



Trends in the Development of Science Fiction Literature in Taiwan

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TRENDY VE VÝVOJI SCI-FI LITERATURY NA TAIWANU

ABSTRAKT Literární kritika vědeckou fantastiku většinou ostentativně přehlíží, přitom H. G. Wellse, Isaaca Asimova, Roberta A. Heinleina, Raye Bradburyho či Arthura C. Clarka aj. lze jen stěží označit za bezvýznamné pisálky ... Na konci šedesátých let minulého století, konkrétně v roce 1968, publikovala Zhang Xiaofeng 張曉風 v deníku *Zhongguo Shibao* 《中國時報》 *China Times* povídku *Panduna* 《潘渡娜》 *Pandora*. Ta je považována za první dílo taiwanské vědecko-fantastické prózy. V sedmdesátých a osmdesátých letech 20. století pak vědecko-fantastická literatura na Taiwanu zaznamenala bouřlivý rozvoj: byla uveřejňována v denících a časopisech, publikována ve vydavatelstvích, byly zakládány vědecko-fantastické časopisy, vyhlašovány první literární soutěže pro autory vědecké fantastiky a udělovány první ceny. Současně vznikaly první kritické práce a objevili se i první významní autoři vědecko-fantastické literatury, například Huang Hai 黃海 či Zhang Xiguo 張系國 aj. Dvacet let vývoje taiwanské vědecké fantastiky ukončila na počátku devadesátých let 20. století vlna amerických vědecko-fantastických filmů. Počátky, rozvoj a úpadek vědecko-fantastické literatury na Taiwanu je proto jako ukončený jev možno popsat i analyzovat. Její historie je téměř u konce, a tak můžeme nejen hodnotit její význam, ale zároveň ji i srovnat s vývojem nejlivnější vědecko-fantastické literatury na světě – americké vědecké fantastiky. Popis vývoje a toto srovnání jsou hlavním záměrem tohoto příspěvku.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA literární kritika; komparatistika; moderní taiwanská literatura; vědecko-fantastická literatura; Zhang Xiguo

ABSTRACT Science fiction literature is commonly disregarded by main stream literature. Gratuitously: e.g. H. G. Wells, Isaac Asimov, Robert A. Heinlein, Ray Bradbury and Arthur C. Clarke can hardly be insignificant scribblers ... In late 1960s, in 1968 to be precise, *Zhongguo Shibao* 《中國時報》 *China Times* published Zhang Xiaofeng's 張曉風 novel *Panduna* 《潘渡娜》 *Pandora*. It is regarded as the first example of Taiwanese science fiction prose ever written. In the 1970s and 1980s science fiction literature experienced the turbulent progress in Taiwan: sci-fi literature was published by newspapers, periodicals and publishing houses, sci-fi magazines were established, the first competitions for authors of science fiction literature were announced, the first prizes were awarded. In addition, the first critical works were written and sci-fi stars such as Huang Hai 黃海 and Zhang Xiguo 張系國 appeared. The twenty years of development of Taiwanese sci-fi came to a halt in the early 1990s with the boom of science fiction cinema. The beginning, development and decline of science fiction literature in Taiwan as a definite phenomenon can therefore be analysed and described. Its history is almost completed, thus we can not only elevate, but also compare her development with the most influential science fiction literature in the world: American science fiction. A description of the development and a comparison are the main purpose of this paper.

KEY WORDS criticism; comparative studies; modern Taiwanese literature; sci-fi literature; Zhang Xiguo

DEFINITION

Science fiction literature is a broad genre of fiction which often involves speculations based on current or future science or technology. Science fiction is largely based on writing in

an entertaining and rational manner about alternative possibilities in settings which are contrary to known reality. These include: a setting in the future, in alternative time lines, or in a historical past that contradicts known facts regarding history or the archaeological record; a setting in outer space,

on other worlds, or involving aliens; stories that contradict known or supposed laws of nature; stories that involve discovery or application of new scientific principles, such as time travel, or new technology, such as nanotechnology, faster-than-light travel or robots, or of new and different political or social systems.

