The Production and Distribution of Lianhuanhua (1949-1966)

Rebecca Scott (4168551)

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for examination for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

June 2016

Word Count: 98,242

Abstract

My doctoral thesis uses the ‘institutional approach’ to analyse the mechanics of the production and distribution of *lianhuanhua* (comics) from 1949 to 1966. From this analysis, I extrapolate what made the medium unique and therefore what insights *lianhuanhua* can offer into Maoist ‘political culture’. *Lianhuanhua* originated in the Republican era and the unique characteristics of its publishing and distribution had important consequences for the medium’s subsequent development after 1949. During the ‘seventeen years’ *lianhuanhua* functioned as a propaganda tool, supporting political campaigns and celebrating CCP history. Despite these functions however, the themes inherent in the medium were a lot more varied. Analysis reveals that what was allowed and disallowed was considerably more ad hoc than what we might expect of a strictly controlled totalitarian state. Irregular approaches to production and censorship were also mirrored in the lack of an overall national publishing strategy before 1966. Meanwhile, as the producers of an art form which managed to successfully reconcile the inherent contradictions in CCP art policy, *lianhuanhua* artists developed a complex give and take relationship with Party-State agencies. Comics were disseminated through highly regulated channels, including bookshops, libraries and factories to ensure ‘revolutionary’ content reached a wider audience and Party-State agencies also sought to advocate ‘appropriate’ reading through ‘reading tutorship’. However, these agencies simultaneously faced challenges in regulating the stocks and location of the highly popular *lianhuanhua* ‘guerrilla vendors’ and this had profound implications for the kinds of content which persisted in circulating in the early PRC.

Table of Contents

Introduction 5
  Political Culture 8
  Lianhuanhua 11
    Lianhuanhua and Comics 11
    What are *Lianhuanhua*? 12
  Lianhuanhua in the Early PRC 14
  Thesis Statement 16
  Chapter Plan of the Thesis 17
Chapter 1: *Lianhuanhua* and Political Culture 21
  Introduction 21
  Scholarship on Political Culture 21
    The Political Cultural Approach 22
    Art and Literary History and Visual Culture Studies 25
    Social History: Political Culture as Part of Everyday Life 27
    The Institutional Approach and the Politics of Cultural Production 29
  Scholarship on *Lianhuanhua* 31
  Lianhuanhua Production in Shanghai and Beijing during the ‘Seventeen Years’ 35
  Historical Source Analysis 36
    Primary Sources 36
    Secondary Sources 41
  Conclusion 42
Chapter 2: The Birth of a Popular Culture 44
  Introduction 44
  The Development of a New Popular Culture 46
  The ‘Devil for Children’ 51
  ‘In Defence of Comics’ 56
  Lianhuanhua and the CCP 59
  The Master Narrative and the History of *Lianhuanhua* 63
  ‘The Most Powerful Works of Mass Literature and Art’ 65
  Conclusion 66
Chapter 3: Regulating a ‘Foreign’ Medium 68
  Introduction 68
  A Universal Appeal 70
  The Cultural Bureau 74
  The Publishing Houses 77
  Zhao Hongben and the Artists 80
  The ‘Golden Era’ and ‘Old’ *Lianhuanhua* 85
  The *Paomashu* 91
  San fan wu fan 97
  A Foreign and a National Medium 100
  The Nationalisation of the Publishing Houses 104
  Conclusion 109
Chapter 4: ‘A Weapon for Education and Propaganda’ in the ‘Combat Zone’ 112
  Introduction 112
  ‘Eliminate Illiteracy’ 113

- ‘A Weapon for Education and Propaganda’ 115
- Master Narratives 126
- ‘Serviceable for Today’s Society’ 130
- Adapting Content for *Lianhuanhua* 133
- Conclusion 139

Chapter 5: Censorship and the Lack of a National Strategy 141

- Introduction 141
- The Censorship Process 142
- Poisonous Comics 146
    - Maligning the Heroes 146
    - Anti-Party Figures 150
    - ‘Superstitious Beliefs’ and ‘Bourgeois Sentiments’ 154
    - Foreign Adaptations 156
    - Adaptations of Soviet Tales 158
    - Child Characters in *Lianhuanhua* 162
- Lacking a National Strategy 164
- Conclusion 170

Chapter 6: Creative Cadres 171

- Introduction 171
- The SPFAPH 172
- The Adaptor and the Writer 174
- The Artists 179
    - Single-line Drawing 181
    - The Freelance Artists and the ‘Socialisation’ of the Publishing Industry 185
    - The Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Anti-Rightist Campaign 188
    - Great Changes on the Mountain 195
    - How to Draw *Lianhuanhua* 201
    - The Three Guarantees 204
- The Contradictions in Communist Art Policy 208
- Conclusion 213

Chapter 7: ‘Seizing the Front’ in the Dissemination of *Lianhuanhua* 215

- Introduction 215
- Party-State Socialisation of the *Lianhuanhua* Bookstore Industry 217
- Libraries in Schools and Factories 221
- Reading Tutorship 226
    - *Lianhuanhua* Exhibitions 226
    - *Lianhuanhuabao* 228
    - Reading Tutorship for Children and Youth 237
- Conclusion 240

Chapter 8: *Lianhuanhua* in Circulation: ‘Guerrilla Vending’ on the ‘Cultural Front Line of Socialism’ 242

- Introduction 242
- Regulating the ‘Guerrilla Vendors’ (1949-1956) 243
    - The Vendors, the Readers and the Party-State Agencies 243
    - The Comic Renters Association 245
    - A Market Economy in the Comics 249
    - The Bookstores and the Vendors 250
    - ‘Guerrilla Vending’ 252
    - Licencing and Co-Operation 256

Censoring *Lianhuanhua* on the 'Cultural Frontline of Socialism' in the 1960s.......259
Conclusion.......266
Conclusion.......268
Glossary.......276
List of Lianhuanhua.......282
Bibliography.......286
Appendix.......310

Introduction

Over the last decade, a resurgence in fascination with *lianhuanhua* (comics)[1] produced during the 1950s and 1960s has resulted in the medium once again permeating the cultural sphere in China.[2] *Lianhuanhua* are being republished in large numbers as ornate editions and bookshops have display cabinets devoted to them (Radomski 2012). In 2000, the Shanghai People's Fine Art Press restored the *lianhuanhua* publishing department, and in 2005 alone, they issued over 50 titles. More recently, the China Bookstore in Beijing held the Second *Lianhuanhua* Fair, visited by avid collectors (Pan 2008, 714). At the same time, specialised websites and online reading clubs have been established, and markets for retail and forums for the discussion of *lianhuanhua* have emerged. The revival of interest in *lianhuanhua* has spread overseas with *In the Land of the White Stag*,[3] (*Au Pays Du Cerf Blanc*), which *Le Monde* terms 'a sumptuous reinterpretation of the medium,' being published in France (Barou 2015, 25).

Despite the fact that *lianhuanhua* are gradually beginning to be documented, very little is known about the history of the medium. Significantly, it is the republication of *lianhuanhua* first produced during the 1949-1966 period which is currently attracting such widespread interest. That this thesis analyses the production and distribution of *lianhuanhua* during the 'seventeen years' is thus highly topical and I offer unique insights into a medium which is much known but little understood. However, *lianhuanhua* demand analysis, not just because the medium is again infiltrating the cultural sphere, but because the history of *lianhuanhua* has substantial reference value and historical significance, offering exclusive insights into political culture under Mao.

---

[1] This introduction provides a comprehensive explanation of why I use the term comics.

[2] *Lianhuanhua* publishing reached its height during the Mao era, but waned during the 1980s as a result of the advent of new forms of entertainment in China, such as television (Sun 2007, 18).

[3] *In the Land of the White Stag* by the artist Li Zhiwu, is based on the prize-winning novel *White Deer Plain* (*Bai Lu Yuan*), which was published in 1993 and written by Cheng Zhongshi (1942-). The story focusses on the fall of the Manchu dynasty and its effect on a small village near Xi'an.

Lianhuanhua emerged during the Republican period and became a popular form of culture in urban areas. Recognising *lianhuanhua's* prevailing appeal after the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party-State sought to co-opt the medium for propaganda purposes. Shen Roujian (1960), a woodcut artist and later Executive Director of the Chinese Artists Association, expressed this view, writing in *The People's Daily* in 1960 that *lianhuanhua* were a 'powerful tool for the Party, workers, peasants and children'. This was because through entertaining stories, *lianhuanhua* could capture the 'new spirit of the Great Era' and 'provide a Communist ideological education, which focussed on popularising cultural and scientific knowledge' (Shen 1960). However, despite the Party-State's goal to turn this 'powerful tool' into a source of propaganda, the administration of *lianhuanhua* was never straightforward, and it is these struggles over how to control the medium which are the central narrative in this thesis.

With reference to a diverse array of primary source material from government documents to cultural ephemera, in this thesis I will provide a discursive institutional history of how Party-State agencies sought to transform the medium from 1949 to 1966. I will analyse approaches to the production and distribution of *lianhuanhua* and the challenges Party-State agencies faced in establishing authority over a medium that persisted in asserting its popular roots. In so doing, this study will provide unique insights into several key areas of cultural production during the 'seventeen years'. Firstly, I will analyse how an appreciation of the history of *lianhuanhua* enhances our understanding of how the Party-State adapted a medium which it had limited experience of utilising prior to 1949. Secondly, I will examine how *lianhuanhua* were used for propaganda purposes and provide crucial insights into the functions of culture in an extracurricular setting and into the ways in which censorship operated. Thirdly, I will discuss the institutional history of the medium and provide insights into the functioning of the cultural bureaucracy and the publishing industry, in particular the less closely managed arena of the Civil Administration. At the same time, I will analyse the relationship between writers, artists and the Party-State and how this was determined in part by the specificities of the medium. Lastly, I will explore the channels through which the Party-State disseminated *lianhuanhua*. The dissemination of political culture is an even lesser-studied field than the production of culture and an analysis of *lianhuanhua* contributes significantly to scholarship on this.

This study of the production and distribution of *lianhuanhua* makes a unique contribution to our understanding of the complicated way politics and culture interacted before the Cultural Revolution. In the early 1950s, the CCP struggled with how to assert its authority over the cultural sphere and policy constantly changed as bureaucrats adapted and crucially adapted to new mediums. However, even during the latter half of the 1950s, there continued to be substantial practical limitations and day to day challenges for the Party-State bureaucracy in regulating the production and distribution of culture. Namely, production could not keep up with changing policy, folk tales retained their popular appeal and publishing houses struggled with how to make revolutionary content marketable. Moreover, censorship rules were constantly in flux and due to the semi-private distribution networks recalling all censored content was an impossibility. Ultimately however, *lianhuanhua* as a medium was able to grow because it successfully married Socialist realism with traditional techniques and revolutionary discourses with popular culture and on the eve of the Cultural Revolution the medium was the most widespread urban based political culture.

Firstly, in order to explain the context of this thesis' focus, this introduction will firstly discuss the concept of political culture and its importance to early PRC Party-State discourses. I discuss the central paradox the Party-State faced in creating cultural mediums, which were at once didactical, and at the same time popular. Secondly, I provide a prelude to the detailed analysis of *lianhuanhua* in this thesis, discussing my choice of terminology, the medium's layout and its use of imagery and language. In conjunction with this, I present an overview of the development of the comics from 1949 to 1966. Lastly, I will outline my argument and a detailed chapter plan of the thesis.

Political Culture

After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party-State sought to restructure the socio-political and economic landscape, relying heavily on coercion for this purpose. However, the Party-State did not have absolute power and thus equally needed to inform and persuade the wider population of the CCP's legitimacy and its message (Hung 2011, 19). This view is not shared by all historians of the period, for example Tang (2015) recently argued that the Party-State was already seen as having legitimacy and thus the systematic instigation of cultural norms was not part of a legitimacy building project. I do not find Tang's argument that the Party already had widespread legitimacy convincing however. The CCP may have won the Civil War, but still had little experience of governing and did not have a firm political, social and economic administrative base in the early 1950s, particularly in the cities.

For the twin purposes of informing and persuadeing the wider population of the CCP's legitimacy and its message, the Party-State sought to transform the cultural sphere and replace the existing cultural framework with its own brand of political culture.[4] This new political culture disseminated the values, socio-political attitudes and expectations of the elite by means of recurring symbols, images, rhetoric and rituals in literature and art (Hung 2011, 5). In the countryside the 'aesthetic battle' over visual signs and symbols was highly important because of the overwhelmingly illiterate population. In the cities, where *lianhuanhua* pre-dominated, the dissemination of a 'new' culture was crucial because the CCP had little experience of governing and less of an established base (Hung 2007, 784). Political culture manifested itself in a variety of different mediums, many of which used visual imagery. These included posters, pictorials, newspapers, illustrations, photos, cinema, theatre, architecture, monuments and squares. After 1949, the Party-State established art institutions to mediate control and ensure that producers of literature and art were organised to create these mediums of political culture.

---

[4] This is not to say that other cultural discourses apart from the Party-State's officially endorsed discourses did not continue to thrive, as this thesis will establish.

In her study of the making of the Republican era citizen, Harrison (2000, 6) defines political culture as the key mechanism by which high politics interacted with individuals in their everyday lives. Likewise, understanding the transformation of the cultural sphere in the 1950s and 1960s is key to understanding how the CCP impacted on the people's daily lives. Scholars have thus far examined the themes and origins of the cultural discourses which circulated in the early PRC, the organisational and institutional structures which produced different mediums, literary and artistic practices and the ways in which audiences appropriated the 'new' discourses.[5] Hung (2011, 4) argues, however, that despite the centrality of this cultural transformation to the Communist regime and its relations with society, as yet insufficient attention has been paid to it.[6] Importantly, an emphasis on the transformation of the cultural sphere provides a unique understanding of how the regime was able to achieve levels of popularity, while at the same time using coercive measures.

The Party-State's brand of political culture was inherently ideological and was used to propagate ideas about orthopraxy and orthodoxy. Paradoxically, however, this culture also needed to be genuinely appealing and entertaining. In Yan'an in 1942 Mao stated that art and literature had to firstly be political, and that aesthetic considerations were secondary; in order to prosper, however, such cultural expression had to have to have a strong popular appeal (Evans and Donald 1999, 3). Mittler (2008, 483) maintains that PRC culture's ability to be perceived as 'high art' by governing State agencies was in direct correlation to how well it was perceived to 'serve the masses' in terms of appeal. Therefore, Party-State policy fixated on the issue of creating art and literature which was both 'revolutionary' and 'popular'. Farquhar (1999, 191) argues that the Party-State was in fact able to do this and thus contends in her analysis of Chinese children's literature that the history of the medium does not tell us just what the Party-State wanted children to read, but what they liked to read.

---

[5] I discuss these scholarly approaches in chapter one.

[6] In their analysis of propaganda posters, Evans and Donald (1999, 2) comment that there is a proclivity to see them as an aesthetic accompaniment to the period, instead of what they should be, which is central to our understanding of it.

Scholars have explored the way in which the Party-State sought to fulfil the paradoxical task of creating something which was genuinely popular, while at the same time teaching lessons on how to act as new national subjects (Hang 2013, 14). This approach has predominated here because understanding this appeal is fundamental to explaining why the Party-State was so successful in getting its message across and gaining support. Perhaps more than any other medium, it was *lianhuanhua* that were able to resolve this contradiction. By uniquely combining traditional Chinese line drawing with Communist themes, *lianhuanhua* instructed a broad spectrum of the population on Communist principles and history and acted as a political 'cultural carrier' (*wenhua zaiti*), whilst at the same time constituting a popular form of culture (Dang Dai Xuesheng 2012, 79). However, ultimately it was the medium's popular roots that caused issues for the Party-State when it came to establishing and maintaining control of content.

Lianhuanhua

Lianhuanhua and Comics

Xiaorenshu (children’s picture story books), *lianhuantuhua* (serial pictures), serial-picture books, children’s literature and cartoons have all been used interchangeably to describe *lianhuanhua* in English and Chinese. Changes in terminology are important as they signify the different ways in which the medium has been viewed and appreciated. *Lianhuantuhua* were an early nineteenth-century precursor to modern *lianhuanhua*, the term signifying the sequential nature of the art (Lent 2001, 9). Likewise, before the terms *lianhuanhua* and *xiaorenshu* were commonly adopted in the 1920s and 1930s, the medium had different names denoting their size and main audience and depending on the Chinese geographical context, such as *yayashu* (children’s book) in Guangdong and *gongzishu* (doll book) in Wuhan (Pan 2008, 694).

Xiaorenshu is the second most commonly used term for the medium and suggests that the target audience was children and youth. One of the original purposes of *lianhuanhua* was to foster an interest in the classics among children by adapting complex content and the term was widely used in the Republican period by Lu Xun (1881-1936), his contemporaries and the press (Farquhar 1999, 194).[7] There is no doubt that the medium was a key form of children’s literature[8] and discussions on how to best educate children and youth were often tied into discussions about *lianhuanhua* both during the Republican era and during the Maoist era, as will be discussed. *Lianhuanhua,* however, had a much broader appeal and functioned as a legitimate art form, as well as a form of literature. From their inception, they were widely appreciated by adults, therefore the terms *xiaorenshu* and children’s literature are not wholly indicative of their appeal (Pan 2008, 713). This thesis adopts the term *lianhuanhua* for the medium because this is precisely the terminology used in the period covered in this thesis.

---

[7] All primary source material from the 1930s and 1940s uses the term *xiaorenshu*.

[8] Highlighting their importance as a form of mass education and popular fiction, Farquhar (1999) provides a chapter on *lianhuanhua* in her discussion of twentieth century Chinese children's literature.

The appropriate English term to describe *lianhuanhua* is comics.[9] In his seminal work *Understanding Comics*, McCloud (1994, 6) loosely defines comics as 'juxtaposed pictorial images in deliberate sequence intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the reader'. *Lianhuanhua* are serial picture stories which use both images and text to convey their message, and therefore they fit McCloud's definition of comics.[10] Other terms to describe *lianhuanhua* do not provide a clear enough depiction, for example the label 'children's literature' does not tell the whole story, and describing the medium as 'cartoons,' a specific kind of art, is inaccurate (McCloud 1994, 21). *Lianhuanhua* can (although most do not) utilise cartooning, but they are certainly not defined by this approach alone. Henceforth, the terms comic and *lianhuanhua* are used inter-changeably throughout this thesis.

What are *Lianhuanhua*?

Lianhuanhua are small palm-sized serial picture stories. During the 1950s and 1960s, they appeared in single book form or in magazines, such as the medium-specific publication *Lianhuanhuabao*. *Lianhuanhua* varied in length depending on the subject matter, from a few pages to hundreds of pages in length. In terms of publishing, they could constitute a single story, or as part of a marketing strategy to sell more books, were published in a series or in two parts (entitled *shang* and *xia*) (Farquhar 1999, 194).[11]

---

[9] Other scholarship has routinely used the term comic for *lianhuanhua* (King 2013).

[10] This broad definition of the comics does not say anything specific about the medium, the artistic techniques or the printing methods used (McCloud 1994, 22). The term comic can therefore be used to describe *lianhuanhua*, even though the genre medium has its own specific aesthetic style and modes of production and distribution, which emerged in the political-cultural environment of China in the 1950s and 1960s.

[11] In terms of layout *lianhuanhua* differed from *manhua*, alongside which they are frequently and incorrectly analysed because they narrate stories through a sequence of panels. *Manhua* on the other hand can consist of a single large panel.

Lianhuanhua consist of an image with two or three lines of text per page.[12] In 1932 the writer and critic Mao Dun (1896-1981), an early commentator on *lianhuanhua,* called this image and accompanying text *tuhua* (image) and s*huoming* (explanation) (Mao 1932). However, it was not until the 1950s that much emphasis began to be put on the role of the text in conveying meaning in *lianhuanhua* (discussed in chapter six). Umberto Eco notes that the inclusion of textual information had an important impact on the way in which meaning was subsequently conveyed in *lianhuanhua*. Although, there is a fusion between visual and verbal information in *lianhuanhua*, the story is primarily led by the text (Eco 1994, 54). Indeed, it is very difficult to understand the story by looking at the images in isolation from the text. Eco (1994, 55) suggests that using the text to convey basic meaning allows the images to evoke realism, rather than having to be larger than life and cartoon-like to emphasise certain points. In addition, the images serve to facilitate the reader's identification with the narrative evoking daily life. Furthermore, images in *lianhuanhua* are interpretative, for example not detailing action, but highlighting heroic aspects or conveying emotions. Jiang Weipu (1956a) (1926-), head of the *lianhuanhua* press, commented in 1956 in *The People's Daily* that the purpose of the image in *lianhuanhua* was to provoke an emotional response in the reader.

The notable artist He Youzhi (1922-2016), who gained widespread acclaim in the early 1960s for his comic series *Great Changes on the Mountain* (*Shan xiang jubian*) (Appendix Figure 1), about the effects of collectivisation on a village in China, stated that drawing *lianhuanhua* not only required technical expertise, but also required a certain level of 'performance' (*biaoyanxing*) (Zhang, Gongzhe 2012, 15).[13] By this he meant drawing things which were not necessarily evident in the text. For example, if a character is giving a speech in the text, the images are supposed to convey the audience's response (Gu 1965, 46). The artists were expected to pay attention to composition, image and character proportions, and there had to be a complementary effect between style and content (Wan 2012, 46). Successful comics were those, such as *Great Changes on the Mountain*, which were purported to contain drama and tension, and an infinitely rich perspective and level of content in a 'small space' (Zhong 1999, 44). Although this thesis primarily focusses on production and distribution, some of the stylistic conventions used in *lianhuanhua* are further discussed in chapter six.[14]

---

[12] Some comics also incorporated speech bubbles (Gu 1965, 82). By the early 1960s, they also sometimes incorporated pinyin, affirming the link between *lianhuanhua* and improving literacy that is explored in chapter four.

