series is not yet finished. It is expected that Pai Hsien-yung will continue to write his New Yorkers stories one by one just as he did with his "Taipei People" stories. From "A Celestial in Mundane Exile" to "Nocturne", we find that Pai has increasingly enlarged his writing area about the expatriate Chinese. He not only concerned himself with the identity issue, but also uncovered the dark sides of Communist China via his portrayal of the students abroad coming from the mainland. It is hoped that Pai will grow from strength to strength in the creation of his New Yorkers. Thus perhaps more and more touching records about "the human heart in conflict with itself"²⁷ in the twentieth century will be produced through a variety of angles in different areas.

NOTES

1. C.T. Hsia declares that Pai Hsien-yung is "the most important Chinese short story writer since Eileen Chang" and "one of the rare talents in the whole history of modern Chinese literature since 1919." See C.T. Hsia, ed., *Twentieth Century Chinese Stories* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 218. and Hsia, "On Pai Hsien-yung", in *Modern Literature*, No. 39 (Dec. 1969), p. 1. Chi Pang-yuan says that "Pai Hsien-yung is certainly one of the most accomplished of modern Chinese writers." See Chi Pang-yuan, ed., *Anthology of Contemporary Chinese Literature* (Taipei: Shu-ping shu-mu, 1975), vol. 2, p. 259. Even on the Chinese mainland, according to George Kao, Pai's works have been published and his literary achievements are highly praised. See Kao's "Preface" in *Wandering in the Garden, Waking from a Dream: Tales of Taipei Characters*, translated by Pai Hsien-yung and Patia Yasin and published by Indiana University Press in 1982.
2. Yu T'ien-tung points out in an essay that almost all of Pai Hsien-yung's characters are sickly, morbid, masturbational and are people of Chia Pao-Yu's type, living in paralysis and decline. See "The Last Aristocrats" in *Literary Review*, p. 96.
Another critic, Kao Tin-sheng remarks that Pai fails to grasp the pulse of our time and fails to experience and share together with the great multitude in their various sufferings..., so his works have been gradually rejected by readers here. "On the Fiction of Pai Hsien-yung" in *China Forum*, vol. 12, no. 9 (August 1981), pp. 38-41. In Hongkong, Pai is even abused as "a decorator in the funeral home" by the leftist writers. See Joseph S.M. Lau, *Hand down the Fire of Tradition* (Taipei: Ta Ti, 1979), p. 166.
3. Many scholars, such as C.T. Hsia, S.M. Lau, Yen Yuan-shu, Chi Pen-yuan, Yu Kuang-chung, Howard Goldblatt, Cyril Birch, Helmut Martin, etc., are engaged in the research of modern Chinese literature actively and they have made appeals

for stepping up the study of modern Chinese literature. However, we find that modern Chinese literature still has not aroused much attention in the West so far. For this reason, the writer of this paper is motivated to do a research on Pai Hsien-yung in the hope that some contribution might be made to the development of modern Chinese literature.