GENRES

Literary critics tend to place science fiction literary works into various categories – “genres”: Hard science fiction is characterized by rigorous attention to accurate detail in the quantitative sciences, in particular physics, astrophysics, and chemistry. Arthur C. Clarke, for example, predicted a number of future developments accurately. Certain hard science fiction authors have also distinguished themselves as working scientists. Soft science fiction may describe works based on the social sciences such as psychology, economics, political science, sociology and anthropology. Ray Bradbury is an acknowledged master of this art. Related to Soft science fiction are the speculative fiction branches of utopian or satirical stories; *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and *City of Cats* could be viewed as examples. Common themes in cyberpunk include advances in information technology, especially the Internet. *Blade Runner* is commonly accepted as a definitive example of the cyberpunk visual style. Time Travel stories were popularized by H. G. Well’s novel *The Time Machine*. Alternate history stories are based on the premise that historical events might have turned out differently. Military science fiction is set in the context of conflicts between national, interplanetary, or interstellar armed forces; the primary viewpoint characters are usually soldiers. Heinlein’s *Starship Troopers* is an early example¹.

HISTORY

Science fiction has antecedents back in mythology, although precursors to science fiction as literature began to emerge from the 13th century to the 17th century in the Age of Reason with the development of science itself, Voltaire’s *Micromégas* was one of the first, along with Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*. Edgar Allan Poe later wrote a story about a flight to the moon. More examples appeared throughout the 19th century. Then with the dawn of new technologies such as electric-

¹ The broader category of speculative fiction includes science fiction, fantasy and horror. Fantasy is closely associated with science fiction, although science fiction is the literature of things that might someday be possible, and fantasy is the literature of things that are inherently impossible, such as magic and mythology. Horror fiction is the literature of the unnatural and supernatural, with the aim of unsettling or frightening the reader. Many works of horror literature only incorporate science fiction elements: Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein*.

ity, the telegraph, and new forms of powered transportation, writers such as Jules Verne and Herbert George Wells created a body of work that became popular across broad cross-sections of society. In the early 20th century, pulp magazines helped develop a new generation of mainly American science fiction writers, influenced by Hugo Gernback, the founder of *Amazing Story* magazine. In the late 1930s, John W. Campbell became editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*. Important writers during this period included Isaac Asimov, Robert A. Heinlein and Arthur C. Clarke. Campbell’s tenure at *Astounding Science Fiction* is considered the beginning of the Golden Age of science fiction, characterized by hard science fiction stories celebrating scientific achievement and progress. In the 1960s and early 1970s, writers such as Frank Herbert, Samuel R. Delany and Roger Zelazny explored new trends, ideas, and writing styles. In the 1980s, cyberpunk authors turned away from the traditional optimism and support for progress of traditional science fiction. *Star Wars* helped spark a new interest in space opera, focusing more on story and character than on scientific accuracy. The television series *Star Trek: the Next Generation* began a torrent of new science fiction programs and was among the most highly acclaimed of the decade. Television shows and films created new interest in all the speculative genres in films, television, computer games, and books. Among the most respected awards for science fiction are the Hugo Award and the Nebula Award. Conventions are held in cities around the world, catering to a local, regional, national, or international membership. General-interest conventions cover all aspects of science fiction, while others focus on a particular interest. Most are organized by volunteers in non-profit groups, although most media-oriented events are organized by commercial promoters. The convention’s activities are referred to as the “program”, which may include panel discussions, readings, autograph sessions, costume masquerades, and other events. Science fiction societies, referred to as “clubs” except in formal contexts, form a year-round base of activities for science fiction fans. They may be associated with an ongoing science fiction convention, or have regular club meetings, or both. Most groups meet in libraries, schools and universities, community centres, pubs or restaurants, or the homes of individual members. Fandom has helped incubate related groups. The first science fiction fanzine, *The Comet*, was published in 1930.

A HISTORY OF TAIWANESE SCIENCE FICTION

1950s: The prehistory of Taiwanese science fiction literature began in the 1950s, but has been regarded as “a Desert of Science Fiction”: with only American science fiction films being shown and San Xin 三信 San Xin Publishing House in Gaoxiong publishing Zhao Zifan’s 趙滋藩 *Feidie Zheng Kong* 《飛碟征空》 *A UFO Attacks the Sky*, Taikong Lixian Ji 《太空歷險記》 *Records of Adventure in Outer Spaces* and Yueliangshang Kan Diqiu 《月亮上看地球》 *A View of Earth from the Moon*. These are actually more pseudo-scientific

works than actual science fiction literature. In the late 1950s the Hong Kong author Ni Kuang倪匡 using the pseudonym Weisili衛斯理 Wesley began to create his saga written as autobiography. His innumerable stories should be classified, however, as fantasy, not science fiction.