[13] In nearly all cases I in text reference using just the surname and the date, except in rare instances such as this, where there are two authors in the bibliography with the same surname in the same year.

Lianhuanhua in the Early PRC

In 1956 Jiang Weipu (1956a) summed up the Party-State's vision for *lianhuanhua* declaring in *The People's Daily* that 'advancements in the production of *lianhuanhua* were a glorious Socialist mission and not just for the needs of today, but for the rapid improvement of People's cultural life in the future'. Jiang (1956a) declared that *lianhuanhua* were loved by audiences with an estimated 1.5 to 2 million people visiting bookstores to read *lianhuanhua* nationally per day.

Although *lianhuanhua* emerged as a form of popular culture during the Republican period in cities, the CCP had little experience of using the genre in the 1930s and 1940s. After 1949, as Jiang (1956a) illuminates, *lianhuanhua* played a key role in Party-State cultural production because the medium had the capacity to function as a form of propaganda in urban areas. At the same time, *lianhuanhua* maintained their widespread popular appeal among adults and children which had developed during the 1930s and 1940s, and which remained important in order for the medium to thrive (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952).

---

[14] *Lianhuanhua* had some of their own stylistic conventions, such as curved corners of the whole frame to denote memories of the past (Gu 1965, 82).

As part of a far-reaching political cultural strategy, the Party-State attempted to assert control over the *lianhuanhua* publishing industry and sought to inculcate Communist doctrine into discourses. Farquhar (1999, 213) collectively terms the new politically correct *lianhuanhua* as 'revolutionary comics'. Ostensibly, the *lianhuanhua* published after 1949 were supposed to support political and social campaigns, literacy programmes and the Party's version of history. Not all those published did, however. It is for this reason that Party-State departments sought to censor erroneous content. Authorities debated the relative merits of *lianhuanhua* titles and stories, which constituted a threat to the Party-State's dominant narrative in the press and in official documents. By the early 1960s, production levels had increased and a hundred million volumes had been published (Andrews 1994, 247).

Through a series of measures in the 1950s and 1960s, Party-State agencies sought to co-opt the production and distribution of *lianhuanhua*. However, the way the medium evolved over the course of the first 17 years of CCP rule did not constitute a uniform process and the State's control over the comic book industry fluctuated and changed. This had implications for the genres of *lianhuanhua* that were available. In spite of the preference for publishing 'revolutionary' *lianhuanhua*, therefore, a variety of genres continued to be published right up until 1966.

Despite *lianhuanhua's* centrality to PRC cultural discourses, the medium has garnered scant scholarly attention when compared to posters, New Year prints (*nianhua*), cartoons (*manhua)* and other forms of artistic and cultural production. This thesis seeks to address this imbalance because an analysis of the production and distribution of *lianhuanhua* provides unique insights into the development and intersection of society, culture and politics during the 'seventeen years'.

Thesis Statement

In this thesis, I focus on how the *lianhuanhua* industry was institutionalised by Party-State agencies between 1949 and 1966. From this I extrapolate what made *lianhuanhua* unique and, therefore, what the medium can tell us about the development of political culture in China under Mao. Firstly, I argue that the unique and important characteristics of the medium, which first developed during the Republican era, had far-reaching consequences for its development after 1949. These included the comics' absence from Yan'an and the emergence of speedy publishing and bookstall distribution. Secondly, I argue that *lianhuanhua* was institutionalised more slowly than other mediums of political culture partly because of the CCP's unfamiliarity with it and partly because it was controlled by the less tightly managed civil administration. Moreover, and unlike other forms of political culture, the CCP could not draw on examples from the USSR, because the Soviet Union had no comic book industry to speak of. Thirdly, I argue that even though the publishing of *lianhuanhua* had been successfully co-opted by 1956, a variety of genres of *lianhuanhua* continued to be produced and censorship remained ad hoc. Overall, the lack of a national strategy in *lianhuanhua* production also had an impact on the kinds of texts that continued to be published. Fourthly, I maintain that the two major contradictions in Communist art policy, that of maintaining popular appeal versus upholding high artistic standards, and Socialist Realism versus traditional techniques, were most successfully resolved through the medium of *lianhuanhua*. Therefore, while artists challenged the Party-State over their treatment in regard to subsistence issues, they never came into conflict with the authorities over the artistic direction of the medium. Finally, I argue that the limits of control over *lianhuanhua* stretched as far as distribution, and that the Party-State never managed to totally control the vendors, who continued to retail *lianhuanhua* in their thousands on a daily basis.

Chapter Plan of the Thesis

Chapter one provides a literature review. I analyse the ‘political cultural’ approach of scholars such as Hung and the ‘close reading’ approach frequently adopted by art and literary historians. In conjunction with this, I examine the contribution of social history studies, which focus on the role of culture in People’s day to day lives in the early PRC and the institutional histories of the way in which the ‘new’ culture was instilled. Subsequently, I analyse the limited scholarship on *lianhuanhua* so far. I then argue that providing an ‘institutional history’ of the medium is the appropriate methodological approach to enable these unique insights and I provide an overview of the primary source material I have used.

Chapter two analyses the history of *lianhuanhua* prior to 1949. I focus on the important characteristics of the publishing and distribution of *lianhuanhua*, which went on to be highly significant after 1949, such as the distribution of *lianhuanhua* through the street stalls and the speedy publishing. Early PRC approaches to the regulation of *lianhuanhua* resembled Guomindang approaches albeit on a much larger and more comprehensive scale. In addition, so too did the rhetoric surrounding the ‘dangers’ *lianhuanhua* supposedly posed to children if certain comics were not censored. I draw attention to Lu Xun’s important ‘Defence of Comics,’ which influenced how the medium was subsequently conceived and utilised in the PRC. This was particularly significant because the CCP itself had little practical experience of the medium before 1949 and the implications of this in the early 1950s are discussed in detail in chapter three. Finally, *lianhuanhua* were not used widely in the base areas, so this chapter discusses how CCP historians wrote *lianhuanhua* into the revolutionary master narrative in the 1950s.

Chapter three discusses the development of the *lianhuanhua* publishing industry from 1949 to the nationalisation of the publishing houses in 1956. Firstly, I establish why the medium had a universal appeal to urban audiences and thus why the Party-State put such effort into transforming the industry in the early 1950s. In addition, I discuss the overall early administration of the medium, in particular, the role of the civil administration, the cultural bureau and the publishing houses. This chapter also analyses early efforts to censor *lianhuanhua* and promote the production of 'revolutionary *lianhuanhua*'. I chart the history of early comic book production, including the initial boom in sales and the backlash against the derided *paomashu* (horse racing books*).*[15] I discuss the challenges Party-State agencies faced in adapting to a medium which they had not utilised widely in Yan'an. Finally, I discuss the implications of the absence of Soviet influence in the early administration of the medium.

Chapters four and five focus on the ongoing struggle over the publication and censorship of *lianhuanhua* before 1966. In chapter four I discuss how Party-State agencies sought to carve out a propaganda and literacy function for *lianhuanhua*. I highlight significant aspects of the medium including how *lianhuanhua* production often found it hard to keep up with changing campaigns and the implications of the comics remaining in circulation even after a campaign had gone out of favour. Furthermore, I discuss how *lianhuanhua's* other propaganda function was to support the Party-State's historical master narrative by telling tales of the revolutionary wars. I subsequently discuss the sources of inspiration from which *lianhuanhua* adaptations were derived and the challenges artists and publishers faced in drawing on material already in circulation.

In chapter five, I analyse the censorship process and the kind of content which was liable to be censored, while at the same time emphasising the ad hoc ways in which censorship was imposed and carried out. I subsequently link the unplanned nature of the way censorship and publishing operated to the lack of an overall national strategy for *lianhuanhua* production before the Cultural Revolution.

---

[15] *Paomashu* was a derogatory term, at times utilised to demarcate rapidly produced and allegedly poor quality *lianhuanhua*. The meaning is further discussed in chapter three.

Chapter six discusses the role of the ‘creative cadres’ in the production of *lianhuanhua* and their interactions with Party-State agencies from 1956 to the early 1960s. I establish that the Party-State introduced a new contributor to the comics in the early 1950s in the form of the writer. However, to a large extent their role was not recognised as a legitimate art form and Party-State agencies had to incentivise authors to pen *lianhuanhua*. Subsequently, the chapter analyses the role of the artist and the push and pull relationship that developed between Party-State agencies and artists. As producers of a highly popular form of mass culture, *lianhuanhua* artists played an important role in Party-State propaganda. They were awarded for particularly exemplary comics because they could make monotonous themes attractive to an audience. I chart how *lianhuanhua* artists were affected by developments during the Hundred Flowers Campaign, the Anti-Rightest Campaign and the Great Leap Forward and I combine this with an analysis of the impact of these events on their artistic style. Finally, I conclude that by the early 1960s *lianhuanhua* artists had been able to reconcile the two inherent contradictions in Communist Art policy.

Chapters seven and eight focus on the dissemination of *lianhuanhua*. In chapter seven I examine the ways in which the dissemination of the comics was controlled through bookstore, school and library distribution. Additionally, through an analysis of the role of exhibitions, *Lianhuanhuabao* and ‘reading tutorship’ for children, I discuss the ways in which Party-State agencies sought to regulate not just what people read, but how they read. Conversely, chapter eight focusses on the circulation of *lianhuanhua* among the street vendors, which was much more difficult to regulate. I discuss the role of the Comic Vendors Association and the challenges Party-State agencies faced in forcing vendors to register and locate to ‘appropriate’ areas. Ultimately, as a consequence of the Party-State’s lax control of the vendors, *lianhuanhua*, which were at best considered ‘un-educational’ and at worst ‘harmful’ to the Party-State, continued to circulate in urban areas into the 1960s. In the conclusion, I return to the broader concept of political culture and sum up how a study of the production and distribution of *lianhuanhua* contributes to, but also challenges current scholarship.

Chapter 1: *Lianhuanhua* and Political Culture

Introduction

An analysis of the development of the *lianhuanhua* industry fits into wider scholarly discourses on the interaction between politics and culture from 1949 to 1966. Thus, firstly, this chapter analyses the prevailing literature on Maoist cultural production. In this context, I analyse four scholarly approaches. This includes the ‘political cultural’ approach of scholars such as Hung and the ‘close reading’ method of analysing a few select texts frequently adopted by art and literary historians. In conjunction with this, I examine the contribution of the discipline of social history, which focusses on the role of culture in people’s day to day lives and what this can add to our understanding of Mao era culture. Additionally, ‘institutional histories’ have provided new insights into the complicated and sometimes conflicting ways in which the cultural bureaucracy operated.

Subsequently, I narrow the focus to analyse the limited and disparate scholarship on *lianhuanhua* so far in English and Chinese. I then establish that providing an ‘institutional history’ of the medium based on primary source analysis is the appropriate methodological approach for analysing the history of *lianhuanhua* and for producing unique insights into the production and distribution of culture more generally in the early PRC. I discuss in detail the nature of the primary and secondary source material and justify the scope of the study in terms of time period and regional context.

Scholarship on Political Culture

Recently available archival resources have allowed historians to explore the development of Communist political culture in the 1950s and 1960s in increasing detail. Some scholars have examined specific political cultural mediums, whilst others have adopted a broader approach.

In this section, I explore the range of scholarly approaches to the study of political culture and their strengths and limitations. I divide the current scholarship into four analytical approaches: the political cultural, the art and literary history, the social history and the institutional approach. Prior to commencing however, it is important to specify that studies of political culture cannot always be neatly slotted into one particular methodological approach or focus. Often studies take multiple different approaches, combining an analysis of thematic content with some insights into the institutional setup, for example. For instance, in his analysis of the emergence of 'new *nianhua*,' Flath (2004) examines debates in the art world in the early 1950s over the boundaries of propaganda art. However, in addition to examining debates within the art world in journals, he also looks at exhibitions and directives from the Ministry of Culture. Therefore, in summation there are specific ways of analysing the interaction between politics and culture in the early PRC, but scholarly analysis is not always defined exclusively by one particular approach.

The Political Cultural Approach

The political cultural approach seeks to holistically examine cultural production in the early PRC. Drawing together disparate mediums and examining developments in cultural discourses over wider time periods, scholars have searched for recurring themes and motifs. These accounts posit that cultural mediums circulating in the 1950s and 1960s should be read intertextually precisely because they propagate similar messages and utilise comparable linguistic and artistic techniques. A notable proponent of this approach is Hung (2011), who discusses the visual culture of the 1950s, examining mediums as diverse as the building of the Museum of the Chinese Revolution, dance and *manhua*. These mediums are explored under the banner of overarching notions of space, celebration, history, visual imagery and commemoration. Additionally, from his intertextual analysis Hung draws out three recurring themes, namely the dominance of the CCP over cultural discourses, Soviet influence and nationalism. He also reflects on how language and artistic styles were used to communicate their message and ultimately glorify revolutionary heroes and demonise those labelled as ‘reactionaries’.

Mittler (2013) uses the term ‘Cultural Revolution culture,’ rather than political culture in her study of the cultural landscape which assaulted people’s senses from 1966 to 1976, but she nevertheless takes a similar holistic approach to Hung. In her study of music, art and speech, Mittler (2013) examines cultural conventions, while at the same time establishing significant connections with much earlier and later historical developments. She finds that Cultural Revolution culture harked back to Republican forms both in terms of theme and motifs (Mittler 2013). Mittler (2008, 470) contends that certain ‘propagemes,’ such as the Mao image (which dates back to the Zunyi Conference in the mid-1930s) are recurrent in Chinese history and have become important in shaping cultural memory. She refers to this as ‘pre propaganda’ and she argues that these cultural discourses were highly successful in the arena in which they operated precisely because of these constantly repeated elements (Mittler 2008, 476).

‘Panoramic studies,’ such as those of Mittler and Hung, have done much to provide us with a holistic view. They draw out the recurring discourses, symbols, imagery, rhetoric and rituals and fundamentally assert the centrality of political culture to understanding developments in Maoist China. However, there are three significant limitations to this approach. Firstly, often when political culture is studied holistically, the nuanced differences between cultural mediums are lost. For example, Hung combines an analysis of *manhua* and *lianhuanhua*, despite the very significant differences between these two mediums in terms of origin, audience, production and distribution.[16] Consequently, this impacts on our knowledge of the way the cultural sphere operated.

Secondly, proponents of the ‘political cultural approach’ largely ignore how culture was produced and disseminated in favour of an examination of famous finished products. While it is important to analyse these examples, such an approach can nonetheless lead to notions of ‘oneness’ both in terms of thematic content and in terms of the ways in which culture was produced. Accordingly, some scholars have challenged these notions of ‘oneness,’ drawing attention to the multiple and sometimes conflicting narratives which emerged in the 1950s and 1960s. For example, Hang (2013, 13) recently argues, in her study of the journal *People’s Literature,* that the communist literary establishment did not have a clear view of what literature should look like. Instead the early 1950s was a period of literary experimentation as authors sought to create relevant and entertaining revolutionary stories, but often by drawing on ‘decadent bourgeois forms’ (Hang 2013, 8). Moreover, Braester and Chen (2011, 10) argue that the upshot of this experimentation in the film industry was that there is no all-inclusive category, such as ‘socialist (or Maoist) aesthetics’ that fits the period from 1949 to 1979. It is just such catch-all categories that the ‘political cultural approach’ advocates.

Thirdly, due to a lack of understanding of the way in which culture was produced, the process is reduced to a unified, top-down flow of cultural discourse, placing all agency in the hands of government or party agencies. In actuality the way in which the majority of cultural products were produced and disseminated was a lot more complicated and often depended on the workings of the cultural bureaucracy at a grass roots level. So whilst Hung has examined how the Museum of the Chinese Revolution became the centre of an elite factional debate during ‘the Red Line dispute,’ he does not go into detail on how more grass roots forms of culture were produced.

---

[16] I make reference to the intrinsic differences between the two mediums throughout the thesis and the consequences of these differences for their development before the Cultural Revolution.

Tang (2015) has argued that ignoring subtleties in the interaction between politics, culture and society can lead scholars to reduce everything to politics, including reducing any audience apathy at grass roots level to a direct political statement against top-down politics. He criticises Hung for reducing peasant resistance to new revolutionary *nianhua* to politics, arguing instead that it was apolitical (Tang 2015, 21). I take issue with aspects of Tang’s approach in a subsequent section, and his view that peasant resistance to *nianhua* was apolitical is nothing more than an assumption. However, he does make a very convincing point in arguing that the process of producing and disseminating culture was more complicated than the ‘political cultural approach’ suggests. However, this was not just because audience response to mass-produced culture was complex, but also because of the complicated way the bureaucracy, producers and marketers interacted in its production.

The ‘political cultural’ approach has begun to be challenged by a shift in emphasis towards institutional studies of the way in which cultural production operated. This scholarship suggests production was dynamic and experimental, and continuing theoretical debates sought to refine and redefine the functions and limits of the cultural sphere. They suggest the system itself was not always monolithic in the ways it operated and that grass roots institutions and the cultural bureaucracy played a key role in the way in which policy was instigated.

Art and Literary History and Visual Culture Studies

In contrast to the broader ‘political cultural approach,’ literary and art historians have provided close readings of specific texts. These studies seek to identify both the dominant narratives, and those which went ‘against the grain’ and through an analysis of language and imagery, the different premises underlying artistic production in the early PRC. For example, King (2013) has recently discussed significant works of fiction exploring the influences of Socialist Realism from the Civil War to the immediate post-Mao era. For example, he discussed the ways in which the novel *Hurricane* (1948) by Zhou Libo imported Soviet norms of Socialist Realism into Chinese literary discourses. In contrast to these dominant narratives, scholarship has also demonstrated that friction occurred when pre-1949 artistic and linguistic cultural norms tried to assert themselves in the new environment. Jia (2005, 535) describes how in depicting Mao against a backdrop of a traditional landscape painting the artist Shi Lu problematised a common revolutionary theme.

The approaches offered by literary and art historians have offered deeper insights into dominant literary and artistic techniques and the ways these were sometimes subverted. However, focussing on the narrative and thematic discourses alone does not allow for a nuanced understanding of the overarching institutional setup in which they were produced. Understanding this is key to appreciating the complicated and sometimes haphazard way in which the cultural bureaucracy operated, and the ways in which dominant discourses emerged and were interpreted and contested or ignored at a grass roots level. Furthermore, focussing on individual interpretations of a few random texts can result in idiosyncratic readings. For example, Yang's (1998) generalisations about the family in children's literature from 1949 to 1966 are less convincing because she does not give any particular reason for her selection of the three stories in her analysis.

Recently, a new brand of scholarship has emerged which claims to move beyond art history and to which studies of culture in the PRC are gradually being drawn to. These visual culture studies claim to be a hybrid discipline combining history, literary studies, philosophy, film studies, mass culture studies, sociology and anthropology (Tang 2015). Tang (2015, 8) advocates this approach to his analysis of what he calls 'socialist visual culture' or 'revolutionary cosmopolitanism'. In his analysis of woodcuts, *nianhua* and other visual products from 1949 to the present and through an analysis of elite artistic debates, he sets aside the more constrictive paradigms of scholars such as Hung. He instead demonstrates that Chinese contemporary and socialist culture was complex and unique. However, he falls short in analysing the backdrop to cultural production. For example, he sums up the restructuring of the cultural sphere from 1949 to 1952 in a few sentences, stating that the Party-State assumed control by setting up associations and establishing art journals, national exhibitions and art academies (Tang 2015, 33). He argues that visual culture studies give more attention to the production and distribution of culture than art history does, and they might do so in theory, but in this instance Tang does not. He looks at some of the debates on key pieces of art in top journals, but does not analyse the ins and outs of mass cultural production (Tang 2015, 11). Tang's approach has also been assessed critically in other ways. Notably, Du (2014, 93) rightly critiques Tang for idealising the Party-State's art endeavour and for suggesting the transformation of the art world was a naturalised story of historical rationality and necessity.[17]

Social History: Political Culture as Part of Everyday Life

Scholarship on the Maoist cultural sphere has also adopted a 'social history' approach focussing on the way in which discourses infiltrated individuals' daily lives. These kinds of studies explore the ways in which cultural mediums functioned as a form of propaganda and featured in campaigns. Landsberger (2001, 472) contends that the models held up in cultural discourses played a role in 'political schooling' and propagated appropriate modes of behaviour and thought. In addition, these readings of cultural mediums have contributed to an understanding of how cultural production sought to address different societal groups. For example, Zhong Xueping (1999, 161) analyses ten films between 1955 and 1966 which were targeted at youth and used adjectives like ‘young’ or ‘youthful’ in the title, such as *The Youth of Our Village* and *Youth in the Frontline*. Yang’s (2001, 189) study alternatively focusses on the plot and characters of 24 ‘agricultural novels,’ published during the Cultural Revolution for young people. Meanwhile Bi (2013) and Xu (2011) both discuss *Sparkling Red Star* (*Shanshan de Hongxing*), a seminal Cultural Revolution children’s story, although in the different contexts of literature and film.