4. "A Celestial in Mundane Exile" firstly appeared in *Modern Literature*, No. 25 (1965), and was translated into English by C.T. Hsia and Pai Hsien-yung under the title "Li Tung: A Chinese Girl in New York", in C.T. Hsia ed., *Twentieth Century Chinese Stories* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), pp. 220-239. "Nocturne" firstly appeared in the literary section of *China Times*, January 21 & 22, 1979 and was translated into English by Patia Isaku and Pai Hsien-yung in *The Chinese Pen* (Taipei Chinese Center, International P.E.N., Summer 1980), pp. 1-34. "Complaints of a Celestial in Mundane Exile" was published originally in *Modern Literature*, No. 37 (1969), and is not yet translated into English. In Hongkong, an anthology of Pai's New Yorkers stories had been published in 1974. It consists of Pai's post-1963 stories written in America, such as "Death in Chicago", "One Day in Pleasantville", "Ascending the Empire State Building", "A Trip to Fire-Island", "A Celestial in Mundane Exile", and "Complaints of a Celestial in Mundane Exile". See *The New Yorkers* (Hongkong: Wen-i shu-wu, 1974).
5. Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), p. 115.
6. Allen Wheelis, *The Quest for Identity* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1958), p. 19.
7. Erik H. Erikson, "The Concept of Identity in Race Relations; Notes and Queries," *The Negro American*, eds., Talcott Parsons & Kenneth B. Clark (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), p. 229.
8. Robert Langbaum, *The Mysteries of Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press 1977), p. 3.
9. William Glasser, *The Identity Society* (Harper and Row, Harper Colophon, 1975), p. 5.
10. Merv Block, "The Chinese Americans," *Time*, No. 25 (June 1975), pp. 22-24.
11. According to H.A. Taine, the three sources which influence a work are RACE, SURROUNDINGS and EPOCH, that is, national character, the age or period, and the general social environment. Taine used them as three criteria to analyze a work. See "Hippolyte-Adolphe Taine" in W.J. Bate ed., *Criticism: the Major Texts* (Taipei: Yeh Yeh, 1975), pp. 500-507.
12. Burton Watson's translation, in *Chinese Lyricism: Shih Poetry from the Second to the Twelfth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. 115.
13. Pai Hsien-yung, *Looking Back* (總然回首) (Taipei: Er Ya, 1980), p. 167.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.
15. S.M. Lau has given a good explanation of the original Chinese title "Niu-yueh ke" (紐約客), saying that "the word *ke* in such a context can of course be interpreted as 'inhabitant, resident.' However, its literal meaning remains 'visi-

- tor, guest.' The ambivalence here is obviously deliberate and significant." See "Celestials and Commoners: Exiles in Pai Hsien-yung's Stories" in *Asian Culture Quarterly* (Taipei, Asian Culture Center Autumn 1987), p. 16.
16. C.T. Hsia ed., *Twentieth Century Chinese Stories* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 233.
 17. Yu Li-hua, *See Again the Palm Trees* (Taipei: Huang Kuan, 1986), p. 313. Yu Li-hua is generally regarded as one of the most famous woman writers who wrote about Chinese expatriates in the 1960s.
 18. Pai Hsien-yung, *The New Yorkers* (Hong Kong: Wen-i shu-wu, 1974), pp. 91-92.
 19. Actually the names of the three major characters all have connotations. The word 'Tung (彤)' can be interpreted as "red cloud" (彤雲), the symbol of being noble and distinguished. No doubt, Li Tung's parents hoped that she would be noble and have a distinguished life. 'Feng-i' means 'as beautiful and eminent as a phoenix', which is Huang Feng-i's mother's expectation of her. 'Chen-to' refers to "a great man who inspires and instructs others". Wu Chen-to's father of course hoped that his son would become such a man. But the three all failed to fulfil their parents' expectation of them.
 20. "Nocturne" has been translated into English by Patia Isaku and Pai Hsien-yung in *The Chinese Pen* (Taipei Chinese Center, International P.F.N., Summer 1980), p. 9.
 21. Pai Hsien-yung, *Looking Back* (Taipei: Er Ya, 1980), pp. 167-177.
 22. S.M. Lau, *Hand down the Fire of Tradition* (Taipei: Ta Ti, 1979), p. 73.
 23. See Nathan Glazer & Danie P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1970).
 24. Yu Kuang-chung, "An Introduction to Pai Hsien-yung", in *Modern Literature*, No. 37 (1969), p. 119.
 25. Kao Tin-sheng, op. cit.
 26. Chi pang-yuan has made an in-depth retrospection to the works concerning overseas study and remarked that readers will continue to pay attention to work of this type due to its alien characteristics. See "Overseas Study Literature" in Chen Sing-huci ed., *Anthology of Critical Essays in 1986* (Taipei: Er Ya, 1987), pp. 231-259. In fact, not a few works of this type have been highly praised by readers and some of them even won the first prize in Literary Contests, such as Shiue Li's "The Last Night Train" (the first prize in the short story contest of the *United Daily News* in 1982), Ping Lu's "Death of Cornfield" (the first prize in the short story contest of the *United Daily News* in 1983), and Fei-li Chou's "The Big Event of the Week" (the first prize in the short story contest of the *China Times* in 1985).
 27. These are William Faulkner's famous words in his speech delivered in Stockholm on the occasion of the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to him on December 10, 1950. He said, "...the young man or woman writing today has forgotten the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat."