

demi-minute au moins, j'en jurerais. (*Poussière sur la ville*, Montréal: Le cercle du livre de France, 1953, p. 11).

The stout woman, her eyes half-closed against the snow's glare, looked me over coldly. I returned her stare without really seeing her at all, as if my glance went right through her and rested on something far, far away. Yet, I recognized her vaguely—the mother of several children, who lived nearby. This silent exchange of glances lasted for a full half-minute, I am certain. (*Dust Over the City*, p. 11).

Translation is always a major problem. *Dust Over the City* has been competently translated, yet the translation, consistent and readable as it is, is unable to reproduce the style of the original. Let us hope, however, that it will persuade the reader that the book is worth rereading in its French original.

Roger Moore

HAROLD R. ISAACS, ED.

Straw Sandals: Chinese Short Stories 1918-1933

Foreword by Lu Hsün
Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1974.
Pp. 444. \$10.00.

Modern narrative forms as known in the Western world are late comers to Chinese literature. Great European storytellers like Dostoevsky, Chekov, Balzac, and Goethe were read and admired by young Chinese intellectuals, but it was not before 1915—the year in which Ch'en Tu-hsiu founded his revolutionary journal *New Youth*—that young Chinese writers started to try their hands at the newly imported genres and especially the short story. When Lu Hsün published his story "Diary of a Madman" in *New Youth* in 1918 it was regarded by historians as the first modern short story in Chinese (see p. xix).

Soon after that a group of revolutionary writers started to follow suit and to experiment with new forms and styles, and to deal narratively with daring and politically relevant subject matter. The turbulent years between 1918 and 1933 gave the younger generation all the reasons they needed to justify their insistence on a literary and political revolution: Chiang Kai-shek's attack on his communist allies in 1927, the founding of the League of Leftist Writers in 1930, the execution of five young writers in 1931, and the Japanese invasion of China in the same year.

In the midst of this turmoil and confusion Harold R. Isaacs founded in Shanghai his short-lived journal *China Forum* (1932-1934), in order to protest against the cruel and unjust methods of the Kuomintang authorities; it also served as an organ for young and revolutionary writers. It was in 1934 that Harold R. Isaacs, guided by Lu Hsün, assembled the stories included in *Straw Sandals* in order to "trace, through examples, the passage of the new literary movement in China from the humanistic or romantic concerns of its beginning to the intensely political and ideological cast it took on under the pressure of the great events that swept the country" (p. xi) in the years between 1918 and 1933. But, unfortunately, this collection had to wait forty years before it found a publisher. In the meantime most of the stories included in it were translated and introduced to Western readers.

The first story in this collection is Lu Hsün's parabolic narrative "Diary of a Madman" which condemns the "man-eaters" of his nation and cries for change and reform: "'You can change all this!' I cried. 'You can change from the depth of your hearts! You must know that man-eaters will have no place in the world of the future! You will devour yourselves if you don't change. Even if you can still multiply, you'll be extinguished by the real human beings just like wolves by hunters! Like vermin!'" (p. 11).

One of the shortest and most poignant stories of this collection is "Hassan" by Chiang Kuang-Tz'u (an author whom Lu Hsün held in low esteem). It is about a simple and ignorant man who suddenly refuses to support his oppressors; as a result he is called a "Bolshevik," a word he is unable even to understand.

A story that is published for the first time in English translation is "The Diary of Miss Sophia" (1927) by Ting Ling, the lonely and unfulfilled authoress who was awarded the Stalin Prize for literature in 1951 but was sent six years later to a labor camp. It is about the dilemma of an emancipated young lady who tries to save—or waste—the rest of her life according to her own wishes and whims.

But as is always the case with the reviewing of collections of stories, there is not enough room here for a discussion of all the themes, motifs, and styles represented in *Straw Sandals*. We can only add that this collection of stories—one play and one poem are also included—should be recommended for young sinologists and students of comparative literature. Harold R. Isaacs' valuable 38-page introduction and the section "About the Authors" will undoubtedly enable the unspecialized reader to understand many aspects of contemporary Chinese literature.

S. Elkhadem

MORRIS WEST

Harlequin

New York: William Morrow, 1974.
Pp. 324. \$8.75.

In the prefaces to the New York Edition of his collected works Henry James decisively marked—one by definition, the other by implication—the two courses which the modern novel has successively taken. The first was that which, recognizing internal-psychological complexity, has since moved toward the definition of an art of dramatic consciousness in which the universe is virtually a reflex of a person's sensibility (the way followed by James himself, by Forster, Woolf, Richardson, and Joyce). The second was that which, acknowledging the complications of the external world as a primary reality, has organized its structure as a model of that world, reducing human sensibility to a function of its design (the way followed by Huxley, largely by Graham Greene, by Orwell and, most recently, by Ian Fleming). The most sophisticated achievements in prose fiction have followed the former internally ordered method. Conversely,

Harlequin, the latest novel in Morris West's extensive chartings over twenty years and through eleven novels of this latter circuitous "way," is severely flawed, partly by virtue of weaknesses inherent in the fictional mode in which the novel is shaped and partly because of a cumbersome structural dichotomy which has been progressively emerging in his work. Namely that of a world institutionalizing itself into ever more complex forms of evil or nihilism on the one hand, while the central characters on the other hand resolve their problems and conflicts through a simplifying Christian vision or in weighty but irrelevant moral pronouncements. What emerges in (to my mind Mr. West's best novel) *The Devil's Advocate* (1959) as a personal quest for salvation at odds with the lives of other flawed characters develops in *The Shoes of the Fisherman* (1963) into a conflict between Russia and America, the threat of nuclear war being resolved by a humble Ukrainian Pope who had once been tortured by the very Russian leader he now negotiates with. This pattern of the simple Christian visionary involved in a naive salvational relationship with a world of proliferating evil is complexified ten years later in *The Salamander* (West's third novel set in Italy yet moving in the course of its plot to innumerable world capitals), and is most racily articulated in *Harlequin*, again hopping from Geneva, to Hamburg, to London, to Washington, to Mexico City, and to New York.

Harlequin (its title would suggest as much) derives principally from romance. Throughout the labyrinth of the novel's plot and its elaborately structured imagery of kings, courts, jesters, princesses, wizards, geniuses, puppets, magic, dark woods, and monsters, one is reminded variously of episodes from the world's quest literature: from the *Odyssey*, the Medieval prose *Lancelot*, Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller*, Gulliver's *Travels*, even *Alice in Wonderland*. Its hero, a descendant of a master-mummer of the *Commedia dell'Arte*, is a brilliant and cultured owner of a Geneva-based bank with branches in the world's major capitals. The villain is Basil Yanko, cadaverous director of a computer and systems-analysis industry programming the operations of large corporations throughout the world, among them George Harlequin's bank. As one move in a strategy designed to give him global power, Yanko seeks control of the Harlequin bank (to be sold later to the Arabs