---

[17] She also finds Tang's obsession with applying Western theory and interpretation to the Chinese cultural sphere unconvincing (Du 2014, 92).

Moreover, these studies have also examined the ways in which audiences perceived and experienced these cultural forms. Shen (2000, 189) argues that posters manipulated and fooled people into following Party dictates. However, the situation was more complicated than that and increasingly academic literature is focussing on how the population engaged with and appropriated political cultural forms. Landsberger (2001, 554) argues that photographic evidence shows individuals proudly displaying propaganda posters in their homes and giving them as gifts on special occasions, suggesting their personal value.

More recently, studies have explored the ways in which audiences could read, debate and ‘mis-read’ the ideological messages inherent in the texts with unexpected consequences. In her article based on forty individuals’ first hand experiences of the Cultural Revolution, Mittler (2008, 474) concludes every propaganda image could act as ‘anti-propaganda’ and could be read favourably or subversively. An individual’s experience of different political cultural forms and messages depended on their class and educational background and location among other factors. In fact, Mittler (2008, 475) goes so far as to argue that this was the most important characteristic of Cultural Revolution propaganda and perhaps of all propaganda. While Mittler focusses on the ways in which propaganda could be ‘mis’ interpreted, Hubbert (2006, 147) analyses badge collecting, explicating the complexity of cultural products which functioned as both commodities and forms of propaganda.[18] She argues the Mao badge contributed to a 'communalisation of culture, a process by which culture is made mandatory through the widespread possession of material objects;' however, the very devices used to try to enforce the oneness of identity produced division and fetischisation (Hubbert 2006, 239). The reason such studies of audience reception are still relatively rare, however, is that they are particularly difficult to do as they rely on personal written accounts, and access to and choice of interviewees can be challenging.

The Institutional Approach and the Politics of Cultural Production

A study of the institutional framework in which culture was produced examines in detail how Party-State departments interacted and the role of artists and writers. Within the context of this there are broader and narrower approaches, which examine the politics of cultural production as it relates to wider movements and studies of the workings of individual industries. For example, adopting a broader approach, Liang (1988) examines how art movements affected artists and their work. Taking a similar broad sweep, Galikowski (1990) examines the relationship between politics and art in terms of artistic institutions, ideological schemes and political movements, focussing predominantly on the Artists Association. Likewise, and with a particular focus on the art academy system, Andrews (1994) examines the impact of fluctuating political discourses on Chinese painters and their artistic styles.

More recently however, scholars have adopted a narrower focus, but used this as a lens through which to analyse broader developments in politics and culture. For example, Altehenger (2013) adopts a very specific focus analysing the institutional development of the magazine *Manhua*, the production process and the role of the cartoonists who contributed to it in the 1950s. Likewise, taking Hubei as a case study Demare (2012) analyses the link between cultural performance and political action in marginal geographical spaces. Through this case study, he is able to examine the limits of Party-State control in these spaces and the tensions on a micro level, symptomatic of broader tensions, which existed between cultural producers and CCP bureaucrats over how to balance propaganda initiatives with entertaining audiences (Demare 2012, 168). Furthermore, through an analysis of the making of one film during the campaign against Wu Xun, Wang (2011) reveals that divisions in the cultural leadership and film-making ranks in the early PRC were complicated and often shifted. He establishes that cinema was not homogenous or tied strictly to the development of a campaign.[19] Wang (2011, 25) furthermore argues that early PRC films played an active role in the development of political campaigns and were not just the cultural products of them.

---

[18] A badge was a commodity, but it could not be cheapened as it was also a symbolic object, imbued with Mao's image and therefore thought to have special powers.

In the context of an analysis of institutional frameworks, scholars have also begun to challenge the idea that political cultural discourses were instilled in a regimented and clearly defined way. For example, in their study of Chinese film, Braester and Chen (2011, 9) highlight the partial nature of the cultural transformation and the complicated and chaotic nature of Party-State-sponsored political-cultural change from 1949 to 1978. Furthermore, as well as eschewing generalised descriptions of film in the period, they also examine the 'messiness' of history and film's role in making that history (Braester and Chen 2011, 11). Meanwhile, Du (2014) analyses the gradual shift that occurred in State agencies' 'Shanghaiing' of the Shanghai popular publishing industry from 1949 until 1956 and describes this as a dynamic transitional period, marked by uncertainty and change. Du focusses on broader aspects of the publishing industry and in particular on the fate of tabloids and draws out some themes which are explored and at times challenged in this thesis.

---

[19] The film *Song Jingshi* was intended to play a role in the campaign against Wu Xun, one of the first denunciation campaigns of the early PRC, but rival interests meant the film went through a long and complicated revision process.

Scholarship on *Lianhuanhua*

Within the context of studies of early PRC cultural production, this research fits into the as yet limited and disparate, but very important scholarship on *lianhuanhua*, much of which has not yet appeared in English. With the renewed interest in *lianhuanhua* in the last decade and the republishing of many titles, Chinese scholarship has begun to focus on the medium, particularly on the comic's aesthetic qualities and the role of the artist. Notably, the Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House (*Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe* henceforth abbreviated as SPFAPH) produced a volume on *lianhuanhua* in its fine arts series (Shi 2010). Although this is a useful reference source for the most notable comics from the period and contains beautiful reproductions from such classics as *The White Haired Girl* (*Bai mao nü*) and *Great Changes on the Mountain*, it does not offer a nuanced view of the medium's history.[20] Additionally, and for the most part, the comics in this volume are used illustratively to give an impression of historicity, rather than to provide fundamental insights into the period from which they originate. Meanwhile, articles in Chinese academic journals have provided insights into how artists worked and sought to illustrate *lianhuanhua* (Wan, 2012) (this is further discussed in chapter six). Chinese scholarship has, for example, revealed that *lianhuanhua* artists were versatile and moved into other forms of artistic production if required and that they conducted research in the field (Zhong 2011, 44; Zhang, Ying 2012, 112). Interviews conducted with artists who operated during the 1950s and 1960s and published in recent

---

[20] For example, the book claims that Republican publishers employed mafia gangs to control *lianhuanhua* artists and provided them with opium (Shi 2010).

Chinese journals are useful for providing these kinds of insights and I use them as a resource in this thesis.[21]

Chinese scholarship focusses less on how the industry operated and how the Party-State regulated production and distribution. However, there has been some analysis of the early development of the medium, which can act as a starting point for the more in-depth analysis in this thesis. For example, while Lian's (2012) article on the development of the comic book industry in Beijing is very brief, it highlights some key areas to examine in more depth, such as the ways in which *lianhuanhua* were distributed and the tension which existed between Shanghai and Beijing over comic production. Meanwhile, Li's (2011) study of the Beijing comic book industry gives an overview of the changes the industry experienced after 1949. However, like much of the scholarship, he suggests the eradication of 'old' *lianhuanhua* was a smooth and 'morally correct' process. In a doctoral thesis Cheng (2011) offers a more comprehensive, if not always analytical assessment of the 'Socialist transformation of the comic book industry,' and focusses on how content changed after 1949 and how this content embodied wider ideological and cultural discourses.

Scholarship in English on *lianhuanhua* is limited and quite disparate. The few scholars who have produced chapters or articles on the comics since the 1970s have done so individually and there has been no coherent and ongoing discussion about the nature of the comics and their function. *Lianhuanhua* first attracted the attention of scholars writing in English in 1978. Hwang (1978, 51) argued that revolutionary *lianhuanhua* were a 'deadly serious' medium used to promote social change and indoctrination and that publishing figures proliferated prior to 1976. Hwang's chapter predominantly focusses on the *lianhuanhua* of the Cultural Revolution.

---

[21] See He Yulin's (2012) interview with Huang Quanchang and Zhang Ying's (2012) talk with Liu Hanzong.

Significantly for this thesis, he does stipulate that 'revolutionary' *lianhuanhua* did not successfully collar the market and succeed in driving out comics with 'alternative themes' prior to 1966 (Hwang 1978, 54). However, Hwang does not go into any detail about why this was the case and this is one of the central questions of this thesis. Eco's (1994, 152) chapter on *lianhuanhua's* penchant for scrupulous realism, fine line drawing and strict delineation of perspective makes a convincing argument for the different functions of the image and the text elaborated in this thesis' introduction. However, his haphazard comparisons between *lianhuanhua* and comic strips from other cultures are less convincing (Eco 1994, 152).[22]

More recently, *lianhuanhua* have garnered passing reference in the context of broader studies of literature and art. For example, King (2013) briefly discusses some *lianhuanhua* adaptations of key 'red classics,' such as *Li Shuangshuang*. Also in an analysis of literary developments, Farquhar (1999, 192) argues that *lianhuanhua* were 'the most significant Maoist contribution to modern children's literature' and subsequently devotes a chapter of her book to them. She argues that an examination of *lianhuanhua* contributes significantly to an understanding of Chinese children's literature because it is a pictorial medium and thus far mainly written texts, such as fiction, plays and poetry have been analysed. Farquhar's analysis predominantly focusses on the content of some key *lianhuanhua* which garnered widespread acclaim, notably Zhao Hongben's (1915-2001) famous comic *Monkey Subdues the White Boned Demon*. Frequently, *lianhuanhua* are analysed in conjunction with *manhua*, despite the inherent differences between the two (further explored in subsequent chapters). For example, Hung (2011, 55) combines an analysis of the two mediums.

---

[22] For example, with reference to only one *lianhuanhua*, *Following the Trail* Eco (1994, 152) concludes that Chinese revolutionary comics resembled British comics from the 1930s in terms of their emphasis on realism and lack of humour. After making this comparison, he even more tenuously argues that the latter directly influenced the development of the former.

As is also the case for Chinese scholarship, studies on how the *lianhuanhua* industry operated are rarer still. In her seminal analysis of the overall institutional framework of the Chinese art world, Andrews (1994) touches on the development of *lianhuanhua*. However, for the most part, her main focus is on political and artistic developments in the academies and the Chinese Artists Association. She primarily concentrates on *guohua*, which was fundamentally affected by changes within these institutions. Nevertheless, she makes some key suppositions about what set *lianhuanhua* apart from other art forms in terms of artistic practice and political setup, and it is with access to a vast array of archival materials, which have become available in recent years, that this thesis is able to explore what she theorised in depth. Most crucially, Andrews (1994, 134) proposed that the two major contradictions in Communist art policy, that of maintaining popular appeal versus upholding high artistic standards and Socialist Realism versus traditional techniques were most successfully resolved through the medium of *lianhuanhua*. My archival research explores this hypothesis. Also relevant for this study, Shen (2001) discusses the origins of *lianhuanhua's* unique distribution network during the Republican era and Macdonald (2011) provides a translation and discussion of Lu Xun and Mao Dun's influential treatise on the comics written in 1932.

Most recently, in her exploration of Cultural Revolution culture, Mittler (2013) draws attention to the importance of *lianhuanhua*. However, her rather scant analysis of a few randomly selected comics stands in contrast to her more in-depth treatise on the development of opera in the same book. In exploring the ideological confines of the comics, she questions whether these 'chained pictures' actually 'chained readers,' however she does not explore how the comics were produced and in what context readers acquired and read them. Such a contextual analysis of Cultural Revolution comic industry would be hard to do without an understanding of the environment prior to 1966 and how *lianhuanhua* were produced, disseminated and circulated. This thesis will provide this essential context and provide a starting point for future studies wishing to analyse the ways in which *lianhuanhua* were produced and distributed during the Cultural Revolution.

Lianhuanhua Production in Shanghai and Beijing during the 'Seventeen Years'

This thesis primarily concentrates on developments in urban areas because up until 1955 readership of *lianhuanhua* was an urban phenomena. The medium was accessible to a semi-literate urban audience, due to its use of colloquial modes and linear story telling. I do, however, discuss some of the attempts to extend the circulation of *lianhuanhua* to the countryside, such as the literacy programmes in the early 1960s in which the SPFAPH was heavily involved.

Within the context of the development of the industry in urban areas, this thesis discusses the dissemination of *lianhuanhua* in Shanghai and to a lesser extent Beijing. This is because Shanghai led the *lianhuanhua* industry, producing half the national publishing total during the decade after the establishment of the PRC (SPFAPH 1959a). The primacy of Shanghai as the 'capital' of *lianhuanhua* is discussed in chapters five and six. However, the study of *lianhuanhua* dissemination in Beijing also allows for some important comparisons. Even though the political capital of the PRC was the normative centre of power, Beijing reacted to developments in Shanghai over *lianhuanhua* production and dissemination and responded to what had not worked and sought to counter a similar 'crisis' occurring.

I incorporate a chapter on the emergence of *lianhuanhua* as a key form of popular culture during the Republican period because this provides an important context for the future development of the medium. I reveal continuities and changes across the '1949 divide' and discuss the aspects of the production and distribution of *lianhuanhua* which emerged during the 1930s and 1940s and affected its development in the early PRC. However, I do not provide a full history of *lianhuanhua* during the period as there is not the time and scope within this thesis.

I focus on the first 'seventeen years' of Party-State rule rather than extending the study up until the end of 1976 for several reasons. Firstly, there is sufficient scope for the thesis by just focussing on the period from 1949 to 1966 and having a narrower study timewise allows for a much more in-depth analysis. Secondly, an analysis of the production and distribution of *lianhuanhua* during the Cultural Revolution would necessitate a completely different methodological approach. Unsurprisingly, there are very few archival records from the period[23] and providing a history of *lianhuanhua*, particularly how the comics were distributed, would demand conducting an oral history. Such a study would provide unique insights into the production and circulation of Cultural Revolution culture, but time and resources do not allow for this in the context of this thesis. In the conclusion, I explore possible avenues for further research on the comics and this is one of them.

Historical Source Analysis

Primary Sources

This PhD thesis is chiefly based on an analysis of an array of primary source material from the 1950s and 1960s and to a lesser extent the Republican period. In terms of the Republican period, I analysed writings on *lianhuanhua* by Lu Xun and his contemporaries. These provided a formative understanding of how the comics were viewed as an influential (whether for good or ill) form of art and literature by writers of the May Fourth era. Lu Xun's treatise is also highly important because later Party-State functionaries drew upon his earlier essay on *lianhuanhua* in the 1950s.

---

[23] I collected all the documentation that was available during my archival research in China in Shanghai and Beijing.

I also examined popular newspapers from the 1930s and 1940s in which articles on *lianhuanhua* featured, such as *Family Weekly* (*Jiating Xingqi*). These magazines tended to focus on the dangers the rampant spread of *lianhuanhua* posed to children's morals. However, I also examined other articles, which sought to defend the medium, seeing it as besieged by the popular press and government agencies alike. Additionally, I analysed relevant articles in *Shenbao*, the oldest and one of the most influential Chinese newspapers during the period. Between 1933 and 1949 20 articles about *lianhuanhua* featured in the newspaper. In the 1930s these articles focussed on government efforts to censor the comics and the dangers they were reportedly supposed to pose to children. Later during the Civil War, the paper commented on attempts to distribute *lianhuanhua* by the China Youth Core and the Guomindang's continued fears about their 'polluting' content. Crucially, the paper helped establish that both the CCP and the Guomindang did not use *lianhuanhua* for propaganda purposes. In terms of the comics themselves, I was also able to gain access to a Chinese compilation of particularly famous *lianhuanhua* from the period. The compilation gave a sense of the comics' artistic style and layout and highlighted notable titles (Chinese *Lianhuanhua* Publisher 1998).

To contribute to an understanding of how Party-State historians 'wrote *lianhuanhua* into revolutionary history,' I examined books on the history of the medium prior to 1949 and published during the 1950s. As will be explored in chapter two, these histories were highly important because they constructed a narrative about the role *lianhuanhua* played in cultural and political discourses prior to 1949. However, when examined alongside other primary source material, this narrative does not ring true. In fact these texts wrote *lianhuanhua* into a history the medium had never been a part.

I also collected all of the preserved government documents in the Shanghai and Beijing Municipal archives relating to the production and distribution of *lianhuanhua* from 1949 to 1966. In total this amounted to 130 documents from one to 10 pages in length, the majority originating from Shanghai as the centre of *lianhuanhua* production. These documents were produced by various different Party-State agencies at a district, city and national level, by publishing houses and by interested individuals, notably the SPFAPH, the News Publisher (*Xinwen chubanshe*), the Cultural Bureau (*Wenhua ju*), the Publishing Bureau (*Chuban ju*), the Culture and Education Office (*Renmin weiyuanhui wenjiao bangong*) and the *Xinhua* bookstore (*Xinhua shudian*).[24]

The letters and reports produced by these agencies were fundamental in establishing the mechanics of how the *lianhuanhua* industry operated. Documents from the early 1950s are particularly numerous, providing a highly detailed picture of how the Party-State sought to carve out a function for the comics in the face of numerous challenges. An analysis of these documents provides a sense of the complexity, disarray and contingency of much of what occurred. From 1956 onwards, the documents reveal the continuing debates over censorship and the changes in the ways in which *lianhuanhua* were envisaged. Additionally, they shed light on how artists and writers operated and the relationship between them, the publishing houses and the Party-State. The documents are particularly valuable for the insights they provide into how *lianhuanhua* were distributed and the concerns Party-State agencies had over the vendors.

It is important to note that due to the diverse nature of the primary source material used, and the complex set of institutions involved in the production, circulation, censorship and distribution of *lianhuanhua* in the period examined in this thesis, I decided to include the English names of institutions when providing in-text references for material produced by Chinese agencies, departments or other institutions. In turn, the bibliography is arranged with the English names of institutional authors in the first instance, but with full Chinese-language details including pinyin and characters also provided. This will enable readers to easily trace the source of material without being confused by the sometimes highly similar names in Chinese of various institutions, while at the same time being able to trace the origins of such material to the archives or other institutions in which they are found today. I also provide a comprehensive glossary.

---

[24] The following chapters provide details on the different and sometimes overlapping responsibilities of these agencies and the relationships between them.

In analysing the development of the *lianhuanhua* industry, *The People's Daily* proved a very useful accessory to the government documents. In all, over sixty articles were published on *lianhuanhua* from 1947 to 1966. The paper frequently commented on distribution initiatives and conferences on *lianhuanhua.* For example, there are number of articles from the early 1960s which especially focus on a conference in which the famous comic *The White Haired Girl* was displayed and the changes Hua Sanchuan was expected to make as a result of comments by his peers. Additionally, *The People's Daily* often criticised specific titles; for example, complaining during the Korean War when *lianhuanhua* production could not keep up with national directives (discussed in chapter four). Jiang Weipu, the head of the *lianhuanhua* press, was a particularly frequent contributor to *The People's Daily,* commenting on the function of the comics and the ways in which producers could learn from Lu Xun's writing's about the theory and practice of comics.

In addition to *The People's Daily,* I also utilised the journal *Meishu*. This was particularly useful as a treatise on how artists were supposed to work and more general issues with texts within the comic book industry.[25] I also made a study of *Lianhuanhuabao,* copies of which I obtained from Stanford University. This 'trade magazine' was specifically produced to accompany the production of the comics. Chapter seven discusses the functions of *Lianhuanhuabao* in more detail as the publication of the magazine fit directly into Party-State agencies' aim to guide the reading of *lianhuanhua* in an extracurricular context.

---

[25] If I had longer I would have examined more articles in *Meishu*. I was only able to get hold of the magazine rather late in the writing process and was unable to make such a comprehensive study of the publication as I had with *Lianhuanhuabao* and *The People's Daily*. Nevertheless, the articles I looked at in detail provide useful insights into how the artistic establishment viewed *lianhuanhua*. I chose to focus on more general articles, rather than ones which focused on particular issues with specific *lianhuanhua,* as by that point in the process I already had a lot of individual examples of censored content.

After conducting the archival research and reading relevant newspapers from the period, I was able to deduce who were some of the most famous artists prior to the Cultural Revolution and to look at their comics in more detail. Notable examples are *Great Changes on the Mountain* by He Youzhi and Hua Sanchuan's *The White Haired Girl*, which are readily available online.[26] Hua's work was acknowledged as exemplary by the Party-State, when he won a newly inaugurated National Comic Book Award in 1963 (Zhong 2011, 44). He Youzhi was similarly awarded, with his *Great Changes on the Mountain* winning first prize (Zhang 2012, 14). He also created the famous 1962 'feminist' comic *Li Shuangshuang* (Andrews 1997, 29).

Identifying these 'masters' of the medium was key as consequently I was able to analyse some of their writings on how to produce *lianhuanhua*. He Youzhi was particularly prolific in this regard, writing in-depth in the 1980s on how to illustrate *lianhuanhua* and his experiences creating *Great Changes on the Mountain* and *Li Shuangshuang* during the 1960s. However, He and Hua are by no means the only artists that I specifically make reference to throughout the thesis. Zhao Hongben, who produced some famous *lianhuanhua*, but more importantly for this thesis took a prominent organisational role in the industry, is mentioned throughout the thesis and first introduced in chapter three. Unsurprisingly, it was more difficult to get hold of the comics which were censored during the 'seventeen years,' but every title that was mentioned in the archival documents I did a search for online and some are still available to buy and scanned pages can be viewed on the internet. For example, *The Old Persian Man's Sword* (*Bosi Laoren De Jian*) (mentioned in chapter five in the section on censorship) is still in circulation today and available to buy on the internet. Costing 1500 yuan, it is a high-priced collector's item.

---

[26] As specified, however, this thesis is not primarily based on an analysis of particular texts, but rather on production and distribution in general. This is why the bulk of the source material comes from the government documents instead.

In general, in stark contrast to the wealth of material about their production and distribution, there are not many *lianhuanhua* preserved in libraries in China. As specified above, some famous comics are available as collectors' items or online, but *lianhuanhua* were not collected in libraries for many years because they were not viewed as high culture (Pan 2008, 695). When researching her thesis in 1994, Chen Shangyu had to exchange toys and sweets for *lianhuanhua* or meet private collectors and artists in order to see their personal collections (Pan 2008, 695). I was able to find a few disparate texts from the 1950s and 1960s in the Beijing National library, but there was certainly no comprehensive collection and thus I turned to sources outside of China. I collected cultural ephemera from the University of Stanford. These collections were also useful for looking at examples of the comics themselves from the early 1950s, which have been preserved in the Harvard-Yenching collection. I also ascertained how the medium crossed with other forms of political culture. For example, I found examples of *lianhuanhua* turned into propaganda posters.

Secondary Sources

The literature on political culture analysed in the first part of this chapter formed the formative framework for this study. As stipulated I analysed not just what scholars have written about the development of cultural production in Maoist China, but their divergent approaches to this. As discussed, this scholarship included more general studies on politics and culture, treatises on specific mediums of visual and/or literary production, discourses on the interaction between culture and society and institutional histories.

In terms of scholarship in Chinese on the comics, I referred to the full monographs on *lianhuanhua*, journal articles and compilations of art work. As established in the section on Chinese scholarship on the comics, Chinese academic articles provided some useful insights into areas of comic book production and distribution that analysis of the archival documents allowed me to explore further. Additionally, these articles provided bibliographic information on the authors. However, sources on the Chinese Academic Journals Database (CNKI) were also valuable for this project because the database contains a variety of Fine Art magazines with interviews directly with or about the artists. For example, an interview with Jiang Weipu in the magazine *Art Watch (Meishu Guancha*) in 2005 provided insights into the relationship between himself and the artist Hua Sanchuan and how Hua had developed a particular focus on *lianhuanhua* adaptations of stories from the Soviet Union (discussed in chapter four). These secondary sources are particularly useful due to the lack of archival material on the exchanges between the artists.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the approaches to the study of political culture so far. While a broader approach enshrined in what I have termed the ‘political cultural’ slant offers a more rounded understanding of the cultural sphere and highlights recurring tropes, it does have limitations. Comparisons between mediums are often made which do not necessarily apply, and the mechanics of production and multiple and sometimes conflicting cultural narratives are ignored. Literary and art history studies have provided in-depth analyses of significant texts, drawing out key themes, styles and techniques. However, these readings can appear idiosyncratic, unless the context in which these cultural discourses were produced is also analysed. Visual culture studies claim to move beyond the ‘confines of art history’ in understanding the Maoist cultural sphere. However, these too are limited in their analysis of the mechanics of production. Social history studies of the interaction between culture and daily life have provided insights on the ways in which culture was envisaged as a form of ‘political schooling,’ the ways in which specific audiences were targeted and more challengingly have endeavoured to analyse audience reception of ‘revolutionary culture’. However, it is the institutional histories of the interaction between politics and culture which are able to explicate the actual mechanics of cultural production.

While scholarship on *lianhuanhua* in English and Chinese has so far provided tantalizing hints of areas which if studied in more depth could yield significant insights, there has been no comprehensive study of the development of the medium from 1949 to 1966. An institutional history of the medium based on the wealth and variety of primary source material explored in this chapter is the appropriate method for garnering these insights.

Chapter 2: The Birth of a Popular Culture

Introduction

Serial picture stories have a long history in China, but this chapter focusses on the emergence of modern *lianhuanhua* in the Republican period, notably in Shanghai. Many of the unique aspects of *lianhuanhua* originated during this time. These were to prove highly influential after 1949. *Lianhuanhua* grew as a form of popular culture due to a rise in literacy levels in urban areas and a search for new forms of entertainment in the 1920s. The comics were cheap and easy to rent at street bookstalls and *lianhuanhua* based on film plots proved particularly popular in the 1930s and 1940s. However, developments during the Republican period had implications for how the medium was viewed and regulated after 1949.

Strauss (2006, 893) argues that many of the initiatives introduced by the CCP actually originated in Republican China, but the CCP was much more successful in implementing them. There are definite parallels between the rhetoric surrounding comics and the censorship of *lianhuanhua* under the Guomindang and the CCP. During the 1930s and 1940s, some *lianhuanhua* titles were targeted by the Guomindang and governing bodies as they were perceived to be the ‘devil for children’ (*xiaorenshu dique shi ertong de moguai*) (Fang 1937). *Lianhuanhua* were also attacked in various quarters of the press. After 1949 the PRC Party-State was caught in a much larger battle over how to combat comics labelled ‘harmful’. These were at times the exact same genres of comic, which Guomindang agencies had themselves tried to ban. However, there was also a distinct difference. The Guomindang only very rarely used *lianhuanhua* for propaganda purposes, whilst in contrast after 1949 the CCP sought to delineate the role and function of *lianhuanhua* for these purposes.[27]

---

[27] The circulation of *lianhuanhua* under other non-KMT regimes in pre-1949 China, such as warlord governments or wartime ‘puppet governments,’ is not covered in this thesis. Future research may go some way further in exploring these alternative histories of the form.

Among intellectuals during the 1930s the role of *lianhuanhua* also featured in larger debates about the political function of literature and art. Lu Xun and Mao Dun defended the medium as a genuine art form and saw the comics as having unique pedagogical possibilities if used in the 'right' way. Lu Xun's 'Defence of Comics' in particular shaped the way in which the medium was used by the CCP after 1949 (Lu 1932). His paper argued that *lianhuanhua* had a mass appeal and therefore should have a significant educational role. This was relevant for the CCP, because the Party had no real experience of using the medium for education and propaganda purposes before 1949 as *lianhuanhua* seldom featured in Yan'an and other CCP controlled areas. The medium required a sophisticated publishing industry and a great deal of resources to produce and these were limited in CCP controlled areas (Judd 1985, 398). Furthermore, *lianhuanhua* required a certain level of literacy to appreciate them, and the peasant population in Yan'an and various base areas was largely illiterate and therefore oral mediums, such as drama, or those with limited amount of text, such as *nianhua*, were preferred by the CCP for propaganda purposes (Judd 1985, 386).

This chapter is not an exhaustive history of *lianhuanhua* during the Republican period; such a study would constitute another thesis altogether. Rather, I analyse the connections between the development of *lianhuanhua* pre and post-1949. Firstly, I highlight the important characteristics of the publishing and distribution of *lianhuanhua* during the Republican era, which went on to be highly significant after 1949. For example, the distribution of *lianhuanhua* through street stalls. Secondly, I explore the approaches of government agencies and civic groups to the regulation of *lianhuanhua* during the Republican period, which later PRC approaches resembled, albeit on a much larger and more comprehensive scale. In addition, some of the rhetoric surrounding the 'dangers' *lianhuanhua* posed to children if left unchecked was echoed in later CCP discourses. Thirdly, I draw attention to Lu Xun's important 'Defence of Comics,' which influenced how the medium was conceived and utilised in the PRC. This was particularly significant because the CCP itself had little practical experience of the medium before 1949. The absence of *lianhuanhua* in the revolutionary base areas is the final important point made in this chapter and I consequently explore the ways in which CCP historians writing in the 1950s wrote *lianhuanhua* into 'revolutionary' history.

The Development of a New Popular Culture

Serial-picture stories have a long history in China and there are parallels between them and modern *lianhuanhua*, which emerged in the first half of the twentieth century (Sun 2007, 19). The available Chinese literature on the history of *lianhuanhua* often focusses on these early precursors to the medium. From the Han dynasty right up until the end of the Qing dynasty, the artistic techniques and materials used to juxtapose pictures in deliberate sequence slowly evolved. Stories gradually developed in terms of complexity and length in a variety of different mediums to eventually encompass both words and pictures in a series of panels. Hwang (1978, 53) however argues that although serial picture stories had a long history in China, modern *lianhuanhua* were also in part modelled on the foreign comics circulating in China in the 1920s and 1930s. Rosen (et al. 1987, 121) also affirms that the arrival of Western characters such as Mickey Mouse more generally in Shanghai precipitated the founding of publishing houses for cartoons and comics. These were produced for political, educational and entertainment purposes.

However, it was the introduction of imported, cheap and easy publishing technologies into Chinese cities in the early twentieth century which ensured the development of modern *lianhuanhua* in their small book printed form. *Lianhuanhua* were particularly prevalent in Shanghai and Tianjin (Shen 2001, 101). One newspaper proclaimed:

> ‘The production place of comics is not in Beijing, which is a cultural city; not in Nanjing, which is the capital of the Republic of China; not in Wuxi, which has the most developed industry and commerce and the most convenient transport centre. Not in south China. They are produced in Shanghai and Tianjin (Sha 1941).’

The emergence of *lianhuanhua* was part of a general and unprecedented growth in visual cultural products. In Shanghai, in particular, visual cultural products grew in sophistication and complexity in the 1920s and 1930s (Yeh 2011, 113).

Lianhuanhua in book form began to incorporate words as early as 1921, but they were not routinely used until 1929, when dialogue was used in a comic based on the movie *The Singing Girl Red Peony* (*Genü Hong Mudan*) (A 1957, 9). Most famously and heralding the establishment of a new mass art form, the ever-popular and canonical *Journey to the West* was first published as a comic set in 1929 (Zhang, Shu 2012, 118). From then on traditional stories, popular dramas and film and opera plots were all adapted into *lianhuanhua* with pictures and words.

Comics based on films were often rushed to publication in the 1930s, so they could be brought out before the first performance. Indeed, these were often sold at prices lower than the cost of a theatre ticket (Andrews 1997, 19).[28] Shen (2000) demonstrates that because publishers had to produce *lianhuanhua* so quickly (two new volumes went on the market nightly with

---

[28] An example of one such film adaptation was the horror story *The Phantom Lover* (*Yeban gesheng*), which is noted as particularly significant in a Chinese compilation of *lianhuanhua* from the period (Chinese *Lianhuanhua* Publisher 1998, 9). This was itself an adaptation of the novel *The Phantom of the Opera*. Braester (2003, 83) has argued the film combined a left wing revolutionary agenda, with a fantastical tale and it was this that gave it an appeal. The central protagonist, Sun Danping, falls in love with the daughter of a warlord. However, he is punished by the warlord for this and his supposed connections to the rival Guomindang. The warlord orders that caustic acid be thrown over Danping’s face and in despair at his deformed appearance he hides himself away and sings to the moon. In one memorable frame in the 1937 *lianhuanhua*, Danping gazes at his mutilated face in the mirror in anguish (Chinese *Lianhuanhua* Publisher 1998, 9).

2000 copies) artists also were under pressure to produce as many as ten frames a day. Due to the speed of production the art work was often rough and slipshod and a master worked with several apprentices to collectively create content as quickly as possible (Shen 2001, 104). The master determined compositions and worked on the figures. Alternatively, the apprentices were each responsible for specific details, such as architecture, trees and flowers and some never had the opportunity to draw figures (Shen 2001, 105). This emphasis on speed rather than detailed imagery meant many artists did not have the requisite level of skill as far as the Party-State was concerned after 1949 (Andrews 1991, 71). The implications of this are discussed in the next chapter.

According to the contemporary critic and writer Mao Dun (1932), it was the ‘supernatural martial arts stories’ (*wuxia shenguai*) adapted from films and novels which proved to be the most popular with urban audiences. Particularly famous was the *lianhuanhua* adaptation of *The Burning of the Red Lotus Temple* (*Huoshao hongliansi*), which was based on a sixteen-part silent film and at 27 hours in length, it is one of the longest films ever produced.[29] Unsurprisingly given the source material, these adaptations often constituted a long series of comics. For example, every one of the 70 chapters of the classical novel *Water Margin* (*Shui hu zhuan*) was adapted into a single comic. As will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, the propensity to adapt long classical Chinese novels into a series of *lianhuanhua* continued after 1949 (experiencing a heyday during the Hundred Flowers campaign) and the PRC Party-State contended with the enduring popularity of comics incorporating ‘sprits and devils’ (*shenguai*) and the ‘knight-errant’ (*wuxia*) (A 1957, 24).

---

[29] *The Burning of Red Lotus Temple*, adored by audiences, was a watershed film(s), which incorporated a complicated plot and innovative special effects. The film, alongside a plethora of other costume dramas, was banned in 1931 for being ‘feudalist’ and ‘unrealistic,’ and therefore having the potential to harm the ‘uneducated masses’. The censorship occurred after *Lotus Temple* had been criticised by Reformist writers (Berry and Farquhar 2006, 58).

In his 1932 article ‘Comic Strip Novels’ (*Lianhuan tuhua xiaoshuo*) Mao Dun claimed that *lianhuanhua’s* popularity was seeing off other forms of urban popular culture which had previously dominated, such as Contemporary Suzhou Opera (*Suzhou kunqu*) and Wugeng Style (*wugeng diao*) songbooks (Mao 1932). Mao Dun also stipulated that the new popularity of *lianhuanhua* was due to a rise in literacy in urban areas in the early 1930s and people’s desire for lengthier reading material. Indeed, only the extremely highly educated and the completely illiterate were thought to not engage in reading comics (Sha 1941).

By 1932, Shanghai had over 30 bookstores retailing *lianhuanhua* and these accounted for half the number of bookstores in Shanghai (Dang Dai Xuesheng 2012, 79). Comics grew exponentially in number because they could be published quickly, requiring less time to draft and proof read than other forms of literature. In addition, to speed up the production process, printed pages were sent out to private households in the morning, where individuals worked on binding them in a day (Sha 1941). Initially, most of the sales were within Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang, but later in the 1930s sales extended to South China, Wuhan, Tianjin and Beijing (Cheng 2011, 41).

Comics also became a highly popular form of entertainment for the urban population to rent due to their cheapness (Shen 2001, 108). Comic renters went door to door renting to families (Sha 1941). However, it was particularly inexpensive to read *lianhuanhua* in situ at book lending stalls and Shen (2001, 103) argues that these stalls constituted a unique distribution system. According to A Ying (1957, 26), these book stalls began to emerge when two publishers who lacked capital to publish multiple copies started up a renting system so that more people could access the limited stocks and they could accumulate profits. Shen (2001, 103), however, gives another reason for the development of the stalls, arguing that bookstores did not want to sell the comics because the medium was considered low taste and vulgar and small publishers therefore sold to the street vendors. Cheng (2011, 39) also maintains that the comic publishing industry and the bookstalls were densely clustered in and around the North market and Mongolia Road in the Zhabei district of Shanghai and thus retail was separated from the main bookstores traditionally situated on Fuzhou Road.[30] The publishing and distribution of *lianhuanhua* was thus separate from other parts of the publishing industry before 1949.

Mao Dun described the pervasiveness, but also the insubstantial and flexible nature of the *lianhuanhua* book lending stalls:

> Every street corner and alley's end is densely covered by book stands like countless sentries. Although I use the word book stand, they are really just two planks of wood designated for the purpose of leaning against the wall, densely packed with every possible medium and title and all in the format of a little book. This book stand, if we can call it a book stand, also has a small wooden bench beside it. Whoever has paid his two coppers is permitted to sit on that bench and rent and read 20 or 30 little books from that stand. If you're a regular, you might get to read forty or fifty of them, but nothing is fixed (Mao 1932).

Cheng (2011, 21) argues that the emergence of the cheap renting stalls coincided with a decrease in the 'quality' of the comics on offer, as the stalls had less money to invest than bookstores, and that from then on *lianhuanhua* devolved into a form of pure entertainment (Cheng argues this was a bad thing), incorporating martial arts, romance, the supernatural and fantasy stories.

---

[30] Conversely, Fuzhou Lu today is the national centre for the marketing of republished *lianhuanhua*.

As will be elaborated in chapter eight, these stalls played a pivotal role in comic dissemination after 1949 and posed a major challenge for Party-State agencies as many persistently resisted registration and regulation. However, a report by the CCP Cultural Bureau in 1951 highlights a fundamental difference in the function of the stalls pre and post-1949. During the 1930s and 1940s vendors did not retail *lianhuanhua* produced by the Education Bureau, and these were only available through the bookstores (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951d). The PRC Party-State did the opposite in trying to co-opt the vendors for propaganda purposes, rather than make 'revolutionary' *lianhuanhua* the preserve of the bookstores.

The early growth of the *lianhuanhua* industry in the 1930s occurred against a backdrop of Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists' consolidation of power and the afterglow of the May 4th Movement. At the same time, in the cultural sphere, major debates emerged as to the role of literature and art in society and literary and artistic freedom. As will be subsequently discussed, attention soon turned to the new forms of mass culture, such as *lianhuanhua* and their role in education, and the comics became embroiled in wider debates. Despite their meteoric rise in popularity, *lianhuanhua* attracted criticism from some quarters because they were thought to have a negative impact, particularly on the psychology of children. However, at the same time, *lianhuanhua* gained an important spokesperson in Lu Xun.

The 'Devil for Children'

During the 1930s and 1940s, writers, critics and some Party-State agencies discussed the potential negative implications of the spread of *lianhuanhua*. The comics were generally perceived to have the capacity to influence children and thus discourses on *lianhuanhua* became linked to discourses on the fate of the nation. These discussions about the role of *lianhuanhua* and agencies' attempts to regulate what comics were available to read in the Republican period are significant for this thesis because they were echoed and intensified in later CCP discourses. In particular, the potential adverse effects of 'harmful' content on children and youth were frequently touted as a reason for censorship and ‘reading tutorship'.

The dangers of reading *lianhuanhua* particularly for children were discussed in various quarters of the press. An inflammatory article in the magazine *Family Weekly* labelled comics the 'devil for children,' and chastised the supposed sensationalism of *lianhuanhua* (Fang 1937). *Family Weekly* was established by businessman You Huaigao in 1936 and in general its articles promoted a vision of an idealised Chinese nuclear family and made supposedly 'scientific' suggestions about childcare (Yeh 1997, 389). Glosser (2003, 135) points out that a significant aspect of the magazine was its commercial element and the promotion of women as wives and mothers, but also as 'educated' consumers. Given children's desire to read *lianhuanhua*, which were a widespread consumer product, it is not surprising that the journal expounded on the topic and parents' role in regulating children's purchase and rental of them. One article in *Family Weekly* complained that although the comics had the capacity to 'satisfy children's penchant for fantasy,' they were 'cheap, ugly and low' (Fang 1937). Another issue recounted a 'joke' in which three children in Tianjin went off to find a famous sword teacher to teach them after reading a comic, because they believed its sentiments to be true (Yu 1936, 40). A different article concluded 'now is a time of science and instead these fantastical stories in comics are damaging children's psyche and emptying their heads. This is an emergency and it is time to rectify the situation' (Fang 1937).[31]

---

[31] In this thesis, I do not focus on developments within the *lianhuanhua* industry during the Anti-Japanese War. The fate of Chinese graphic arts under Japanese occupation is a very recently emerging field of scholarship, with Taylor (2015) for example examining the work of collaborationist cartoonists. An analysis of *lianhuanhua* within this context therefore goes beyond the scope of this thesis as it would require the gathering of further primary source material. Nonetheless, there is some indication from the sparse sources which I have looked at, that the media in Shanghai continued to fixate on the dangers the comics supposedly posed to children. Future research may shed further light on this. Moreover, *lianhuanhua* were sometimes used by other city-based groups in Shanghai. For example the China Youth Corps, ostensibly under Japanese auspices (but also looking towards their defeat) (Mulready-Stone 2009), used *lianhuanhua* alongside posters and wartime photographs in their mobilisation efforts (*Shenbao* 1938b, 10).

While publications such as *Family Weekly* decried *lianhuanhua* as a danger to children, government employers, teachers, public education officials and other societal groups took up the call to regulate comics in practice. As early as 1933 the Internal Affairs Bulletin (*Neirong gongbao*) of the Republican China Party-State stipulated that the Beijing Government had called on different agencies, such as libraries and book shops, to ban seven *lianhuanhua* found to have ‘sexually deviant’ content (Internal Affairs Bulletin 1933, 20). These developments were mirrored in Shanghai in the same year. The highly influential newspaper *Shenbao* (1933, 9) reported that the City Secretary for Education and Public Security (*Shi jiaoyu gong’an liang juzhang*) was banning certain titles at the bookstore and street vendor level (*xiao tan xiao fan*). The titles in question involved ‘spirits and devils’ and allegedly ‘obscene’ (*yinhuai*) content and were banned because of their supposed impact on national social culture, ideas, customs and in particular children’s morals (*Shenbao* 1933, 9). The CCP targeted similar genres of comic after 1949.

Shenbao later reported that although *lianhuanhua* might seem ‘irrelevant and trivial to the modern man and woman, the government is really concerned about their influence on morals and public art’ (Li 1933, 20). The author of the article, Li Zhai, claimed that he had no objection to the banning of certain popular songs and comics, but questioned whether there was anything positive as yet to take their place and counteract their popularity. If not, he stipulated the banning of these titles would constitute a hollow victory. Like the PRC Party-State, Government agencies in Shanghai, Beijing and Tianjin tried to ban certain *lianhuanhua* titles, but this was on a much smaller scale.