1960s: At the beginning of the 1960s *Mofan Shaonian* 《模範少年》 *Imitation of Youth* magazine published translations of foreign science fiction literature in a fragmented fashion. The actual history of Taiwanese science fiction began in September 1968 when *Zhongguo Shibao* 《中國時報》 *China Times* issued Zhang Xiaofeng's張曉風 short story *Panduna* 《潘渡娜》 *Pandora* describing the unsuccessful creation of an artificial girl, a clone Pandora. Although Pandora is a beautiful girl whose appearance does not differ from a normal human girl, she has no "substance", no soul and therefore dies at the end. Of interest is the fact that the story shares certain characteristics with the above already-mentioned Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein*. It is one of the first science fiction works in a European context, the author is also a woman and the topics are also very similar. It is more of a love story and psychological prose with a science fiction background, a reflection on the nature of humanity searching for the answer as to whether humans have the right to play the role of God and create other "human" beings? In October 1968 Zhang Xiguo張系國, a computer scientist with literary ambitions, published *Chaoren Liezhuan* 《超人列傳》 *A Biography of Superman* in *Chun Wenxue* 《純文學》 *Pure Literature*. A mere two months later, in December 1968, Huang Hai黃海, an author of social short stories at that time, began to publish *Hang Xiang Wuya d Lucheng* 《航向無涯的旅程》 – a series of science fiction stories on travels through the universe in *Zhonghua Ribao* 《中華日報》 *China Daily*. Zhang Xiaofeng did not write all that many science fiction stories. Zhang Xiguo and Huang Hai, in particular, will be made mention of repeatedly in this paper. Their contribution to the creation and development of Taiwanese science fiction in terms of both the creative and theoretical aspects should not be underestimated along with their struggle for popularisation of science fiction in Taiwan. In May 1969 Yan Yuanshu顏元叔 published *Renlei Gongchengxue – jian Tan Chaoren Liezhuan yu Panduna* 《人類工程學——兼談「超人列傳」與「潘渡娜」》 *Human Engineering: on the Biography of Superman and Pandora* in *Daxue Zazhi* 《大學雜誌》 *University Journal*. It is the first theoretical paper on Taiwanese science fiction literature ever recorded. In October 1969 Zhang Xiguo in *Pure Literature* published an article *Beng Yue zhihou – jian Lun Kexue Huanxiang Xiaoshuo* 《奔月之後——兼論科學幻想小說》 *After Running to the Moon – On Science Fiction Prose* and thus created a term, the Chinese name for science fiction. At the end of the 1960s Huang Hai decided to publish *Yilingyilingyi Nian* 《一〇一〇一年》 *Year 10101*. Although he was still seeking out a method of expression in the story, it was awarded the Juvenile Literature Prize by the National Society.

1970s: Thanks to the efforts of the science fiction enthusiasts Zhang Xiguo, Huang Hai and Lü Yingzhong, Taiwanese publishing houses began to release foreign science fiction literature. Although the American writers, e. g. Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury and Arthur C. Clarke, etc. prevailed, translations of European and surprisingly Soviet science fiction authors were also introduced to Taiwanese readers². In December 1972 Huang Hai published the anthology *Xin Shiji zhi Lü* 《新世紀之旅》 *Travelling to a New Century*. The stories were located in the near future, the year 2020 and it was the first Taiwanese *Weilai Wenti Xiaoshuo* 未來問題小說 fiction on future problems, one of the mainstream topics in science fiction in Taiwan. Around the same time Zhang Xiguo using the pseudonym Xing Shi醒石 Awakened Stone wrote an introduction to the excellent foreign science fiction stories in *Lianhe Bao* 聯合報 *Ally* by its supplement *Kehuan Xiaoshuo Jing Xuan* 《科幻小說精選》 *Carefully Chosen Science Fiction*, these were later collected into an anthology *Hai d Siwang* 《海的死亡》 *Death of the Sea* which was extremely influential for both Taiwanese science fiction readers and authors. In July 1976 *Zhongyang Ribao* 中央日報 *Central Daily* released a story written by an Overseas Chinese living in the USA *Chang Sheng bu Lao* 《長生不老》 *Live Forever* marked as *kexue xiaoshuo* 科學小說 a fiction on science. In September 1976 *Central Daily* published Huang Hai's science fiction novelette *Yinhe Mihang Ji* 《銀河迷航記》 *Records on Drifting Off Course in the Milky Way*. In November 1977 Lü Yingzhong呂應鐘 established at his own expense *Yuzhou Kexue* 《宇宙科學》 *Universal Science* magazine, presenting articles on E.T., new discoveries in astronomy, paranormal phenomena and science fiction. It was not only the first special platform for Taiwanese science fiction literature, but also the real beginning of UFOlogy in Taiwan. Lü Yingzhong is therefore regarded as "the godfather of Taiwanese UFOlogy". In 1978 the finest of Zhang Xiguo's fictions, the saga *Xingyun Zuqu* 《星雲組曲》 *Nebula's Suite* began to be published in *Ally*. In July 1978 Lü Yingzhong's *Universal Science* organised the first symposium on science fiction in the history of Taiwanese literature. In 1979 *Ally* published the first Taiwanese science fiction "essay" *Jiade he Diqiuren* 《迦得和地球人》 *Gad and Terrestrial* by Wu Wangyao吳望堯, an Overseas Chinese who had returned to Taiwan from Vietnam, and also the first Taiwanese science fiction poems. The American science fiction films, e.g. *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, etc. were shown in Taiwan and helped to encourage an increasing interest in science fiction. Zhaoming照明 Illumination, Guojia國家Country and Xingji星際InterStar Publishing Houses published Taiwanese science fiction and translations of foreign science fiction in the 1970s. In 1979 Huang Hai delivered several lectures on science fiction at Danjiang University. Science fiction translations, theoretical papers on science fiction and Taiwanese science fiction in *Mingri Shi-jie* 《明日世界》 *A World of Tomorrow* – the magazine of the

² e. g. Alexandr Romanovich Belyayev's *Beaier Boshi d Naodai* 《德埃爾博士的腦袋》 *Professor Dowell's Head*.

university, were the result of a course on futurology creation at Danjiang University in the late 1970s. In August 1979 Ye Yandu 葉言都 completed the initial part of the first Taiwanese catastrophic and military science fiction, the pentalogy *Hai Tian Long Zhan* 《海天龍戰》 *A War of the Ocean and Heaven Dragons*. In October 1979 Li Qi's 李頌³ novel *Tao Hua Yuan* 《桃花源》 *Peach Blossom Spring – Utopia* was released.

1980s: The 1980s began with the publication of the first theoretical monograph on the science fiction written by Lü Yingzhong *Kehuan Wenxue* 《科幻文學》 *Science Fiction Literature*. The book is divided into two parts with the first describing the theory and history of science fiction, while the second is a handbook, a manual on how to write science fiction. This was the only theoretical work on science fiction for a long period of time, not only in Taiwan but also throughout the entire Chinese world. A bimonthly *Feidie yu Kehuan* 《飛碟與科幻》 *UFO and SF*, a new platform for Taiwanese science fiction, was also established by Illumination Publishing House. It was focused on Taiwanese science fiction, theoretical works of science fiction and the science fiction arts, primarily publishing works by Huang Hai and Lü Yingzhong. Starting in September 1980 *Minzu Wanbao* 《民族晚報》 *The National Evening Paper* created *Kehuan Shijie Zhuanlan* 《科幻世界專欄》 *A Column on the Science Fiction World* weekly. Lü Yingzhong translated the masterpiece of the science fiction star Arthur C. Clark 2001: *A Space Odyssey*. In the 1980s Huang Hai published his first works of children's science fiction literature. The 1980s was also a period of anthologies of foreign science fiction translation along with the publication of Taiwanese science fiction, Zhang Zhijie 張之傑, Huang Hai and Lü Yingzhong edited *Zhongguo Dangdai Kehuan Xuanji* 《中國當代科幻選集》 *An Anthology of Chinese Contemporary Science Fiction* a selection of the finest foreign and Taiwanese authors over the last twenty years. In the early 1980s Taiwan Normal University organised a symposium on Zhang Xiguo's fiction *Nebula's Suite*. Zhang Zhijie founded *Kehuan Wenxue* 《科幻文學》 *Science Fiction Literature* quarterly with an aim at promoting science fiction, only to cease after releasing only one issue. Huang Fan's 黃凡 story *Ling* 《零》 *Zero* was the first Taiwanese science fiction awarded by *Ally* with the extremely prestigious Novelle Prize. On the eve of the 4th May Movement in 1982 *Ally* organised a symposium on science fiction. Zhang Xiguo began to release the first part of his science fiction trilogy *Cheng* 《城》 *City called Wu Yu Die* 《五玉碟》 *Five Plates of Jade in China Daily*. The trilogy imitates Chinese epic tradition and mythology and is an excellent portrait of China. The trilogy was also translated into English and is consequently popular as a chivalrous science fiction romance very similar to David's Wingrove famous saga *Chung-kuo* creating a romantic mood of history. In 1984 Zhang Xiguo in co-operation with *China Times* announced the first Taiwanese science fiction prize which had six sessions all together. During the first

