

plotting the murder of Mary's husband, Lord Darnley, whose obsessive jealousy is believed to be the origin of the plot to murder Rizzio. While Chris toys with alternate endings, he is courted by publishers and filmmakers. Rowland is stabbed by a jealous envy that obsesses him increasingly, preventing him from pursuing his novel. Instead, he writes a novel about a boy writing a novel about Darnley's murder. Chris plays a cat-and-mouse game with Rowland, tormenting him with his jealousy. The two men engage in a symbiotic relationship in which each needs the other's obsession. Meanwhile, Nina pursues her affair with the nephew of a red-haired violinist. The quiriness of Spark's narrative is signed by the fact that this "uncle" is many years older than his violinist "aunt."

Campus Sunrise may be a Finishing School in more ways than one, as readers wonder who will finish off whom: Rowland Chris or Chris Rowland. Rowland's sin, according to Spark, is the sin of spiritual envy, or "Envy of Another's Spiritual Good" (80), according to the Roman Catholic Church, to which Spark, born a Jew, converted. Spark ends her novel with a classic denouement, itemizing the future occupation of each student, upon finishing.

Brief, like all of Spark's novels, *The Finishing School* is an elegant book with large print on small pages nicely bound by Viking Penguin with a dust cover showing a red-haired young man reading a book with a castle depicted on its dust cover, while balancing a pile of books on his head, symbolizing the metafictional quality of the novel. For those who like that kind of thing, that is the kind of thing that they like, as Jean Brodie would say.

Mao Dun

The Shop of the Lin Family & Spring Silkworms

Trans. Sidney Shapiro

Chinese-English Bilingual Edition. Bilingual Series on Modern Chinese Literature
Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2004. Pp. Xxxix+168. US \$14.00

Reviewed by Anne Wedell-Wedellsborg

This book presents two of the most well-known stories by Mao Dun (1896–1981), one of the major figures in twentieth-century Chinese literature. It includes an informative and thoughtful introduction to the narrative universe of the author by renowned scholar of Chinese literature David Der-wei Wang.

Mao Dun (other name: Shen Yanbing) belonged to the so-called May Fourth generation of Chinese writers, that is, writers whose creative energy was fueled by the nationalist cultural movement in 1919, and whose literary activities culminated in the 1920s and 1930s. Like many of his contemporaries Mao Dun joined the communist party, and by the time the People's Republic was

established in 1949 he had stopped writing fiction. Instead he became minister of culture, a post he kept until the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in 1966.

Both of the stories included in this publication were first published in 1932. They pointedly reflect the economic chaos and social turbulence in China at the time, through a description of its devastating effects on ordinary people in town and countryside. The protagonist of "The Shop of the Lin family" is poor Mr. Lin, at the center of relentlessly progressing financial ruin. The owner of a grocery store, he finds himself caught in a vicious circle of interests and loans. He is under pressure from all sides: his sickly wife and spoiled daughter, his creditors, customers, competitors, the bank manager, etc., people who are themselves pushed to their limits. To make matters worse the local Guomindang boss sets his eyes on Mr. Lin's daughter. There is a certain irony and no deep psychological probing in the depiction of this typical representative of the small-town petite bourgeoisie, a good and hard-working man who is, for all his efforts, powerless in the face of social turmoil and economic collapse.

The old peasant Tongbao, in "Spring Silkworms" fares no better. Life in the small village where he and his family live is entirely dependent upon the silkworm industry, and when the economic crisis shuts down the silk filatures, Tongbao's family turn out to be unable to sell the best crop of cocoons they ever raised. The story gives a meticulous and sensitive description of the whole process of work from the budding of mulberry leaves to the harvesting of cocoons, and of the dedication and care invested by the villagers in this traditional mode of production. Superstition plays a big role, intricate rituals are observed, and as the silkworms get thick, the family get thin, eyes bloodshot from lack of sleep as they tend the little creatures day and night. All to no avail in this finely drawn story, which is as much about the dignity of hard labor as about the futility of individual endeavor in circumstances beyond the control of ordinary people.

As a writer, Mao Dun was strongly associated with the style of realism, or even naturalism, which once earned him the nickname "China's Zola." Particularly in the first story there is something almost clinically detached about the way in which he demonstrates the logic of financial disaster and its impact on common people. But Mao Dun is clearly involved in the fate of his characters. To quote from the introduction, "his effort to imbue his narrative with a political agenda tempts him to walk the thin line between propaganda and art, between a realism of commitment and a realism of impartiality." This publication shows him successfully walking that line.

A bilingual edition (English/unsimplified characters), the book would obviously be useful for Chinese students of English and, especially, for English-speaking students of Chinese, as an introduction to one of the great modern Chinese writers and to a traumatic period of China's modern history.