Additionally, unlike the PRC Party-State the Guomindang did not use *lianhuanhua* for propaganda purposes. The Nationalists certainly did not envision a whole other medium of *lianhuanhua*, which could contend with ‘problematic’ stories, as the CCP did in creating ‘revolutionary’ *lianhuanhua*. The qualitative change after 1949 therefore was that some *lianhuanhua* became a form of propaganda.

Moves to ban certain *lianhuanhua* continued into the late 1930s and after the end of the Anti-Japanese War. For example, in 1936 the Mass Education Institute (*minzhong jiaoyuguan*) began checking comics in Tianjin and some thought to 'injure the psyche of the child' were banned (China Christian Advocate 1936). In Tianjin, children's 'physical and psychological health' was deemed to be particularly at risk because comic vendors supposedly gathered around schools (Education and the Public 1936). Later, in 1946 the street bookstalls were targeted as the home of 'pornographic comics' by the Shanghai Bureau of Education. Some texts were collected from the stalls, while at the same time 'appropriate' comic reading for women and children was circulated in a 'roving library in a van' (*xun hui tu shu che*) (*Shenbao* 1946, 6). As will be explored in chapter eight, after 1949 Party-State agencies faced fundamental challenges in regulating the vendors.

The Guomindang did not use *lianhuanhua* for propaganda purposes widely or encourage the growth of the medium for political cultural purposes as did the CCP after 1949. This was because the medium was perceived as a form of 'low culture' by authorities and the Guomindang sought to appeal to the upper middle classes. In general, the Guomindang did not use visual imagery as widely as the CCP. For example, Chang (2011, 358) argues that unlike the CCP the Guomindang rarely used *manhua* prior to the Civil War, viewing the medium as essentially oppositional by its very nature. It was only when the Guomindang formed an alliance with the CCP during the Second United Front (1937-1941) that they began to use visual imagery more comprehensively. Even then, however, much of the visual propaganda produced in the name of the Guomindang had communistic undertones, appealing to the working classes peasants and non-elites. Moreover, stylistically it was modelled on discourses developed in the USSR using Soviet iconography and colour symbolism (Zhang 2014, 95). Additionally, MacKinnon (2008) argues that during the cultural experimentation and relative press freedom during the Wuhan period (January to October 1938) the majority of the intellectuals interested in popularising literature and making it more accessible were leftists, rather than members of the Guomindang.

After 1949 the CCP critiqued many *lianhuanhua* produced during the 1930s and 1940s as those of the ‘reactionary government’ and the publishers and bookshops for being under their thumb and for allowing ‘bad’ content in *lianhuanhua* in order to make profits (Gu 1965, 2). However, Mao Dun attests to the fact that although there were some *lianhuanhua* circulating during the 1930s which focussed on the achievements of the Guomindang (such as *The Northern Expedition of Chiang Kai-shek*), they had very little traction and circulation. He said ‘most little book stands don’t carry this type of comic, the reason being that since there aren’t any supernatural martial arts elements readers are not interested’ (Mao 1932).

For the most part the Guomindang government continued to focus on the ‘dangers’ of certain kinds of *lianhuanhua*, even continuing during the height of the Civil War in 1947. According to *Shenbao*, which passed into the hands of Pan Gongzhan, an influential Guomindang official after Second World War, the Guomindang municipal government banned 75 comic adaptations of martial arts stories, biographies and war novels read by children in their stronghold in Shenyang (*Shenbao* 1947). Notably, there is no mention of the Guomindang municipal government fearing an influx of comics produced by the CCP. This again suggests the Communists were not utilising the medium at this point because eking out CCP propaganda within their stronghold would have been one of Guomindang’s top priorities.

In March 1948, after the CCP’s victory in the winter offensive in the northeast, *Shenbao* lamented the level of poverty, the unqualified teachers and children’s illiteracy in the northeast and the fact that ‘yellow publications’ (*huangse qian wu*) and comics were flowing into the area to fill the cultural vacuum (*Shenbao* 1948). Although there was no wholesale attempt to control the *lianhuanhua* industry prior to 1949, evidence suggests that while comers of the press discussed their potentially polluting impact on children, the comics were also on the radar of those in authority and different governments and agencies at times took concerted action against them. Their attempts to regulate *lianhuanhua* led a writer for a pictorial magazine (*huabao*) to lament in 1944 that the medium had suffered under every leader, and had been checked and prohibited since its inception (Xiaode 1944).

‘In Defence of Comics’

In addition to their popular and market appeal during the Republican period, *lianhuanhua* also achieved an intellectual following amongst the literati of the May Fourth Movement. The role of *lianhuanhua* featured in wider exchanges about literature and art. Most influentially, an intellectual debate arose between the novelist, translator and literary theorist Du Heng (1907-1964) and Lu Xun concerning the nature and role of the comics. Both were members of the League of Left Wing Writers, which formed in 1930 with the encouragement of the CCP. The League became concerned with the political role of literature and their theorising foreshadowed Mao’s influential ‘Yan’an Talks on Literature and Art’.

Sun Wen and Lu Xun held opposing views on the politicisation of literature and art and these are apparent in the former’s attack and the latter’s defence of *lianhuanhua*. Du Heng stipulated that writers and artists should constitute a ‘third type of person’ and produce un-politicised work, while Lu Xun believed that writers were not independent from notions of class (Denton 1996, 361). Du Heng argued that *lianhuanhua* constituted an inferior form of literature and art, precisely because they were propaganda by their very nature. Furthermore, he argued that a tendency towards political alignment in writing in general would mean ‘literature is no longer literature, and becomes a type of comic strip, and the writer is no longer a writer, and becomes an agitator' (Macdonald 2011). However, his views were challenged by Lu Xun.

Lu Xun's (1932) article 'In Defence of "Comics"' (*"Lianhuan Tuhua" 'Bianhu*) affected the ways in which the medium has been defined, as well as how the CCP conceived of *lianhuanhua* after 1949. However, as Macdonald (2011) points out, this formative article was not actually exclusively about printed comic books. In the article Lu Xun uses the term *lianhuan tuhua* to refer to lots of forms of 1930s mass print culture, which constituted sequential art. This has had an impact on current scholarship in which the very real boundaries between *lianhuanhua* and other mediums have also been blurred. Lu Xun himself was particularly interested in the related medium of serial wood block printing, which combined Chinese techniques with a European Modernist aesthetic (Andrews 1997, 21).[32] Serial picture stories were deemed to have a strong impact on society by intellectuals such as Lu Xun, because they could communicate their messages in simple manner and reach a large audience.

Despite not specifically focussing on them, Lu Xun's article influenced later debates on the theory and practice of comics. Lu Xun was not a member of the CCP, but he was a Marxist and his theories on art more generally were frequently appropriated by CCP ideologues. In his 'Defence of Comics,' Lu Xun (1932) took issue with Du Heng's presentiment that comic strips would certainly never give birth to a Tolstoy or a Flaubert. Lu Xun responded using examples primarily from Western art and argued comics had achieved a certain level of elegance and already entered the 'palace of art' (*da yazhi tang*). In fact he argued there was little difference between the emergent sequential art in China and Western art such as 'The Last Supper' reprinted in books. He argued that in this sense these canonical pieces of art are also

---

[32] For example, the Belgian woodcut artist Frans Masereel's work was particularly lauded in China for its depiction of socio-political inequality in stark black and white and for incurring feelings of deep emotion.

'propagandistic comic strips' (*xuanchuan de lianhuan tuhua*) (Lu 1932). However, Lu Xun did not see this propensity to influence as problematic, rather he argued *lianhuanhua* and such art was important precisely because it could play a political role.

Moreover, he suggested *lianhuanhua*'s power to 'inspire the masses' and ultimately be used for pedagogical purposes lay in the fact that they encompassed illustrations, as well as words and so they had a greater impact.

> Illustrations within books are intended to adorn the literary work to increase the reader's interest. However that power, the ability to supplement the limitations of words, can also make book illustrations propagandistic. When they are numerous, the reader will be able to rely completely on the pictures to comprehend the content of the words, and once separated from the words the pictures become autonomous comic strips (Lu 1932).

Mao Dun also affirmed the importance of the image for an often illiterate audience. Furthering and building on Lu Xun's sentiments, Mao Dun's 'Comic Strip Novels', written two months after, argued that the comics (*lianhuanhua* specifically, rather than the serial pictures in general described by Lu Xun) could be the 'most powerful and most prevalent instruments of mass education'. Furthermore, in reference to Lu Xun's arguments, he stated they would have greater influence than the German print presses. He also argued that reading *lianhuanhua* could contribute to building literacy because the image acted 'as a "self-study" tool to enable a reader with a limited written vocabulary to slowly learn to understand the text section' (Mao 1932). However, akin to the popular press and journals such as *Family Weekly* and some agencies, he also contended that the comics had the potential to harm children if publication was left unchecked.

Later in 1939, the writer Han Bo (1939, 8), an associate of Mao Dun who also contributed to his journal *Literary Front* (*Wenyi Zhendi*), complained about the lack of 'robust' (*jianquan*) comics. He argued that comics could not improve as long as businessmen focussed on 'feudal ideology and quick crowd pleasers' (Han 1939, 8). He contended *lianhuanhua* had the capacity to be at the 'forefront of the cultural sector' and had the ability to revive an interest in 'pure literature' (*chun wenxue*) and the classics because of their appeal (Han 1939, 8). Intellectuals recognised the power of *lianhuanhua* as a form of popular culture to be harnessed for pedagogical purposes, but at the same time warned that the medium needed to be regulated.

However, it was Lu Xun's thoughts about the theory, practice and functionality of serial picture stories which continued to be important for the development of the medium after 1949 (Mittler 2013, 363). In 1942 Mao (1996, 484) called on writers and artists to learn from Lu Xun's example and the way in which he supposedly served the masses through his work. Later, Jiang Weipu, (1956b) the head of the *lianhuanhua* press wrote in *The People's Daily* specifically about the influence of Lu Xun's 'Defence of Comics' on persuading individuals of the veracity of comics as a genuine art form and as a powerful tool for 'mass education'.

Lianhuanhua and the CCP

Cultural media produced by the CCP prior to 1949 were formatively shaped by Mao's talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art in 1942. Mao (1942) stipulated that culture was a fundamental part of the revolutionary machine and artists and writers needed to exhibit class consciousness. Furthermore, Mao argued literature and art needed to be popularised and appeal to workers, peasants and soldiers. Artists and writers needed to first learn from them, before they could use their pen to serve and ultimately educate workers, peasants and soldiers on revolutionary rhetoric in return (Mao 1942). In addition, the language used to shape CCP cultural discourses emerged during the Yan'an period and was used to glorify proponents of the revolution and equally to demonise its enemies. *Lianhuanhua* were not part of what Galikowski (1998, 4) terms the 'experiment centre' in CCP cultural policy which occurred in Yan'an. As will be demonstrated in chapter three, this meant that Party-State agencies had to 'experiment' with *lianhuanhua* after 1949.

One of the reasons why Lu Xun's theories about *lianhuanhua* were particularly relevant for the CCP, however, was because the Party had little experience of actually handling the medium prior to 1949. In this *lianhuanhua* is distinctive from other forms of political culture as it did not have a strong basis in territories under the CCP. The following sections will firstly establish the absence of *lianhuanhua* in Yan'an and then discuss the ways in which some PRC historians sought to compensate for this by interweaving 'revolutionary history' into accounts of Republican *lianhuanhua* and in so doing effectively co-opted the history of the medium. Ultimately, this has led to some confusion in scholarly accounts about the comics' place in pre-1949 Communist propaganda. However, a close reading of even the CCP accounts of the history of *lianhuanhua* reveals that they scarcely featured in the base areas.

Gu (1965, 2) stated that '*lianhuanhua* were used heavily in the revolutionary base areas 'as a tool for revolutionary propaganda'. However, later it becomes clear that Gu is in fact using *lianhuanhua* as an umbrella term to encompass mimeographs (*youyin*), lantern slideshows (*huandeng*), cartoons (*manhua*) and wood cuts (*muke*), rather than the printed serial picture stories themselves, which were a key form of urban culture and the focus of this thesis. Moreover, he also admits that due to a lack of resources *lianhuanhua* of multiple pages were few in number. As stipulated Lu Xun had also used *lianhuanhua* as an umbrella term in writing his defence, but he problematised the term unlike CCP historians by putting it in quotation marks.

Another 1950s historian A Ying (1957, 29) actually stated that due to a lack of resources, including suitable wood to carve, and no way to do the plate making which was required for printing, it was almost impossible to produce printed *lianhuanhua* in Yan'an and other CCP controlled areas.[33] He mentions one *lianhuanhua*, produced in 1941 in Eastern occupied China and not actually in Yan'an, entitled *Iron Buddha Temple* (*Tie fosi*). This was wood carved and printed, rather than drawn and collectively produced by three people. Moreover, it had restricted circulation due to the limited number of copies until the story was reprinted in the 1950s (A 1957, 29). *Lianhuanhua* were not used widely by CCP artists under the leadership of the Underground Party in Shanghai, either.

The only known examples are Yang Qinghua's (1915-2001) *Zhu Fengdi* (*Zhu Fengdi*) and Zhao Hongben's *Civil and Military God of Wealth* (*Wenwu caishen*). The first was acclaimed because it had focussed on 'Guomindang corruption' and the second on landlords' oppression of peasants (A 1957, 25). However, it is also unclear from A Ying's (1957, 26) account whether these were actually modern *lianhuanhua* in their serial picture book form as they are mentioned in conjunction with the term posted pictures (*tiehua*).

During the Civil War an article in *The People's Daily* (1947) stated that some Communist cadres were experimenting with producing *lianhuan manhua* to propagate the CCP's counter attack against the Guomindang in Shandong, Henan and Hebei. One of those most involved cadres was Zhang Shouchen (1899-1970) who was a crosstalk comedian and predominantly a stage performer. It is likely that this medium was much more akin to *manhua*, which the CCP had already utilised extensively, rather than *lianhuanhua*. While 'single page *lianhuanhua*,' in actual fact, *nianhua* or posters, and serial *manhua* were used widely for propaganda purposes in the base areas, *lianhuanhua*, in the form that was taking hold in the cities in the 1930s and 1940s and which came to dominate the PRC political cultural landscape after 1949 did not.[34] This is not surprising given the fact that the medium required a sophisticated publishing industry and a lot of resources to produce. Moreover, the comics were unsuited for communicating CCP rhetoric to their target rural audience as they required a certain level of literacy. As will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, even after 1949 and the Party's attempts to expand the medium, *lianhuanhua* took a while to begin circulating in the countryside. The medium was almost exclusively an urban phenomenon until the late 1950s.

---

[33] A Ying's (1900-1977) account is one of the earliest histories of the medium prior to 1949. He was a prominent member of the CCP (joining in the 1920s) and a literary critic and playwright, who advocated for the power of revolutionary art.

Chapter three discusses in detail the development of the *lianhuanhua* industry in the early 1950s and highlights just how unfamiliar Party-State agencies actually were with the medium and the challenges they faced in asserting direction and control over the production and distribution of *lianhuanhua*. Despite this, historians such as A Ying talked about '*lianhuanhua*' and through their writing of history made the medium appear a part of the CCP's revolutionary experience, alongside *nianhua* and *manhua*. In this way, CCP historians appropriated the history of *lianhuanhua* and represented it as a legitimate Communist art form. However, PRC accounts of the development of *lianhuanhua* during the Republican period also recognised the leaps and bounds which had been made in terms of art reaching the urban population and this is one of the reasons why the medium was harnessed after 1949 (A 1957, 24). Crucially, *lianhuanhua* is distinctive from other forms of 'political culture,' notably *manhua*, as it does not appear to have had a significant following in Communist-held Yan'an, where media such as *manhua* were completely dominant. Therefore, my analysis of *lianhuanhua* in subsequent chapters will provide exclusive insights into how the Party-State adapted a form of cultural production that was not indigenous to their revolutionary experience.

---

[34] Political cultural mediums were targeted at specific audiences to reach as wide an audience as possible. For example, New Year paintings (*nianhua*) used bright colours and traditional artistic techniques combined with simply phrased revolutionary rhetoric to reach a primarily rural audience (Liang 1988, 20).

The Master Narrative and the History of *Lianhuanhua*

As will be discussed in chapter four, after 1949 *lianhuanhua* were used to write history in line with Party-State's master narrative and assert CCP legitimacy. However, the history of the medium itself pre-1949 was problematic for the CCP due to the Party's lack of use of the medium during the Republican era. Therefore, in the 1950s and 1960s CCP historians sought to imbue the medium with a 'revolutionary' history, which went back as far as the Qing dynasty.

When writing the history of *lianhuanhua* in the 1950s historians used '*lianhuanhua*' as a blanket term to encompass many different mediums encompassing images and text and in so doing were able to link the comics to other political cultural mediums which were utilised by the CCP. For example, in writing about pre-twentieth century '*lianhuanhua*,' A Ying draws attention to the links between *nianhua* and *lianhuanhua*. Both mediums could be termed different forms of illustration (*chua hua*). His account, however, specifically uses the term 'New Year *lianhuanhua*' (*nianhua lianhuantuhua*) to describe a medium of one to four panel stories that emerged during the Qing (A 1957, 9). Most other accounts suggest the term '*lianhuanhua*' was not even used until the mid-1920s. It becomes clear from a reading of A Ying's work that in the historical narrative, discussion of *lianhuanhua* was tied into other mediums that the Party had already heavily utilised by 1949. Undoubtedly there were links between them, but it is important to recognise that this also had the effect of legitimising *lianhuanhua*'s place in PRC political culture.

In addition, in a quest to make the medium more relevant, historians highlighted parallels between the historical development of '*lianhuanhua*' and key CCP goals in the 1950s.

Highlighting early links between the medium and production, A Ying (1957, 17) describes the development of ‘production *lianhuanhua*’ (*shengchan lianhuantuhua*) during the Qing, which depicted agricultural techniques and were carved in stone or wood. The describing of early mediums in this way was another attempt to bring the history of ‘*lianhuanhua*’ in line with Party discourse on the function of art. Interestingly, A Ying also incorporates a critique of the famous painter Jiao Bingzhen (1689-1726) into his discussion of ‘production *lianhuanhua*,’ stating that in his art he did not do enough to detail the life of the peasants. Jiao was a classical Chinese court painter and astronomer and whether he should be especially linked to a discussion of early ‘*lianhuanhua*’ is highly debatable.

In addition, Zhang Leping’s (1910-1992) *manhua* character Sanmao was also appropriated in PRC histories of *lianhuanhua*. Zhang played a central role in the development of modern *manhua* and Sanmao was one of his most famous creations. Sanmao’s alien and comical proportions appeared in *manhua* strips of four to six pictures in the 1930s and 1940s (Rosen et al. 1987, 125). The plight of the street waif struck a chord with audiences at the time, to the extent that people wished to make a donation thinking he was real. Sanmao’s situation highlighted social and economic concerns, but he did not carry a distinctly Socialist message nor did he actually feature in *lianhuanhua* at the time. PRC historians writing the history of Republican *lianhuanhua* however, inaccurately wrote Sanmao into the narrative (A 1957, 27). Interlinking the famous Sanmao into histories of *lianhuanhua* during the Republican period had the effect of affirming *lianhuanhua’s*

social relevance and popularity for audiences in the 1950s, but at the same time distorted the very real distinctions between *manhua* and *lianhuanhua.*

Significantly, this blurring of the distinctions between *manhua* and *lianhuanhua* and the negation of the fact that both mediums had different origins pre-1949 has influenced current scholarship. Farquhar (1999, 199) discusses Sanmao in the context of a discussion of *lianhuanhua*. Moreover, Sun (2007, 19) inaccurately labels Sanmao and Zhang Leping as *lianhuanhua* character and creator respectively. However, Pang Xianjian, Director of the *Lianhuanhua* Department at the Shanghai Fine Arts Institute, states that the two mediums fundamentally differ in terms of artistic technique and text (Radomski 2012). I will go on to highlight some of the fundamental differences between these two media in this thesis.

‘The Most Powerful Works of Mass Literature and Art’

Lianhuanhua sale and production expanded exponentially during the Republican era. In testament to their popularity with their audience, from 1920 to 1950 more than 28,000 different comic titles were produced and 28 million copies were published (Farquhar 1999, 202). *Lianhuanhua* production survived the Anti-Japanese War and the Civil War and by the late 1940s there were more than 30 professional artists in Shanghai and the comic distribution network had expanded to Hong Kong, Singapore and Indonesia (Shen 1997, 108). The first Shanghai Speciality Comic Bookstore Trade Association (*Shanghai tebie lianhuanhua shudian ye tongyegonghui*) was established in 1944 (*Shenbao* 1944, 2). In addition, by 1949 there were over one hundred comic publishers in Shanghai and over 2000 retailers (Shi 2010). Gu (1965, 2) concluded that by 1949 the stage was set for ‘their revolutionary career and more prosperous future development’.

It was this established popularity in urban areas, which the CCP itself was unfamiliar governing, in addition to their propaganda potential, which appealed to the Party-State after 1949. This was why agencies put such an effort into reforming the industry in the 1950s even though the Party had not previously used the medium widely. The Party-State recognised what Mao Dun had prophesised in 1932: ‘This form, if used with ingenuity, will undoubtedly become the most powerful work of mass literature and art’ (Mao 1932). However, as will be explicated in the following chapters the Party-State faced big challenges in adapting this medium which was foreign to it, and *lianhuanhua* developed in its own individual way, setting it apart from other forms of political culture. Moreover, CCP historians grappled with the task of how to incorporate the history of *lianhuanhua*, which had been largely absent, into the revolutionary narrative.