one the jury received fifty science fiction stories: Fan Shenghong's 范盛泓 *Wen* 《問》 *Question* and Zhang Dachun's 張大春 *Shangshizhe* 《傷逝者》 *The Man who Mourned the Loss of a Loved one* were the most successful ones. In 1986 the competition changed its name to Zhang Xiguo's Science Fiction Prize. In 1986 the second part of Zhang Xiguo's trilogy *City Long Cheng Fei Jiang* 《龍城飛將》 *The Flying General of Dragon City* was also published. In 1987 Chen Kehua 陳克華 published an epic science fiction poem *Xingqiu Jishi* 《星球紀事》 *Chronicle of the Stars*. One year later Kuling 苦苓 edited an anthology *Zhongguo Erling'ering Nian* 《中國2020年》 *China 2020*, collecting masterpieces of Taiwanese science fiction literature from the 1980s. The last session of Zhang Xiguo's Science Fiction Prize held in 1989 had 102 participants, among them 53 authors from Mainland China. On 2nd January 1990 Zhang Xiguo founded *Huanxiang* 《幻象》 *Mirage* magazine at a tea party and announced a new science fiction literature prize. *Mirage* was published for three years in eight issues and was the most influential Taiwanese science fiction magazine ever. That same year Huang Fan 黃凡 and Lin Yaode 林耀德 compiled *Kehuan Juan* 《科幻卷》 *Science Fiction – the 12th volume of Xin Shidai Xiaoshuo Da Xi* 《新世代小說大系》 *Mega Series on Fiction of the New Generation*, collecting science fiction short stories after 1968. Huang Hai's *Qiyi d Hangxing* 《奇異的航行》 *Bizarre Sail* was awarded the Hong Jianquan Children's Literature Prize, in 1984, *Chang'e Cheng* 《嫦娥城》 *A City of Chang'e* the Sunjatesen Literature Prize and a year later, *Da Bi Guo Lixian Ji* 《大鼻國歷險記》 *Records of Adventure in Big Nose Country* the National Literature Prize and *Diqiu Taowang* 《地球逃亡》 *Escape from the Earth* the Oriental Children's Literature Prize⁴ in 1988 both, *Hang Xiang Weilai* 《航向未來》 *Sailing to the Future* the Chinese Children's Literature Prize in 1989, *Di San Zhi Jiao d Weidao* 《第三隻腳的味道》 *Smell of the Third Foot the Mainland – Taiwan Children's Literature Prize* in 1989 as well. *City of Chang'e* also released as a MC record, *Records on a Drift off Course in the Milky Way* was adapted by Zhongguo Guangbo Gongsi 中國廣播公司 the China Radio Company as a radio drama. The creators of the *Records of Adventure in Big Nose Country* radio adaptation were awarded the Golden Radio Prize in 1987 and Cai Shangzhi 蔡尚志 dedicated a chapter of his university textbook *Ertong Gushi Yuanli* 《兒童故事原理》 *Principles of Fairy Tales* to Huang Hai's children's science fiction.

After: At the beginning of the 1990s the majority of the Taiwanese science fiction authors graduated from university, many of them having been experts in the natural sciences. Those who were graduates in the humanities creating science fiction prose also paid a certain amount of attention to science. As a result the science in their works is not pseudo-science, it is not a matrix of knowledge, and it is not a literature about Strangeness, Force, Chaos and Mysteries due to which science fiction is disregarded by main-stream non-scientific fiction.

