

her peculiarities, it did not occur to us that her works sprang as much from the context of twentieth-century women's fiction as from the modernist movement. Diane Filby Gillespie and Ann L. McLaughlin, in articles comparing Woolf to Dorothy Richardson and Katherine Mansfield, show how a woman author can be understood in her interaction with her female contemporaries. Gillespie demonstrates the influence of Dorothy Richardson's theory of male and female realism on two key Woolf essays, "Modern Fiction" and "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown"; and McLaughlin illuminates by comparison Mansfield's "Prelude" and Woolf's "The Mark on The Wall" and Mansfield's "The Garden Party" and *Mrs. Dalloway*.

The essays in Marcus's collection consistently return from the context to the text, providing fresh insights helpful to her reader. After rereading Woolf in the light of such careful critical analysis it is disconcerting to pick up a summer 1984 issue of *The London Observer* (by Hilary Spurling, June 24, 1984) and read that Woolf's works lack "emotional or structural complexity," show "defective architectural sense, immaturity of feeling [and] above all her fundamental incuriosity about human nature." Let us hope that Jane Marcus's volume will go into paperback so that as many readers as possible have access to a criticism and scholarship whose multifaceted "slants" provide a more balanced perspective.

H. C. Chang

*CHINESE LITERATURE 3: TALES OF THE SUPERNATURAL*

New York: Columbia University Press, 1984. Pp. 169.

Reviewed by Robert Joe Cutter

Book stores have seen the repeated appearance of slight books full of trivial observations on China for some time now. Frequently these works are made up of someone's not particularly inspired insights into Chinese society and the Chinese psyche. I have no way of knowing whether the multiplicity of such works has had a limiting effect on the publication of more substantial and ultimately more informative works on various aspects of Chinese civilization, but I cannot help but suspect that in a finite world it has. Happily, excellent works have continued to come out on Chinese literature in both its traditional and modern representations. In many ways, H. C. Chang's new book *Chinese Literature 3: Tales of the Supernatural* is a recent example.

*Tales of the Supernatural*, as I shall refer to it here, is the third in a series of books by Chang about the Chinese literary tradition. It is the second to deal with some form of fiction. An earlier volume, *Chinese Literature 1: Popular Fiction and Drama* (1973), was very well-received and won the coveted prize bearing the name of the distinguished French Sinologist Stanislas Julien (1797-1873). In the present volume Chang turns his attention from vernacular fiction to tales written in the literary (or classical) language.

The English rubric "classical Chinese tale" can generally be applied to two types of works known as *chih-kuai* and *ch'uan-ch'i*. *Chih-kuai*, which may be translated as "recording anomalies," is a name for the kind of short account of extraordinary or supernatural happenings which preceded the appearance of the more mature classical language tale (*ch'uan-ch'i*, or "tale transmitting the marvellous" in Chang's translation) around the beginning of the T'ang dynasty (618-907). The more mature tales transmitting the marvellous continued to be written on into the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1912). Of the twelve such stories translated by Chang, seven are from the T'ang, one from the Sung (960-1279), and four from a single famous collection dating from the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. They include stories about fox-fairies, disembodied souls, ghosts (2), metamorphoses (2), dragons, were-tigers, immortals, a visit to a kingdom of swallows, flower spirits, and a religious conversion and enlightenment. In order to offset any mistaken impression Chang's work might give, it must be noted here that there are other types of classical tales. For instance, there is a considerable number of love stories and chivalric stories. Other groupings are also possible and there is often a good deal of overlap among groups due to the complexity of the stories and the vagaries of such classificatory schemes.

*Tales of the Supernatural* begins with a "General Introduction" (pp. 1-40) which traces the development of the supernatural tale. It accomplishes this largely by providing brief plot summaries, sometimes a single sentence, of stories from the various periods into which the introduction is subdivided. These summaries and those in the separate introductions to the individual tales Chang translates indicate an impressive amount of reading on his part and a rather thorough acquaintance with the varieties of the supernatural story in the literary language. The first section of Chang's "General Introduction" deals with the Early Supernatural Tale; that is, those *chih-kwai* stories of the third through sixth centuries A.D. Note that this section ends on p. 13 with a long paragraph that seems to me to be clearly out of place. Since it tells what the author has done in his introduction and will do in the remainder of the book, I believe it should be transposed directly to the end of the introduction.

Very useful are Chang's summaries of *ch'uan-ch'i* from the most important period of the classical tale, the T'ang (pp. 16-26). However, one of the book's weaknesses becomes apparent in his discussion of T'ang *ch'uan-ch'i*. *Tales of the Supernatural* is not a "scholarly" book. It does not necessarily indicate which points are in dispute, nor is it provided with much in the way of scholarly apparatus. The same is true of certain other works of translation from Chinese from Columbia University Press which are nonetheless important books. Because of this approach, the unwary reader does not know when Chang writes (p. 14) that T'ang classical tales were written to impress prospective career patrons that this explanation of their origin is by no means certain. The main source of the theory is a passage in a work which dates from half a millenium after the rise of the mature classical tale. While many scholars have subscribed to the same view as Chang, it is objected to by others. Also regarding the T'ang tale, I think it is very much an overgeneralization to say that the men in them are not weak scholars but ". . . are full-blooded and manly, abounding with energy and gusto, and extravagant in speech and behaviour" (p. 15). It is true that some stories do contain such men, but to this reader at least, the scholar heroes of some of the favorite and most famous T'ang tales are indeed weak enough. "The Story of Li Wa" ("Li Wa chuan") and "The Story of Ying-ying" ("Ying-ying chuan"), neither of which is a supernatural story, come to mind.

*Tales of the Supernatural* is a good book that will be criticized by specialists for not being sufficiently academic. We will lament its lack of notes, bibliography, and index but we will use it anyway. Chang's omission of references to existing translations of the tales he translates or mentions, on the other hand, is to be regretted by the specialist and non-specialist alike, but is particularly a problem for the latter. The translations in Chang's book are quite good and very enjoyable, though they are not always literal enough to serve as a complete trot. All in all, H. C. Chang has produced an informative and entertaining work that will be useful for scholars of Chinese literature, comparativists of various stripes, and the general reader as well.

Carolyn G. Heilbrun and Margaret R. Higonnet  
*THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN FICTION:  
SELECTED PAPERS FROM THE ENGLISH INSTITUTE,  
1981.*

Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1983, \$6.95.  
pp. 190.

Reviewed by Mary Beth Pringle

Six essays on feminist criticism, four from the 1981 English Institute and two invited papers, are collected in this volume. In a double introduction, Carolyn Heilbrun comments on the occasion of these papers' presentation; Margaret Higonnet discusses the "three distinct but mutually reinforcing phenomena [giving this work power]: a rapid accumulation of evidence, both literary and historical; a shift in focus from discrete images to structural and semiotic analysis; and finally, the growth of a body of criticism that challenges our categories of analysis as well as the literary systems we have been analyzing" (p. xiii).