Conclusion

This chapter has charted the early development of *lianhuanhua,* focussing on its rise to become an entrenched form of popular culture during the Republican period. The analysis of the early history of the medium is particularly important in the context of this thesis because characteristics of the publishing and distribution of *lianhuanhua,* which developed during the 1930s and 1940s, became highly significant after 1949. This includes features such as the distribution of comics through the street stalls and the speedy production of the medium. Additionally, attitudes towards *lianhuanhua* in the Republican era were highly divisive and CCP discourses about the potential ‘dangers’ of the medium versus its ‘educational’ value echoed these debates. Lu Xun’s ‘Defence of Comics,’ in particular, influenced how the medium was conceived and utilised in the PRC and was particularly significant because the CCP itself had little practical experience of the comics before 1949. While Sun Wen decried *lianhuanhua*’s popular culture status, Lu Xun saw this as the medium’s strength and *lianhuanhua* became entwined in the wider debate about the role of literature in politics.

In the 1930s and 1940s, there were early attempts to censor *lianhuanhua* labelled as ‘harmful’. However, the writer Xiao De (1944) (pen name) stated that vast materials were needed to take on the ‘huge project of reforming the industry’. It was the PRC Party-State which took on this ‘huge project’ and in so doing adopted a much more thorough, regimented and holistic approach to controlling *lianhuanhua*’s production and distribution. In addition, as will be discussed in the following chapters, both the perceived power of *lianhuanhua* as a propaganda weapon and fears about the comics potentially polluting content persisted.

Chapter 3: Regulating a 'Foreign' Medium

Introduction

In this chapter I analyse the development of the *lianhuanhua* publishing industry from 1949 to 1956[35] and the challenges Party-State agencies faced in establishing control over the medium. Recognising the popularity *lianhuanhua* had garnered during the Republican era and their potential as a key form of propaganda, the Chinese Communist Party-State sought to co-opt the medium and bring the comic book industry under Party-State control in the early 1950s. However, for the CCP, *lianhuanhua* were essentially a 'foreign' medium which they had had little experience in utilising practically before 1949 due to this form's absence from Yan'an and other CCP controlled areas. Indeed, some of the challenges that Party-State agencies faced, most notably the Cultural Bureau, make the medium unique in the field of 1950s political culture.

The period of early regime consolidation in the first half of the 1950s was once seen by historians as a veritable 'golden age' for the CCP in terms of the economic and social changes which the Party was able to instigate.[36] However, more recently historians have begun to challenge this assumption as it cannot be reconciled with what we now know about the events that came after. Scholars are now increasingly focussing on the complexity, disarray and contingency of much of what occurred in the early years of the PRC (Strauss 2006, 892). This chapter builds on this scholarship by examining the ways in which Party-State agencies encountered a number of challenges and series of false starts as they attempted to expand *lianhuanhua* production, whilst at the same time prohibiting the spread of 'politically incorrect' content.

---

[35] By the beginning of 1956 all the publishing houses had been nationalised and the cultural establishment was on the verge of the Hundred Flowers Campaign (discussed in chapter five).

[36] Particularly notable examples of this view are compiled in the *Cambridge History of China. Vol 14 and 15.* Teiwes (1987, 51) argues that the establishment and consolidation of regime control in China was a relatively smooth process and that the nation had transitioned to a strong centralised State by 1957. He argues that in the early years of the PRC, China gained national and international prestige from its stalemate in Korea and that rapid industrialisation and economic growth resulted in a marked improvement in living standards. Meanwhile, the social system quickly transformed according to Marxist precepts. Additionally, in his analysis of what he terms the 'optimistic 1950s,' Whyte (1991, 740) argues that many urban dwellers were positive about the new regime as the Party-State was able, through its new programmes, to satisfy people's needs.

Much to the elation of the Cultural Ministry, *lianhuanhua* production boomed in 1950 and 1951 and the period was designated a 'Golden Era' in *lianhuanhua* publishing and sales by Party-State agencies at the time. However, many of the new comics which continued to be published constituted adaptations of classical stories and folk stories and many of the *lianhuanhua* published before 1949 were still in circulation. Readers continued to prefer these *lianhuanhua*, with which they were familiar and found more entertaining. However, Party-State agencies regarded as equally problematic, if not more so, the *lianhuanhua* that were intended to function as a form of propaganda, but contained 'political mistakes'. These comics were able to thrive because there were minimal checking procedures and *lianhuanhua* were produced and distributed rapidly in line with the way they had been published during the Republican era. The sale of this type of *lianhuanhua* constituted a crisis for 'new' *lianhuanhua* and was followed by a resultant backlash against supposedly erroneous publishers during the 'Three Antis, Five Antis' (*San fan wu fan*) movement.

Agencies' initial inability to manage the medium stemmed at least partially from their unfamiliarity with *lianhuanhua*. There was a mistaken conviction that *lianhuahua* were sufficiently comparable to *nianhua*, and that the two mediums could be organised in the same way in terms of production and censorship. Subsequently, and in light of the *paomashu* crisis, Party-State departments realised that *lianhuanhua* were sufficiently different to warrant distinctive treatment. This change in policy was important because it affected Party-State attitudes and policies towards the medium throughout the 1950s and first half of the 1960s. Another very significant aspect of the early development of the *lianhuanhua* industry and one which set it apart from other arts and cultural industries in early Maoist China, was that *lianhuanhua* production was not modelled on a similar setup in the Soviet Union, as the USSR had no comic book industry (Alaniz 2010, 4).

In this chapter, I initially establish why *lianhuanhua*, with their combination of simple text and image, appealed to such a broad audience in order to explicate why the Party-State was so keen to co-opt the medium for propaganda purposes. The chapter then focusses on the steps taken by Party-State agencies, notably the Cultural Bureau, to infiltrate the various fields of *lianhuanhua* production. I analyse the upheavals in the development of the *lianhuanhua* industry and how Party-State agencies 'experimented' with implementing control over the industry in constantly changing ways. In so doing, I draw attention to some of the organisational issues which characterised *lianhuanhua*'s development and which would have also influenced other mediums, such as the lack of leadership at grass roots level.

From the outset, however, I primarily analyse what set *lianhuanhua* apart from other mediums in terms of its institutional development and the resultant challenges Party-State agencies faced in dealing with the comics. This is highly significant because the lessons which Party-State agencies learnt about the nature of the comics in the first few years influenced their treatment of the medium in the later 1950s and 1960s. Subsequently, this resulted in *lianhuanhua* developing differently from other political cultural mediums. In this chapter, I predominantly focus on the development of the *lianhuanhua* industry in Shanghai and Beijing for reasons discussed in chapter one. In this case, it is particularly insightful to examine how agencies in Beijing reacted to developments in Shanghai, especially how they responded to what had not worked in Shanghai and sought to counter similar 'crises' occurring.

A Universal Appeal

Lianhuanhua's widespread popularity and loyal following harked back to the Republican era and the growth of the industry discussed in chapter two. Attesting to this, the

Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1951e) stipulated that by the early 1950s *lianhuanhua* had an almost universal appeal in urban areas. Therefore, despite the comics' absence from Yan'an and their association with traditional stories and popular Republican-era dramas and film plots, Party-State agencies recognised this appeal and sought to harness the medium for propaganda purposes. There is no evidence to suggest that the Party-State ever wanted to ban the medium as a whole.

Popular with children and adults alike, *lianhuanhua* were a highly accessible form of political culture. In the early 1950s, the Deputy Minister of Culture Zhou Yang referred to this broad accessibility when he proclaimed 'comic books are not only for children, adults can read them and literate people can also read them' (Lian 2012, 95). Calls for the establishment of *lianhuanhua* organisations in the fields of publishing, authorship and distribution repeatedly alluded to the comic's capacity to reach a broad urban audience as the reason for their promotion. For example, early calls by the Municipal Public Security Bureau (*Shi Gongan Ju*) for the establishment of a *Lianhuanhua* Vendors Association (discussed in chapter eight) declared that comic readers included citizens from every class and all walks of life (Shanghai Municipal People's Government, the Municipal Public Security Bureau, the Cultural Bureau 1950).

The medium's accessibility to a wide audience stemmed from its use of colloquial modes and linear story telling (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). In 1942 Mao had professed that in order for a work of art or literature to be popular it needed to be unsophisticated and easy to understand (Mao 1942). As it happened, *lianhuanhua*, although predating Mao's pronouncements, fitted perfectly with his views about art and culture. Incorporating two or three lines of text per page, *lianhuanhua* were simple linguistically, and required only a basic level of literacy to appreciate.[37] This made the comics more accessible to a widespread audience than more sophisticated literary mediums, such as novels. Furthermore, *lianhuanhua* were also regarded as highly accessible due to their illustrations. In 1951 the Cultural Bureau elaborated on this, stating that ‘due to their cultural limitations, the vast majority of the workers cannot access the kinds of knowledge they need directly from words, they need the image to help them to obtain an understanding’ (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951h). *Lianhuanhua* therefore appealed predominantly to petty urbanites,[38] i.e. those who had some, but a limited education and could utilise the image-supported text reading system.

In general, the Party-State’s conquest of the cultural sphere was particularly important in the cities, in which the Party had little experience of governing and less of an established base (Hung 2011, 3). Due to their popularity with the urban working population, *lianhuanhua* were considered a highly valuable cultural medium for propaganda. Initially, rural readership of the comics was much more limited; however, readership began to expand in the countryside after 1955 (Jiang 1956a). In the first half of the 1960s the publishing houses began to take a more active approach in producing *lianhuanhua*, which specifically catered for rural audiences (discussed in chapter seven) (*The People’s Daily* 1963a).

In addition to being accessible in terms of language, imagery and structure, the CCP also promoted *lianhuanhua* because they could be retailed throughout the year. In this capacity, the comics were intended to be a permanent proxy for changing Party-State discourses.[39] Highlighting this important aspect of the sale of *lianhuanhua*, a writer for *The*

---

[37] The medium was even used extensively in literacy campaigns (discussed in chapter four).

[38] In his analysis of early twentieth century Shanghai society, Lu (1999, 63) defines ‘petty urbanite’ as white collar workers, shop assistants and factory workers. Additionally, he stresses that the term connotes belonging to a specific residential community and abiding in a particular form of housing (known as *shikumen*, the single most common form of housing in Shanghai).

[39] As chapters three and four will further explore, production of *lianhuanhua* actually had trouble in keeping up with changes in Party policy.

People's Daily stated that it was not restricted to certain seasons, as was the case for other art forms, such as *nianhua*, which were particularly prevalent and popular during Spring Festival (Tian 1949).[40] Furthermore, *lianhuanhua* were also promoted because they were conducive to mass publication due to their low costs and relatively speedy production (Lian 2012, 94). This fit in with one of the key policies of the early PRC, which was to harness modern printing technology to issue art in large quantities (Andrews 1994, 35).

In addition, and perhaps most crucially, comic propagation was able to fulfil two entwined policies to which Mao had devoted great swathes of his Yan'an talks. Firstly, *lianhuanhua* could be used to popularise literature and make it more accessible (Mao 1942). Tang (2015, 10) argues that 'Socialist visual culture' was intended to dismantle the hierarchy between fine and popular art. As a form of popular culture, which had traditionally drawn upon 'high culture' and simplified it, the production of *lianhuanhua* was able to make more sophisticated literary mediums more accessible. Secondly, having connected with their target audience, the comics could then 'raise the level' of the people through inculcating Party doctrine (Mao 1942). In this sense *lianhuanhua* functioned as an extremely useful, non-curriculum based propaganda tool for the Party-State. The Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1951h) articulated this view, stating that *'lianhuanhua* play a significant role in reaching the population…*lianhuanhua* can therefore play a big role in our propaganda'. The use of *lianhuanhua* for propaganda purposes is further elaborated in this and subsequent chapters.

The publication of *lianhuanhua* served Yan'an ideals in terms of popularising literature and using this literature to 'instruct' individuals. *Lianhuanhua* were highly accessible to urban audiences in the first half of the 1950s because of their imagery and language. The medium was also favoured because retail could be continuous throughout the year, rather than relegated to specific festivals. Despite the intrinsic appeal of their format and imagery, like other forms of propaganda *lianhuanhua* needed to be entertaining in order to gain audiences (DeMare 2012, 132).[41] In *lianhuanhua*'s case this was particularly important however, as the comics were a retail product and needed to appeal as commodities. People read *lianhuanhua* outside work and school for entertainment purposes.[42] The publishing houses continued to have issues with providing material people were interested in versus the medium fulfilling its prescribed propaganda role.

---

[40] It must be noted that although *lianhuanhua* could be read throughout the year, reading was particularly prevalent in summer when it was comfortable to read outside at the street stalls, discussed in chapter seven (Cheng 2011, 41).

Additionally, despite enthusiasm from many quarters about the 'new' medium and it's potential as a source of propaganda, Party-State agencies' early attempts to expand and establish control over the medium did not always run smoothly. This was at least partially due to their unfamiliarity with the *lianhuanhua* industry and the medium itself.

The Cultural Bureau

From 1949 onwards for the purposes of the Party-State, *lianhuanhua* constituted a highly popular and 'useful' literary and artistic medium, which could be used for propaganda purposes. However, at the same time, the medium was 'problematic' because of its roots in Republican Shanghai and the majority of titles available, which at best did not propagate Party rhetoric, and at worst were labelled actively 'anti-party'. For these two reasons, *lianhuanhua* received immediate and ongoing attention from the Party-State bureaucracy. However, *lianhuanhua* were the preserve of the publishing houses and the Civil Administration, and not the art academies and this meant that the administration of *lianhuanhua* was less tight then other cultural mediums, but also more complex.

---

[41] Analysing the spread of amateur drama troupes in Hubei, DeMare (2012, 168) asserts that they were successful because they co-opted local styles. However, there were tensions between cultural performers and the CCP over the demand to educate as opposed to entertain. The actors, for example, often found humour in Party stereotypes and acted for laughs, much to the chagrin of CCP Cultural workers.

[42] This differentiated *lianhuanhua* from other visual propaganda, such as posters, which were most often bought by work units (Shen 2000, 191).

The Chinese administration has two parallel but intersecting structures, namely the CCP and the civil government. *Lianhuanhua* production and distribution primarily came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture (*Wenhua bu*) and its junior departments operating at a municipal level (*Wenhua ju*), which were a part of the civil administration. This meant that *lianhuanhua* were less quickly institutionalised than other literary and artistic forms in which the CCP administration took on a larger role (Hang 2013, 62). Significantly, for the development of the *lianhuanhua* industry, the Civil Administration in theory was supposed to base their administrative decisions on an understanding of party policy from above; however, the Cultural Bureau often faced unforeseen challenges and had to adapt policy to confer with the situation at grass roots level. As will be elucidated, this was especially the case in the early 1950s for production and throughout the 1950s and 1960s for the distribution of *lianhuanhua*. The fact that *lianhuanhua* were overseen by the civil administration was also significant because it meant the medium was largely separated from the art institutional establishments, such as the Chinese Artists Association, under the administration of the CCP.[43] A particular consequence of *lianhuanhua* not being incorporated into the academies in terms of artistic style (highlighted in a later section) was that the medium was not forced to adopt Soviet stylistics to the same degree as other media, such as *guohua*. Moreover, *lianhuanhua* artists often trained in apprenticeships rather than the art academies, where students were encouraged to produce new revolutionary *nianhua* instead (Andrews 1994, 67).[44]

---

[43] However, as Andrews (1944, 5) observes, the art world as a whole did not always operate uniformly and authority often changed hands. This meant that at times the Propaganda Bureau under the CCP intervened in the censorship of *lianhuanhua*.

[44] There was an emphasis on *nianhua* at the art academies because they reached a large percentage of the population and quickly conveyed ideological goals using bright colours and traditional forms (Liang 1988, 20).

In addition, the production of the comics was the preserve of specialised publishers in the early 1950s and then after 1954 the responsibility of the principal publishers, such as the SPFAPH operating under the Shanghai Municipal government. As will be elaborated in chapter five, however, even after 1956 these publishers did not follow a nationwide strategy for *lianhuanhua* production. In general, it was the publishing industry and civil administration side of the art world of which *lianhuanhua* production was a part, which was generally less tightly controlled (Andrews 1994, 111).

This complexity in the administration of *lianhuanhua* in general is revealed in the early and ongoing organisation of the medium. For example, the *lianhuanhua* industry initially suffered from a lack of Party-State funding. In June 1951 Chen Tongheng, a department director in the Cultural Bureau, wrote a letter to his colleagues complaining that film and opera were both better funded and had better editors to direct content choice. In addition, the *lianhuanhua* publishing industry suffered from a lack of personnel and overlapping leadership at grass roots level with the partial involvement of many departments, including the Cultural Bureau, the News Publisher, the Education Bureau and the Industrial and Commercial Bureau and the Police Office (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951c). To counteract this, the Cultural Bureau established a committee to orchestrate developments and facilitate cooperation between the News Publisher and the Cultural Bureau (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951e).

The committee was important in delineating the responsibilities of different Party-State agencies. Ultimately, it decided that the training programme for artists and the establishment of a comic research journal should be done under the leadership of the Cultural Bureau while the lending and publishing of *lianhuanhua* would come under the direction of news publishers (Shanghai Press and Publication Department of Cultural Affairs 1951). The committee also decided that there needed to be a clearer separation between the creation of *lianhuanhua* and their censorship (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951f). The Fine Arts Association and Lianlian

Bookstore (*Lianlian shudian*) (discussed in detail in chapter seven) took a principal role in reviewing the *lianhuanhua* available, both criticising 'bad' comics and praising 'good' comics and the Cultural Bureau and Fine Arts Association were directed to come up with a plan for how and what comics should be produced (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951f). However, the administration of *lianhuanhua* continued to involve many different departments and they had overlapping responsibilities.

The Publishing Houses

After 1949, the Party-State sought to reorganise the publishing industry, encourage the production of 'revolutionary *lianhuanhua*,' purge erroneous content and control distribution networks. The responsibility for putting this into practice fell to departments within the civil administration, notably the Cultural Bureau. A report written by the SPFAPH in 1959 to celebrate ten years of *lianhuanhua* production suggested that Party policy was implemented quickly and smoothly in the early 1950s and that 'new' *lianhuanhua* with revolutionary themes quickly emerged, while 'ridiculous old comics' were disposed of (SPFAPH 1959f). However, an analysis of the archival documents from the early 1950s reveals quite a different story.

Establishing control over the *lianhuanhua* industry and censoring *lianhuanhua* was an on-going process, and Party-State agencies faced challenges and false starts. These agencies faced some challenges which would have plagued them in asserting dominance in other areas of political cultural production. However, establishing control over the *lianhuanhua* industry came with its own distinctive set of issues. As early as 1951, the Cultural Bureau recognised to some extent that attempting to reform Republican *lianhuanhua* and producing *lianhuanhua* for propaganda purposes would in all likelihood constitute an 'experimental process' (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951h).

In the early years the CCP grappled over how to impose its vision for the cultural sphere. In 1951 the Cultural Bureau outlined its somewhat vague goals for directing the development of the *lianhuanhua* publishing industry in particular.

> We need to change from a loose and undirected method of publishing to a systematic and directed method. We need to move from the past unrefined way to a current refined way of publishing, focussing not on the profits of the past, but on a new creative way (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951h).

The issue of how best to develop the *lianhuanhua* publishing industry was particularly important due to the medium's strong links to Republican Shanghai.

Prior to 1949 artists and writers gathered in Shanghai due to the good conditions for fine arts publishing and as described in chapter two, the city was the centre of *lianhuanhua* production. Shanghai already had a strong base in terms of comic readership and artists and publishers with an advanced understanding of how the industry operated. As will be demonstrated, Party-State agencies relied on this existing expertise to some extent. However, Shanghai was highly 'problematic' for CCP cultural policy in general and the Party-State incorrectly[45] saw the city as 'the home of the Guomindang' (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). Therefore, the well-established nature of the comic book industry in Shanghai was both an advantage and serious concern. Overall, however, the recognition of the city's importance to

---

[45] Notably, Coble (1995) punctures the myth that the Guomindang was closely allied with the emerging new capitalist class from 1927 to 1937. While in reference to culture, Wakeman (1995, 38) describes the challenges Guomindang leaders faced in regulating Shanghai's entertainment industries and agencies failed attempts to create a united civic culture in the face of the city's heterogeneity and burgeoning new urban culture.

lianhuanhua production meant that Shanghai continued to take the lead throughout the 1950s and early 1960s.

The Cultural Bureau was particularly concerned that the *lianhuanhua* industry was under the auspices of private publishers and obtaining control over comic production became the 'glorious endeavour' of the Party-State (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951a). The News Publisher and the Cultural Bureau quickly took over responsibility. In asserting control over the Shanghai *lianhuanhua* industry these Party-State agencies set up a series of organisations within the fields of distribution (see chapter seven and eight), authorship (see chapter six) and publishing (see chapters three, four and five). For example, by June 1950 the *Lianhuanhua* Authors Association (*Zuozhe Lianyihui*, abbreviated as *Lianzuo*) had been established to unite the 250 editors, artists and writers working in *lianhuanhua* production. Its main functions were to educate artists already working in the industry on how to 'improve' *lianhuanhua* in line with Party rhetoric (*Lianhuanhua* Authors Association 1950).