³ also Li Xingchang 李幸長

⁴ it was the first Oriental Children Literature Prize ever awarded

From 18th till 24th June 1990 Zhang Xiguo's *Mirage* organised the Taipei Science Fiction Week. Several foreign science fiction authors attended and each day a renowned Taiwanese author gave a speech with famous science fiction films shown simultaneously. In 1991 the first World Chinese Science Fiction Art Prize was announced. Although Mainland authors received the majority of the prizes, Lin Yingshan 李英杉 and Chen Qiuling's 陳秋玲 comic *Diyu* 《地獄》 Hell was also awarded. In 1992 Zhang Xiguo completed the last part of his City trilogy *Yi Yumao* 《一羽毛》 A Feather. In 1993 Jiang Yunsheng 姜云生 edited *Taiwan Kehuan Xiaoshuo Daquan - Sishi Nian Ming Jia Ming Zuo Jing Xuan* 《台湾科幻小说大全——四十年名家名作精选》 A Complete Collection of Taiwanese Science Fiction - The Essential Anthology of Famous Authors' Masterpieces over the last Forty Years which was published in Mainland China. Lü Yingzhong's fiction *Long Chuan Zheng Kong Ji* 《龍船征空記》 Records of a Dragon Boat Journey in the Universe was the first Taiwanese science fiction ever released in Mainland China by Anhui Shaoer 安徽少兒 Anhui Children's Publishing House. In June 1996 *Central Daily* organised Bai Nian lai Zhongguo Wenxue Huiyi 《百年來中國文學會議》 A Conference on Chinese Literature over the last Hundred Years with science fiction literature being one of its topics. The panel was chaired by Huang Hai while Jiang Yunsheng 姜云生 also part giving a speech. In February 1998 *Kexue Yuekan* 《科學月刊》 *Science Monthly* published a special issue on science and science fiction and therefore created an opportunity for many Taiwanese, Mainland and Overseas science fiction authors to present their views. In May 1998 Kehuan Shikong 科幻時空 Science Fiction's Time and Space, an internet web site containing of a science fiction literature part was launched (www.thinkerstar.com) and in February 1999 a special science fiction internet web site Ke Ke Wang 科科網 Sci Sci Net was established (www.scisci.com). In the middle of 2000 the address was changed to (<http://scisci.nctu.edu.tw>). In April 1999 Jingyi University organised a conference on Children's Literature and Huang Hai's children's science fiction was the subject of a special discussion panel. In September 1999 Ye Lihua 葉李華 began to teach Kehuan Tiandi 科幻天地 The Universe of Science Fiction at Shi Xin University and the Taiwanese Academy of Arts as the first course on science fiction, a part of the curriculum at universities in Taiwan. In December 1999 Haiyan 海燕 Petrel Publishing House in Henan published the anthology *Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Kehuan Xiaoshuo Jingpin* 《二十世紀中國科幻小說精品》 *Excellent Works of Chinese Science Fiction in the 20th Century*, also listing works by Zhang Zhijie, Huang Hai and Lü Yingzhong. At the beginning of the new millennium Ye Lihua established Kehuan Yanjiu Zhongxin 科幻研究中心 The Centre for Science Fiction Studies. In 2000 Zhang Xiguo held lectures on science fiction literature at Zhong Yang University. In the middle of February 2000 *Ke Ke Dianzi Bao* 《科科電子報》 *Sci Sci Digital* magazine was established with its primary purpose being the provision of information about the situation in science fiction. In September 2001 Lü Yingzhong organised the lecture *Kehuan Xiaoshuo yu Dianying* 《科幻小

說與電影》 *Science Fiction Literature and Films* at Nan Hua University, in which 153 students enlisted and Prof. Wu Yan 吳岩 released *Kehuan Wenxue Gailun* 《科幻文學概論》 *An Introduction to Science Fiction Literature*. In 2003 a major conference on science fiction studies was organised.