In 1952, reflecting on the reasons for the establishment of the Comic Book Publishing Industry Association (*Shanghaishi lianhuanhua chuban ye lianyi hui*, *Lianchu* for short) the Cultural Bureau stated:

> During the initial organisational work, we found that the authors relied on the publishers for basic subsistence. At the beginning, we only organised the authors, but because of this reliance we then found we needed to organise the publishers too (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952).

By September 1951, *Lianchu* consisted of 90 publishers, including 20 newly established publishers (Shanghai Cultural Bureau Report 1951d). In general, Party-State agencies lambasted the pre-1949 *lianhuanhua* publishing houses, while to some extent relying on them.

For example, the Cultural Bureau accused big publishers of having monopolised the industry, employing famous artists exclusively and bribing officials to review their comics quicker and thereby obtain a licence. Furthermore, the Bureau alleged that licences had been put up for sale, costing an average of five loads of rice on the black market, and publishers were accused of having acquiesced to a Guomindang government dictate to produce anti-CCP comics during the 1930s and 1940s (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951d).[46]

In addition, the rhetoric used to glorify the transformation of *lianhuanhua* publishing emphasised that the changes would bolster small publishers. According to PRC critics, these publishers had lacked the capital to afford good scripts or to engage skilled artists in the Republican era, and therefore were republishing low quality ‘old’ comics (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951d). The Party-State intended to amalgamate them into the fold by providing scripts and drawing materials and other fine art services (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951d). Ultimately, however, and in light of the banning of the *paomashu*, discussed in subsequent sections, these small publishers were wiped out by 1954.

Zhao Hongben and the Artists

In a bid to sever the old allegiances between artists (*Lianhuanhua huazhe*) and publishing houses who had worked together prior to 1949, the Cultural Bureau extolled artists who attempted to self-publish *lianhuanhua* focussing on Party rhetoric. In particular, Zhao Hongben (1915-2000) was praised for producing ‘progressive comics,’ and for self-publishing in the early 1950s, when his efforts were allegedly stymied by a publishing house (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). By 1949, Zhao had been illustrating *lianhuanhua* for more than ten years and was an underground Communist Party member. During the late 1930s and early 1940s, he produced *lianhuanhua* adaptations of what were considered progressive literary works, including *Sunrise* (*Richu*) by Cao Yu (1910-1966) and Lu Xun's *The True Story of Ah Q (A Q Zheng Zhuan)* (Shen 2001, 107). After 1949, he was quickly promoted and became a member of the Shanghai Fine Arts Association and the China and Soviet Friendship Association and had a presiding role on the Comics Committee (discussed further on). Galikowski (1998, 13) establishes that giving artists prominent positions in the Artists Association was a general policy to induce them to support the regime. Zhao continued to play a dominant role in the *lianhuanhua* industry throughout the 1950s both as an artist and in an administrative role, as will be discussed in later chapters.

---

[46] As discussed, there is little evidence to suggest the Guomindang ever used *lianhuanhua* for propaganda purposes.

Of artists operating in Shanghai more generally in the early 1950s, Flath (2004, 135) comments many had little affiliation to the CCP at best and at worst, were thought of as class enemies. As far as the Cultural Bureau and Party-State agencies were concerned the *lianhuanhua* publishing industry in particular suffered from a lack of 'appropriate' artists and writers. Zhao with his 'good' political credentials and excellent artistic skills was the exception rather than the rule, as far as Party-State agencies were concerned, and even his name was not 'untarnished'. His comic *The Well* (*Jing*) was critiqued in *Lianhuanhuabao* in 1952 and subsequently banned (Nanjing Library 1954, 3). The fact that Zhao's comic could be banned, but that Zhao himself could maintain his illustrious position suggests how much his skills and expertise were valued by the Party-State.[47]

Zhao had been one of the 'four most famous' (*sida ming dan*) comic masters of the Republican period, alongside Shen Manyuan (1911-1978), Qian Xiaodai (1911-1965) and Chen Guangyi (1919-1991). In the early 1950s, Chen Guangyi garnered acclaim for his adaptations of historical stories, such as that of the military general Zhang Fei in 1954 (Chen, Guangyi 1954). Due to his success, he was employed by the SPFAPH in 1955 and went on to work on the highly popular comic version of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi*). This was part of the publishing house's drive to adapt a large compilation of ancient history comics during the relatively free period of the Hundred Flowers Campaign in 1956. Qian Xiaodai also appears to have been successful in publishing *lianhuanhua* based on figures from classical texts and stories, such as one published in 1959 about the polymath Zhang Heng, who lived during the Han dynasty (Chen et al. 1959). On the other hand, Shen Manyuan, who modelled his characters and setting on opera performances, was dropped or was forced out of the industry probably due to his inability or unwillingness to illustrate content in line with Party-State rhetoric (Shen 2001, 106). Artists such as Shen were labelled as lacking in 'appropriate thinking' (A 1957, 26).

---

[47] Although there is no evidence of this in Zhao's case, in her analysis of the transformation of the tabloid press, Du (2014, 99) also suggests personal connections were highly important in the changeover, sometimes more than political affiliation.

However, when *lianhuanhua* artists did have the skills in Chinese line drawing and classical stories, they were often able to survive the transition into the new political cultural environment because they were relatively few in number. Their later publications denote they continued to be successful at least up until the Cultural Revolution, although many of them were sent to the countryside in the late 1950s. The reason why this was the case is that their style of drawing *lianhuanhua* was never overtly challenged, but was instead respected as the legitimate form of illustration. These artists sometimes had to produce 'revolutionary *lianhuanhua*,' but did not necessarily have to adopt Soviet stylistics. Furthermore, often they continued to illustrate the kinds of traditional and classical stories with which they would long have been familiar. This will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

The skill level of the 'four famous' was the exception to the rule. On the eve of the Communist takeover, there were 100 *lianhuanhua* artists operating in Shanghai. However, according to the SPFAPH only 30 of these artists were considered to be sufficiently skilled to create entire comics independently and only ten of them were considered of high enough 'quality,' in terms of both political allegiance and artistic skill. The remaining artists had worked as apprentices before 1949 and only worked on filling in the background (A 1957, 26). Thus they did not have the expertise to create whole comics independently (Andrews 1991, 71).

These artists were to be a key component of what Mao had labelled the 'cultural army' (*wenhua jundui*) but they needed a better understanding of the role of art in serving class needs as laid out in the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art (Mao 1942). The Party-State considered it highly important that artists be educated in line with the maxim that 'art should serve politics and the workers, farmers and soldiers' (SPFAPH 1959f). Therefore, in the early 1950s, Party-State agencies sought to train *lianhuanhua* artists as quickly as possible. To solve this issue the Cultural Bureau planned to recruit newly emerging artists and pre-1949 artists and train them full-time for upwards of half a year to participate in *lianhuanhua* production. The first *lianhuanhua* research class (*lianyanban*) incorporated 36 students (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951a). Training programmes occurred in 1950, 1951 and 1952 with an increase in the number of students each year (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). These classes provided an artistic as well as an ideological grounding in *lianhuanhua* production. Some of the individuals involved in the training programme went on to work in the *lianhuanhua* industry. However, students also went on to work in other cultural fields, such as in the movie projection teams (Shanghai Municipal People's Government Department of Cultural Affairs 1953) or the Culture Office as drawing and decorating artists (*huitu buzhi*) (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1953b). The SPFAPH (1959f) later described the course as 'not just learning, but also a battle' against 'bad' comics.

However, despite these classes many artists also continued to learn through the apprenticeship system in the early 1950s. Deng Ke (2010, 34) describes how he was accepted by the established artist Hua Sanchuan in 1952. He visited Hua's home to copy his work and learned from him on a one to one basis. Apprenticeships usually lasted for three years and during that time most art work produced by the apprentice for the comics was attributed to the master. Taking on such training usually required the support of family money (Cheng 2011, 29). Although the alternative system of learning through classes had been set up, the apprentice system was tolerated by Party-State agencies in the early 1950s.

In 1951, to further encourage artists, the Cultural Bureau in Shanghai also introduced a comic competition, selecting ten excellent works and holding an award ceremony on 25th December. The ten comics supported key Party-State propaganda initiatives:[48] the 'Fight Against America, Support Korea Campaign,' Land Reform, model workers and the movements to supress 'counter-revolutionaries' and 'feudal' marriage (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952).[49] Despite these training programmes and awards, the Cultural Bureau focussed primarily on restructuring the industry as a whole, and took a largely hands-off approach to dealing with the artists, who were overseen primarily by the publishing houses and often worked on a free-lance basis. As early as September 1952 Party-State agencies were commenting on the way in which *lianhuanhua* artists worked at home and how it could be problematic because artists would be separated from 'political learning' (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). However, in the early 1950s they made no moves to stop the artists from operating outside the publishing houses and on a free-lance basis. This hands-off approach had on going consequences and in 1956 the Cultural Bureau was forced to reassess its approach to handling the artists as analysed in chapter six.

---

[48] Chapter four goes into detail on the ways in which *lianhuanhua* supported propaganda initiatives in the early 1950s.

[49] Unfortunately nothing is known about the winners of this particular competition. Flath (2004, 134) demonstrates the awards offered to *nianhua* artists in 1950 were ostensibly supposed to encourage output from the newly annexed areas, but they favoured those from northern areas with strong political connections, who had operated in Yan'an. This may not have been the case for *lianhuanhua* however given the medium was so Shanghai centric.

The 'Golden Era' and 'Old' *Lianhuanhua*

Hua Junwu, the most celebrated *manhua* artist of the Yan'an period, criticised *lianhuanhua* in *The People's Daily* in 1951. Hua complained that 'many of the comic books published before liberation contain toxins, and promote superstition and an American way of life, and some even preach reactionary sentiment and espionage. Therefore giving these comics to readers is ideologically poisonous' (Hua 1951, 3). Some of Hua's protestations about Republican *lianhuanhua* do not ring true. As demonstrated in the last chapter, for instance, there is no evidence to suggest the Guomindang ever used *lianhuanhua* for propaganda purposes. It is true that 'supernatural martial arts stories' were highly popular with urban audiences during the Republican era, while at the same time being criticised as the 'devil for children'. However, as later chapters will elaborate, they continued to be equally popular and published and then criticised in the PRC. It is possible, in Hua's case that he was attacking the legitimacy of *lianhuanhua* because he saw the medium as a genuine threat to *manhua*, which he saw as a pure Socialist art form. He may also have been trying to claim ownership of the political debate about what constituted legitimate art in general.

Either way, Hua was not alone in his presentiments, and to counter what Hua termed 'ideological poison,' the Party-State used organisations, such *Lianchu*, trained artists and encouraged publishers to produce 'appropriately' themed comics. The Cultural Bureau also endeavoured to improve print technology and revise the content of 'old' comics held in storage. While *lianhuanhua* published prior to 1949 were frowned upon, the most 'harmful' titles and the ones which were usually banned outright included those considered 'anti-Soviet,' 'anti-Communist' and 'pro-Guomindang'. While such categorisations may seem self-explanatory, it must be recognised that the boundaries of what counted as ‘anti-Communist’ were always shifting with the ebb and flow of campaigns from 1949 to 1966.

To counter the lingering ‘bad’ content, ostensibly all art produced after 1949 was supposed to function as a tool to glorify the Party leadership, its history and policies and the lives of workers, peasants and Socialist heroes (Farquhar 1999, 191). For example, in June 1951 the initial Government plan for *lianhuanhua* stipulated that 50 good *lianhuanhua* focussing on ‘revolutionary’ themes should be published nationwide and that publishers should strive to publish ‘good’ quality *lianhuanhua* for the next two years (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951a). The Shanghai Cultural Bureau vowed to exceed this central government target and stated to this end ‘we need to strive to publish a first edition in July and then strive to reach a sales volume of at least 50,000 within the year’ (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951a). In reality however, the themes inherent in the *lianhuanhua* which continued to be published right up until the Cultural Revolution were a lot more varied as will be discussed in chapter four, incorporating aspects of classical Chinese literature, folk tales (*minjian gushi*) and adaptations of foreign literature. Rather than banning these genres, the Party-State apparatus dealt with titles on an individual basis depending on the political climate of the time. If a *lianhuanhua* was deemed particularly problematic by prevailing standards it was both banned and collected; if minor errors were found, the text was edited at the production stage.

From the early 1950s, comics were scrutinised for their individual ‘good’ or ‘bad’ points. Reports highlighted their content, weaknesses, strengths, potential readership and stipulated whether the *lianhuanhua* needed to be censored in any way. For example, *The Voice of Black America* (*Meiguo heiren de husheng*) published in January 1951 was praised for showing how ‘only a USA governed by labour can have no race’ and for critiquing American democracy (Beijing News Publisher 1951c) (Appendix Figure 2). The story focussed on the Civil Rights activist Paul Robeson, who was seen in the PRC as a great supporter of the CCP and a fighter against the suppression of African Americans. Alongside its vivid characters, the comic was praised for its clear and insightful description of ‘American fake democracy and for showing how supposed freedom in fact discloses capitalist decay’. Robeson declares in the comic: ‘I will sing it loudly all over the world that this is the America. I sang in Cuba, in Warsaw, and the citizens there love my songs. They all want me to stay’ (Wang 1951, 52). He states that he dreamed of being a judge, but questions ‘who will employ me in America where even the whites cannot find a job?’ (Wang 1951, 29). Race in America was a central Soviet propaganda theme and also became a key part of the CCP’s narrative (Dudziak 2011, 15). The comic report recommended that the *lianhuanhua* was suitable for a readership of students and general citizens and that it was ‘proper to promote this comic’ (Beijing News Publisher 1951c).[50] The intricacies of the censorship of *lianhuanhua* will be further explored in this and subsequent chapters.

Despite the challenges of administrating *lianhuanhua* and training artists, from July 1950 to April 1951 the sale of *lianhuanhua* through bookstores boomed. This occurred for several reasons. As described in chapter two, *lianhuanhua* had not previously been retailed through many bookstores and this was a new avenue for their sales (Shen 2001, 103). In addition, (and elaborated in chapter seven), the Party-State financially backed bookstores involved in an organisation called *Lianlian*, allowing them to buy up *lianhuanhua* stock more quickly. Moreover, a new readership for *lianhuanhua* emerged, including housewives and students, who were made aware of the emerging political culture through the recently established Cultural Centres and street libraries (*linong tushuguan*) (also discussed in chapter seven) (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). A report by the Cultural Bureau (1952a) termed this period the 'golden era' in comic book retail.

---

[50] In addition to the comic reports, which discussed the strengths and weaknesses of particular titles, individual *lianhuanhua* also caught the attention of the Party-State controlled press from the early 1950s. For example, an article in *The People’s Daily* critiqued one particular *lianhuanhua* about the Long March, stating it discriminated against and stigmatized minority peoples by calling them barbarians (*manren*) and referring to their home as the ‘place of barbarians’ (*manren difang*). The article accused the author of articulating ‘the Han chauvinism of the Guomindang’ (Wu 1951). The comic was apparently already on its tenth edition and had already been revised, a sticker on the front attested to this. However, the author of the article, Wu Shaofang continued to critique the story based on in its portrayal of ethnic minorities.

The boom in *lianhuanhua* sales was not necessarily the result of a new-found appreciation among audiences for 'revolutionary' *lianhuanhua* (discussed in chapter seven). For one thing, these bookstores were not automatically retailing 'revolutionary comics'. Chen Tongheng in the Cultural Bureau complained that 'some old artists and publishers still print the old *lianhuanhua* secretly' (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951a). In particular, many artists and publishers were still focussing on the highly popular 'knight-errant' genre of comics (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951d). The Party-State blamed the 'private publisher's backward attitudes and beliefs that the government would change' on the proliferation of 'old' *lianhuanhua*. The Cultural Bureau again stated that this in turn was having a knock-on effect on the artists (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). This highlighted a fundamental clash between publishers and the Party-State over the importance of politics versus finances. The publishers continued to publish knight-errant comics and classical stories because they were more marketable (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951d).

However, despite the fact that old comics were considered 'un-educational' and 'problematic,' State agencies maintained that banning them all was just not feasible. The arbitrary figure of abandoning 95% was quickly abandoned in by the Cultural Bureau (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1950). In fact the Comics Committee headed by Zhao Hongben claimed that only 20% of the comics currently available went against political policy and should be immediately disposed of (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951f). In 1951 publishing houses were urged to destroy *lianhuanhua* with serious 'anti-party content,' including the originals (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1950). However, many *lianhuanhua* with what might be considered ‘problematic’ content for the CCP continued to be published. This was undoubtedly a practical decision given the numbers of *lianhuanhua* in circulation and a lack of organisation and manpower in the early 1950s. In addition, there were simply not enough new *lianhuanhua* to replace them (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1950).

The Party-State’s attitude towards *lianhuanhua* in the early 1950s was also sparked by a fear that taking away large numbers of old *lianhuanhua* would result in the specialised publishing houses collapsing. This would bring about too fast and potentially adverse changes to the *lianhuanhua* industry as a whole and the resultant financial costs would have to be incurred by the still economically fragile government of the PRC (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1950). In the early 1950s, before the publishing houses were privatised the Party-State took on a more limited financial role. For example, agencies offered financial incentives to *lianhuanhua* vendors to give up their ‘problematic’ *lianhuanhua,* as will be discussed in chapter eight.

The unwillingness to ban all ‘old’ *lianhuanhua* adaptations of classical stories and folktales however, was also down to the fact that initially there was often very little difference in terms of ‘quality’ (as defined by Party-State agencies) between ‘old’ and ‘new’ comics. Additionally, the ‘old’ comics published prior to 1949 could not be taken as a homogenous group. Of the ‘old’ comics the Cultural Bureau complained:

> It seems that although the old *lianhuanhua* do not have a good influence on the readers they still vary greatly in terms of their level of harm. Some of them are adapted from old novels, such as *Water Margin* [a favourite of Mao] and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Their content does not differ much from the new *lianhuanhua* published after liberation (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1950).

‘Old’ *lianhuanhua* were treated differently according to their characteristics on a case by case basis as described above (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1950). Furthermore, ‘newly’ published *lianhuanhua* were often seen as little different given they frequently moralised using tales of the knight-errant and the upright official. The Cultural Bureau complained that ‘when newly published *lianhuanhua* talk about revolution they do so through the medium of ancient stories, such as robbing the rich to give to the poor’ (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). For these reasons, the Party-State focused on eliminating old comics which were considered to be the least acceptable for the reading public (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1950). In the early 1950s this meant eradicating ‘those comics which propagate capitalist living, reward traitors, those which are for the people who despise the working group and those which have traditional ideas’. Comics that also faced censorship were those that ‘promoted bad values and bad behaviour, especially those which severely influence children’. Again, however, these appear to have been quite loose definitions, which were open to varying degrees of interpretation by the censors, and comics were dealt with individually (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1950).

Unsurprisingly, given that the Party-State agencies were still defining for themselves what characterised a ‘good’ *lianhuanhua* and what should be banned, there was also confusion from individuals involved in the publishing process as to what comics should be censored and as to who should be doing the censoring. This was demonstrated by the case of the comic *Living Buddha* (*Huo pusa*) in June and July 1950 (Shanghai Municipal People’s Government Press and Publication Department 1950). The artist Zhu Yuanfang was critiqued for not putting his own comic forward for checking and censorship (Shanghai Dagong Newspaper 1950). Both he and the publisher, *Shanghai Big Public Newspaper* (*Shanghai Dagong Bao)* had assumed that because the stage opera version of *Living Buddha* (*Huo pusa*) was ‘welcomed by the masses’ and had been labelled as having ‘educational value’ by a censor its adaptation into *lianhuanhua* and publication could go ahead (Shanghai Municipal People’s

Government Press and Publication Department 1950). After some heated exchanges, the Shanghai Municipal People ’ s Information Services Department (*Shanghaishi renmin zhengfuxinwenchubanchu*) claimed that the *Shanghai Big Public Newspaper* had breached the central publishing policy and ignored the rules of the government by not censoring the comic themselves before they published it (Shanghai Municipal People’s Government Press and Publication Department 1950). In general, it was hard for individuals working within the publishing industry in the early 1950s to figure out censorship boundaries and producers frequently got into trouble even when commenting on content supposedly allowed in the public domain.[51] What is also significant, however, is that this continued to be a problem for producers of *lianhuanhua* into the late 1950s as chapter five will discuss.

The *Paomashu*

In general, the moves to institutionalise the *lianhuanhua* industry in the early 1950s and bring it under the auspices of the Party-State were rather disparate. The banning of the ‘*paomashu*’ was the first concerted attempt to transform the *lianhuanhua* industry. During the 1930s and 1940s, as explored in chapter two, the emphasis in *lianhuanhua* publishing had been on speed, rather than finesse, so that production could keep up with the release of other forms of popular culture, such as film and opera. The derogatory term *paomashu* (horse racing book) was at times utilised to demarcate these rapidly produced and allegedly poor quality *lianhuanhua*. The term has various connotations, which include that of riding a horse fast

---

[51] For example, Du (2014, 109) describes how a newspaper was forced to self-criticise when it adopted a particular angle in an article about the film *Condemned by the Public* (*Qianfu Suozhi*). The article focussed on the fact that the actor who had originally been supposed to play a role in the Communist public security office instead took the role of the KMT spy. The magazine was accused of insulting public security officials and making it sound like a real Communist had defected.