CONCLUSION

Summary: Although the roots of Taiwanese science fiction date back to the 1950s, the real history of the phenomenon represented by the publication of Zhang Xiaofeng's psychological science fiction *Pandora* began in the late 1960s. The next development in Taiwanese science fiction in the 1970s was possible thanks to the support of several newspapers and magazines, e. g. *China Times*, *China Daily*, *Pure Literature*, *Ally*, *Central Daily*, etc. and due to creative individualities, e. g. Huang Hai, Zhang Xiguo, Lü Yingzhong⁵ etc. who promoted science fiction in Taiwan and throughout the Chinese world. Papers on science fiction literature, non-Chinese first and Chinese later, established a solid foundation for new authors and readers along with the translation of foreign science fiction literature. Literary prizes as served not only as an encouragement to authors but as advertising for readers as well. Stories released in newspapers and magazines first were later published in anthologies and therefore became accessible to a wider range of readers. In the late 1970s, the first science fiction magazine appeared, the first symposiums on science fiction were organised and several lectures on science fiction were held at universities. As a result more and more publishing houses expressed an interest in science fiction. In addition, the first theoretical monograph on science fiction came about. The 1980s witnessed a deepening of the phenomena described above, more quantitative than qualitative: more authors and theorists, more stories, more books, more anthologies, more magazines, more publishing houses, more symposiums and more lectures which identified themselves in connection with science fiction literature. And, of course, more readers whose attention was caught by increasing numbers of prestigious prizes for science fiction authors, by the creation of the first Taiwanese science fiction prize, by the establishment of the first special science fiction magazine and by the introduction of science fiction literature into other media than paper. The 1990s were marked by the beginning of co-operation with Mainland China and by the rapid rise of the Internet.

A Comparison: A comparison of American and Taiwanese science fiction is not an easy challenge. Firstly, the history of

⁵ Lü Yingzhong in his article "A Concise History of Taiwanese Science Fiction Literature" also mentions the contribution of Ye Lihua, Zhang Dachun, Zhang Zhijie, Ye Yandu 葉言都, Zheng Wenhao 鄭文豪, Li Jing 李敬, Xu Xiangjun 許蕓君, Chen Kehua, Li He 李赫 and two theorists of *A World of Tomorrow* magazine Wang Changhong 王長洪 and Peng Guangyang 彭廣揚

American science fiction began in 1923, Taiwanese in 1968. This not only involves a difference of two science fiction histories amounting to 45 years, almost half a century, but also a major difference in terms of the periods in which they were created: the between-the-wars period and the middle of the Cold War. The tradition of American science fiction emerged from special science fiction magazines. The first science fiction magazine in Taiwan was established in the 1990s, more than twenty years after the publication of the first science fiction story. This means that at the beginning paperbacks were the main “media” for the expansion of science fiction in Taiwan, not magazines. In contrast, paperbacks were a very important media of spreading science fiction in the USA when science fiction was finally adopted in Taiwan. As regards the publication of science fiction, a slight difference also exists in terms of the concept in Taiwan and the USA. While in Taiwan there is a tradition of publishing a story in a newspaper or a magazine first and then later as a book, the publication of a story in the USA does not necessarily need to follow this procedure, on the contrary magazines and books markets are quite separate from each other. The roots of science fiction in the USA and Taiwan are, of course, also very different: American science fiction evolved from the tradition of Jules Verne and Herbert George Wells’s technical science fiction creating a new tradition in the 1950s, which was followed not only by Taiwan, but also by the entire Western world, with the exception of Great Britain. American science fiction of the 1950s is adventurous, employing science fiction motifs as a decoration. Pseudo-science, also extremely popular in American science fiction of the 1950s is, by the way, reflected in the works of Zhao Zifan mentioned above. What is strikingly different from the situation in the USA is an absence of fan activities in Taiwan. This probably had something to do with what kind of reader consumes science fiction in the USA and Taiwan. The social structure of the recipients in the USA is heterogeneous while it is mainly students who consume science fiction in Taiwan. It is also difficult to find the “spiritual ghetto” mentioned in the history of American science fiction in the 1950s in Taiwan. The majority of the science fiction authors in Taiwan are not only science fiction writers, Zhang Xiguo and Huang Hai being excellent examples. In contrast, science fiction authors in the USA seldom write non-science fiction stories. Also the time of the Golden Age of science fiction in the USA and Taiwan is consequently different, it being a eight year period from 1938 until 1945 in the USA, and the 1980s in Taiwan. The hyperbole that was so common in the 1950s in the USA was not possible in Taiwanese science fiction at all. Firstly, it was the time of Martial Law in Taiwan; secondly, hyperbole is not a typical expressive mood of any Chinese science fiction. The only example of satirical science fiction in Chinese is Lao She’s *City of Cats*, I would argue. I am of the opinion that the British New Wave of the 1960s did not influence Taiwanese science fiction as it did American science fiction by emphasising the importance of human individuality and the demolishing of taboos in the USA. Again, there is not a particularly rich soil for this in Taiwan, influenced

by the collectivism of Chinese culture with its taboos, which have a history of not merely hundreds but thousands of years. What Taiwan was touched by was the “li-fi” movement in the 1970s in contrast to the cyberpunk of the 1980s which failed to impact Taiwan. As regards genre, Taiwanese science fiction is not as rich as American is: alternative history, time travel, sex and lost worlds are rarely found in Taiwanese science fiction. It is instead more sociological, closer to soft science fiction.

American science fiction never had to come to terms with the problem of its identity, while Taiwanese did, as science fiction was an alien “hostile” genre for Taiwanese literature. Firstly, Taiwanese science fiction had to accept concepts which were elaborated by an extremely different Western culture and confront the Western understanding of fantastic elements with the Chinese one. This is the reason why the first stories by Zhang Xiaofeng and Zhang Xiguo were so “Christian”. Why would a Chinese author rely on a Western tradition? The answer is very simple: Mr. Science Fiction came from the West thus his appearance and his substance is a Western one. Secondly, Taiwanese science fiction had to find an identity, am I Taiwanese or Chinese? The difference between China and Taiwan is expressed in many areas and although science fiction should therefore be no exception, there is one. I believe it is very difficult to express one’s identity when the cultural traditions of China and Taiwan are almost the same and the literary language is the same. The tertiary, western science fiction has its own language, therefore Taiwanese science fiction has had to create its own language. Zhang Xiguo often employs the language of *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *All Men Are Brothers*, Chinese chivalry novels in his science fiction stories. It is more important for science fiction to identify itself in comparison with her Western older brother, I presume. Who, which reader would be interested in Taiwanese science fiction if it would not bring something new in comparison with translations of foreign science fiction? It is a difficult challenge, isn’t it? How to match up with more experienced foreign science fiction? The path for Taiwanese science fiction has been to mix traditional literature with science fiction, without, however, merely creating a science fiction background for Chinese stories. It is more about putting new blood into old stories, not into their appearance but into their substance. Western science fiction has its own language, thus it should be interpreted in light of this fact. A translation would not attract a Taiwanese reader, he would not have been familiar with it: science fiction was strange for him not only as regards its content but also formally. Therefore the replacement of that strange language would be more appropriate which is also why Zhang Xiguo suggested using the language of Chinese chivalry novels. It is an excellent idea to compensate for the Western science fiction language with a Chinese one. The success of these books proves him right. He also achieved it by adopting Chinese mythology and history into his stories, something which the reader felt familiar with and could identify with. Common narratives merely describe relationships between people and are limited as re-

gards space. Science fiction is about the relationship between humanity and the universe and prophesies about the future. I also believe that Zhang Xiguo's "homesickness" and Chinese "friendship" can be trapped in his works and have already become a part of the Chinese universe. The relationship between people in Zhang Xiguo's works, especially the emotional one is somehow closer to the Chinese one than to the Western. Zhang Xiguo is also not describing the Chinese society as different from today, he does not express his views of it but instead only affirms societal characteristics. The last question is, could this be of interest to a reader from abroad?

The twenty years of development of Taiwanese science fiction was retarded in the early 1990s by the boom in science fiction cinema. Its history is almost complete. Literary prizes have been awarded to the old stars of Taiwanese science fiction. One can only and rarely purchase old books and anthologies in book stores; translations prevail. Evaluations by theorists, lectures, courses and symposiums on science fiction are common. Although it is the next step of decadence, Taiwan is not an exceptional example. The situation for science fiction literature is critical globally. The crisis is related to the decline of literature on a global scale where the average person does not have enough patience to read a book. How it is possible that so many people are touched by the nonsense of knight-errant fiction and love stories are read by so many, but the description of the future of humanity fails to touch anyone? Only Taiwanese university students are interested. There are courses on science fiction in the curriculum of natural science faculties and courses on how to write science fiction in the humanities. Academic discussion, symposiums and conferences are extremely popular. Taiwanese science fiction is a definite phenomenon and can be analysed and described. It is the main purpose of this paper.

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