(suggesting the speed of production) and a zoetrope (suggesting pictures in motion). Peng (2014) suggests the term originated in the Republican era as early as 1934 to describe 'poor quality' *lianhuanhua* produced quickly and with sketchy artistry. Likewise, Shi (2010) refers to *paomashu* being published during the Republican years. In the early 1950s, the term demarcated comics which had been rapidly produced and distributed and included those produced after 1949 (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952).

After 1949 with the CCP's introduction of censorship, the rapid release of *lianhuanhua* was supposed to decrease as the comics were supposed to be thoroughly checked before being released. In this sense, Party-State agencies were attempting to fundamentally change the way in which much of the *lianhuanhua* Republican publishing industry had worked. However, rapid publishing continued due to the fact that *lianhuanhua* were institutionalised less quickly then other mediums and many of the changes which occurred in the first few years were experimental in nature. Additionally, as stipulated, censorship rules and regulations remained vague and in many cases it was still possible for publishers to continue to publish what they wanted. Furthermore, the Party-State's new avenues for *lianhuanhua* retail and new audiences sparked a boom in sales. This period was known as the 'Golden Era' in *lianhuanhua* production. It was ultimately the '*paomashu* crisis,' which called a halt to the rapid publishing style of the 1930s and 1940s.

While 'old' *lianhuanhua* published before 1949 and the continuing adaption of classical tales, martial stories and folk tales into *lianhuanhua* was problematic for the Party-State, the newly published supposedly 'revolutionary' content proved to be equally challenging in the early 1950s. Hua (1951) complained that 'shoddy work,' was being 'secretly marketed' and he was not referring to classical stories, but to 'revolutionary' *lianhuanhua*. 'New' *lianhuanhua* often ostensibly propagated propaganda as they focussed on the 'war of liberation' and the Anti-Japanese War. However, they were often severely lacking in what the

Party-State labelled as ‘quality’ because they spread ‘mis-information’ about Party policies. This was probably because publishers did not have a very clear idea about what Marxist thinking was at this point. This meant Party-State agencies often saw little difference between these comics and the ‘old’ comics in terms of ‘educational’ value. The Cultural Bureau complained:

> The new *lianhuanhua* have the same bad influence as the old *lianhuanhua*. If we are going to change all the old *lianhuanhua,* there needs to be more differentiation between them and the new *lianhuanhua* or we cannot make clear the deficiencies of the old publishing industry (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1950).

Despite the Cultural Bureau recognising the issue in 1950, these new *lianhuanhua* were initially able to proliferate in the early 1950s because of the rapid publishing and minimal checking procedures.

From October to December 1950, 333 comic script drafts and 200 pictures were produced; however, the Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1952a) later specified they included ‘millions of mistakes’ and ‘ridiculous plots’ and constituted *paomashu*. Some scripts designated *paomashu* also included characters which propagated ‘new democracy,’ (*xin minzhu zhuyi*) but in the garb of feudal dress (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). One comic *Yun Girl* was critiqued in two separate issues of *The People’s Daily* (1951a): in one instance for seriously misrepresenting land reform policy and in the second instance for ‘incorrectly’ portraying ethnic minorities (Hua 1951).[52] Moreover, the Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1951a) argued *paomashu* did not conform to the required standards in terms of style and plotting because they lacked drama, variety, continuity and colloquial language and the images were deemed too comedic and cartoon-like and the pages too few in number.

---

[52] In neither case do the authors of the respective articles go into details on the ways in which the comics ‘distorted’ land policy or ‘mispresented’ minorities.

In targeting *paomashu*, Party-State agencies were trying eliminate the speedy publishing of *lianhuanhua*, which originated during the Republican era. It may have been that the CCP was also endeavouring to divest the medium of some of its more tawdry and slipshod associations, so that it be accepted as genuine art form and thus have a broader appeal. During the Republican era, *lianhuanhua* had not been sold in bookshops because of their association with a low form of culture. Conversely, complaints about the style of the comics and their brevity may just been rhetoric to justify the changes to the industry as whole. From early on, the Party-State frequently used alleged reader feedback as a means to justify changes in control over the comics. *Lianhuanhua* straddled the divide between what was popular and what was political, and therefore, Party-State agencies endeavoured to link changes to the texts with popular demand. For example, in the early 1950s readers allegedly wrote to *The People Daily* stating that comics on the bookstalls focussing on feudalism and colonisation affected the minds of children (Lian 2012, 95). In addition, in Beijing bookstores apparently received letters from readers stating the government should ban the ‘reactionary’ and ‘bad’ comics produced in the last year (Beijing News Publisher 1951d).

What is highly significant about the case of the *paomashu* in general is that this was the only genre of *lianhuanhua* which the Party-State categorically banned and instituted a specific law against (April 1951) during the ‘seventeen years’.[53] On the contrary, the majority of comics, beginning with titles such as *The Voice of Black America*, tended to be reviewed individually. The ‘good’ points and areas which agencies argued needed to be censored were highlighted in reports. Moreover, as will be elaborated in chapter four the idea of what constituted ‘quality’ both in terms of content and form was continually questioned due to changing political rhetoric. The cultural bureaucracy also continually agonised over how to identify ‘problematic’ comics, recognising that agencies often made ‘mistakes’ during this process and it was difficult for agencies to distinguish one genre of comics from another. Conversely, during the early 1950s there were no discussions within the cultural bureaucracy over what constituted *paomashu* and what not, it was a readily accepted term. This level of certainty is especially surprising given *paomashu* often included plots supposedly focussing on CCP rhetoric. The Party-State’s ability to recognise and ban *paomashu* quickly suggests the books may have been visually slightly different from *lianhuanhua* and may in fact have resembled flipbooks which emerged in Europe in the nineteenth century and recorded phases of motion (Gunning 2013, 65). This also helps explain why the term suggested a zoetrope.

---

[53] Even in this case, the cultural bureaucracy was forced to reverse its decision to get rid of all *paomashu* after complaints from the publishers, as will be explicated.

Unsurprisingly, the Cultural Bureau laid the blame for the proliferation of *paomashu* squarely at the feet of the publishers, who were accused of soliciting quick profits (SPFAPH 1959f). In fact, the cultural bureaucracy itself up until that point had encouraged speedy *lianhuanhua* production. For example, the Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1951a) estimated that an artist could create a series of four comics in two months.[54] The publishers were also accused of ‘resurrecting scripts from ten years ago’ and ‘covering over the logo of the Guomindang and publishing the same story’ (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). In addition, artists were accused of being politically and artistically lacking (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). It was hoped that further training programmes would rectify these issues.

---

[54] By the second half of the 1950s, production estimates for the comics tended to be longer, with one comic taking three to six months just in terms of artistry.

Paomashu were officially banned in Shanghai in April 1951. *Lianchu* introduced regulations for editing and required that publishers produce reports on the *paomashu* they held including titles and publishing statistics.[55] The ephemeral nature of the *paomashu* was also an issue and *Lianchu* introduced regulations for binding and printing *lianhuanhua*, which would increase their longevity and mean they could circulate for longer.[56] Any business failing to do this or reporting falsely was to be severely punished (Cheng 2011, 48). The *paomashu* in existence were handled in several different ways. Some publishing houses had their stocks confiscated or banned immediately by the Press and Publication Department, other *paomashu* were allowed to be sold until stock ran out and others were edited and then republished (Cheng 2011, 49). Publishers who had their *paomashu* stock destroyed received only the recycled pulp in return, and by August many were experiencing extreme financial losses as *paomashu* had constituted 70% of their holdings (Cheng 2011, 50). Through the auspices Lianchu these publishers made a special request to the Press and Publication Department for clemency, requesting that the agency not destroy original manuscripts, but instead allow them to be modified. The Press and Publication Department agreed, with the proviso that reasons be given in writing as to why each comic was instructive and should be saved. These comics were then sent for a final review after they had been modified. By October all the *paomashu* stocks had been dealt with and in total 300,000 copies were destroyed, consisting of 2644 manuscripts, while 561 manuscripts had been saved as a result of the appeal by the publishers (Cheng 2001, 50).

---

[55] A total of 60 publishers registered as holding *paomashu* (Cheng 2011, 49).

[56] As subsequent chapters discuss, the longevity of *lianhuanhua* actually turned out to be somewhat of an issue for the Party-State as comics could circulate among the vending stalls for a long time even after being banned at the level of the publishing houses.

San fan wu fan

Speedy publishing decreased in light of new regulations, the banning of the *paomashu* and the ‘Three Antis, Five Antis Campaign’ (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). The campaign, which ran from the end of 1951 to October 1952, targeted the alleged excesses of capitalism, the landlords and the business owners, but at the same time, publishers and artists were criticised for their purported lack of political mindedness. Meanwhile, a nationwide arts and literature rectification campaign in 1951 targeted Chinese intellectuals, stipulating a need to reform thought in line with Mao’s principal of serving peasants, workers and soldiers (Andrews 1994, 124). At the same time, individuals working on comic development in Beijing expressed concern that if they did not take corresponding action in the capital ‘then *paomashu* will emerge in Beijing and Shanghai publishers will also move here’ (Beijing News Publisher 1951d).

Beijing cultural institutions kept abreast of developments in the Shanghai *lianhuanhua* publishing industry and allowed changes there to inform their work in general. For example in January 1951, the Beijing People’s Government News Publisher identified potentially ‘harmful’ comics based on movie adaptations, which had been printed in Shanghai, including *lianhuanhua* with ‘anti-revolutionary’ and ‘reactionary’ content, such as stories about Confucius or filial piety and those with pornographic (*huangse*) content. The Beijing News Publisher (1951b) urged caution in publishing either of the latter two categories and specifically highlighted four film comics considered ‘pornographic,’ which supposedly had a greater propensity to migrate to the capital. In this way, Beijing agencies kept up-to-date with what was being published in Shanghai out of fear that the same titles might appear in the capital. However, as will be discussed in chapter five, Beijing agencies’ stance was predominantly reactive rather than trying to lead national *lianhuanhua* production. The elevated status of the medium in Shanghai also meant that establishing national control over production and distribution was particularly complicated.

In general, after *paomashu* had been banned the Party-State began encouraging the publication of what they saw as new and better quality *lianhuanhua*. For example, in June 1951 the newly formed Creation Team Improvement Committee (*Gaijin Weiyuanhui*) was tasked with coming up with new story lines for comics in a four volume series (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951a). These new *lianhuanhua* were supposed to focus on revolutionary themes, but be lengthier, and have strong continuity. In particular, *lianhuanhua* with easily understandable vernacular text were encouraged (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951a). The Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1951a) urged the incorporation of more stories focussing on current affairs and science and hygiene, terming this 'light and happy content' and also argued *lianhuanhua* needed to be unsophisticated to attract a wider audience. At the same time, concerns over the brevity of the comics were also expressed in August 1951 by the Comic Committee, who complained that in general comics were no more than 14 pages in length (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951f).

The outcome of this drive to produce new supposedly 'quality' 'revolutionary' *lianhuanhua* was that the Cultural Bureau and the News Publisher replaced over one million old books with approximately 500,000 new books in 1951. However, this mass production of *lianhuanhua* did little to eradicate pre-1949 publications or their popularity. An estimated 700,000 pre-1949 comics were still available to consumers (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). In addition, the Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1952a) still feared a 'second *paomashu*' with formulaic stories was emerging during the Korean War. In this case, concerns were particularly over the length of these *lianhuanhua,* which were as short as four pages.

In addition, even if the 'new' comics were not considered bad enough to be condemned as *paomashu*, there was still a belief that they needed significant improvement. In September 1951 the Cultural Bureau complained that most revolutionary *lianhuanhua* produced after 1949 focussed on stories about joining the army and guerrilla warfare against the Japanese. It complained there were not enough comics focussing on production and too many stories were repeats or were republications of pre-1949 stories (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951d).

The censors could at times be highly critical of comics which purported to support the revolution. For example, in May 1951 the Beijing People's Government News Publisher highlighted the 'issues' with one particular comic entitled *The Walking Hungry People* (*E ren xing*). This comic was condemned because although it depicted pre-1949 Shanghai as an unfair society and 'uses the idea of dawn as a metaphor for the new society,' it did not accurately describe 'what the new society should be and the way it should be achieved' (Beijing News Publisher 1951b). Meanwhile, Coal *(Mei*) a comic focussing on workers struggles in the Soviet Union was criticised for making them appear physically ugly (Chen 1952). At the same time, as chapter five will demonstrate, content that might seem more 'problematic' for the regime got through the censorship process. One area of *lianhuanhua* production with which Party-State agencies were satisfied was with was the emerging 'high quality' comics in newspapers (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). Periodicals such as *Worker Peasant Illustrated* (*Gongnong Huabao*) started incorporating *lianhuanhua* (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951f). Comic content in newspapers was easier to control and demarcate.

In 1952 Party-State agencies also sought to augment publishing after the iconoclasm of the *San fan wu fan*, when numbers had plummeted and at the same time improve the public image of new *lianhuanhua* (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). The Comic Committee was described as an 'a skeleton without flesh' (*kong gujia*), signifying that it still lacked strength, authority and ideological leadership (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). Concerns about a new *paomashu* developing persisted in the first half of the 1950s. In 1953 the Cultural Bureau (1953a) decided it needed to specifically check the comics published after 1949. Furthermore, the organisation *Lianlian* took up that call declaring 'we should fight against the *xin paomashu* and improve the quality of children's comics' (Lianlian Bookstore 1954).

Moreover, many people were still very un-enthusiastic about 'revolutionary' *lianhuanhua* and the Cultural Bureau feared that games, such as *kangle qiu* (similar to billiards, but with smaller round flat circles) were becoming a craze instead (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). *Lianhuanhua* were not the only medium which experienced issues in trying to attract audiences to propaganda. As Du has recently highlighted the *New Tabloids*, which replaced the banned Republican Tabloids,[57] had trouble catering for audience tastes. These tabloids needed to appeal to Shanghai urbanites to act as propaganda effectively, but the traditional style of entertainment and literature that attracted readers risked censorship (Du 2014, 108). Significantly, however, unlike 'revolutionary' *lianhuanhua* or *lianhuanhua* adaptations of 'traditional stories' which ultimately thrived, these New Tabloids quickly died out in the early PRC. Their eye-catching titles were problematic as they were liable to be misread and the tabloids could not compete with the broadsheets, such as *Xinhua*, due to their limited space (Du 2014, 111). In addition, the decline in serialised novels and classical poetry and the increase in columns on popular current affairs and social science alienated readers and this resulted in financial losses. As will be demonstrated, 'revolutionary' *lianhuanhua* continued to experience challenges in exciting audiences with CCP rhetoric, but they ultimately gained a strong foothold among the genres of *lianhuanhua*, alongside the ever-popular adaptations of traditional stories.

A Foreign and a National Medium

An analysis of the development of the medium in the early 1950s reveals two other key characteristics of *lianhuanhua* which differentiated the medium from other forms of political culture and were also important in its later development. Firstly, Party-State agencies learnt that *lianhuanhua* was essentially a 'foreign' medium to them, which needed 'special' treatment. Secondly, *lianhuanhua* was also an 'indigenous' medium, without an equivalent in the Soviet Union and therefore it was less subject to Soviet influence.

---

[57] These were systematically banned from April to May 1949.

Initially, the Party-State was convinced that *lianhuanhua* should be treated in the same way as *nianhua*. The Cultural Ministry stipulated that *lianhuanhua* and *nianhua* warranted the same organisational framework as they were similar enough in terms of characteristics and format and some artists producing *lianhuanhua* also produced *nianhua* (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951a). This was strange comparison to make given that *nianhua* prints were used to decorate houses and *lianhuanhua* constituted published books. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Culture issued a national report on literature and art (*quanguo wenxue yishu baogao*) and a major plan in 1951, in which they stipulated that that 'new *lianhuanhua* and new *nianhua* should be developed and the old *lianhuanhua* and *nianhua* should be transformed in the same way' (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951a).[58] The Party cultural bureaucracy was familiar with how to produce and use *nianhua* for propaganda purposes having used them extensively in the revolutionary base areas to disseminate their message to the peasant population (Flath 2004, 124). However, CCP cultural bureaucrats were very out of touch with *lianhuanhua* and the organisation of the industry. Therefore, they hoped the new medium was similar to the one they were already experienced in utilising, but they found this was not the case. Organisational issues, such as a lack of skilled artists, a lack of grass roots leadership and conflicting responsibilities plagued Party-State agencies establishing control over *lianhuanhua*, as well as the fact that *lianhuanhua*, unlike *nianhua*, were not taken up by the Art Academies. Furthermore, with the *paomashu* crisis the Party-State also came to appreciate the importance of instigating checking procedures and censorship over quantity, to a certain extent, in *lianhuanhua* production.

---

[58] It is clear that in general there were debates over how to define the new art forms. For *nianhua* themselves, Flath (2004, 124) argues that in 1950 a heated debate occurred over what constituted 'new *nianhua*,' which Tang (2015, 27) terms a 'hybrid visual object'.

In September 1952, the Cultural Bureau claimed that one of the key issues with comic book production in the preceding three years was that ‘we didn’t pay attention to the specificity of the comic work. We considered them alongside other art work’ (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). As chapter six will discuss, the bureau also demarcated *lianhuanhua* as separate from other artistic mediums by encouraging the incorporation of text. Recognising these differences between the mediums was highly important because in the later 1950s perceived differences between comic production and other media manifested itself in issues, such as the treatment of artists. The early years of *lianhuanhua* production taught Party-State agencies a lot about the uniqueness of *lianhuanhua* and that they would need to develop flexible and different ways of asserting control over it. These ways are further explored in the chapters on publishing, authorship and distribution.

Hung argues that one of the three key aspects of 1950s political culture was its tendency to emulate the Soviet Union. Artists focussed on producing Soviet-style oil paintings, while Soviet advisors influenced many other aspects of the cultural sphere, everything from city planning, to exhibitions and the construction of museums (Hung 2011, 18). In 1951 Zhou Yang, an ideological and cultural spokesperson for the Party stated that Socialist Realist works were ‘good at combining the reality of today with the ideals of tomorrow’ (Shen 2000, 180). A Socialist Realist picture is recognisable by its composition, including several larger highly detailed figures, which are often spotlighted with an artificial light (Liang 1988, 21). One prominent example is the eight reliefs on the National Monument in Tiananmen Square, which clearly evoke the highly emotive style of Socialist Realism: ‘a determined tilt of the head, clenched fists, fixed gaze and militant posture’ (Hung 2001, 470)**.**

Moreover, in the case of literature, writers were encouraged to produce Socialist Realism by representing life from the standpoint of Communist ideology, and combining the ‘reality’ of the day with the ideals of the future. In 1953 Zhou Yang, the vice-minister of culture and propaganda, stated ‘follow the path of the Russians – it is so in politics, and it is also so in literature’ (King 2013, 47). Later that year, Zhou extended his praise of Socialist Realism in culture to incorporate film. The policy was particularly intensive from 1953 and the advent of the Five Year Economic Development Plan in 1957 (Andrews 1994, 110). In general during this period the Soviet Union also provided technical expertise to China.

However, in the case of the *lianhuanhua* publishing industry the Soviet Union had a much lesser influence. *Lianhuanhua* did adapt stories from the Soviet Union as will be discussed in chapter five. However, there is no indication that the Soviet style impacted on the artistry of *lianhuanhua* to the extent that indigenous forms were driven out, as happened in the case of *guohua*. The artistic style of *lianhuanhua* is discussed more thoroughly in chapter six. Moreover, the Soviet advisors did not affect how the industry was organised. This occurred for two reasons. Firstly, from the outset Soviet-inspired art was particularly prevalent in the Academies, from which, this chapter has already established, *lianhuanhua* production was largely removed. Secondly, a *komik* industry had not developed in the Soviet Union itself because the medium was seen as having vestiges of the ‘old society’ and was also linked to Western mass media and popular culture (Alaniz 2010, 4). Therefore, apart from adapting some Soviet literature, there was little for CCP Party-State agencies to emulate in the organisation of the *lianhuanhua* industry.

The Nationalisation of the Publishing Houses

There were in excess of 70 small and large publishing houses producing *lianhuanhua* in 1949, among them the East Publisher (*Dongya Shuju*), the Mandarin Publisher (*Wenhua Shuju*), the Taixing Publisher (*Taixing Shuju*) and the Global Publisher (*Quanqiu Shuju*) (Cheng 2011, 39). Private publishing thrived before 1952 (Du 2014, 116). However, in 1952 two large publishing houses were established which produced *lianhuanhua*, namely the Party-State-run East China People's Arts Press (which became the SPFAPH in 1954) and the 'quasi-private' New Art Press. The New Art Press absorbed the artists of many previously private publishers, many who went on to garner national acclaim, such as He Youzhi[59] and was led by Zhao Hongben. The 'quasi-private' News Art Press was established to produce *lianhuanhua* exclusively and had a board of trustees; however, it shared its director with the Party-State Press and its paper was supplied by the government and also the books were distributed through *Xinhua* (Andrews 1994, 72). The 20 artists working at the New Art Press were able to produce *lianhuanhua* drawings at a much faster rate than the academically trained graduates, who had not necessarily specialised in *lianhuanhua* and who had been assigned to the government publisher. The artists working at the New Art Press were continually able to exceed government targets of one finished drawing per day. Receiving both a monthly wage and a wage for finishing projects, they were thus able to attain high levels of affluence in the early 1950s, to the extent that some of their wives supposedly did not have to work (Andrews 1994, 73).

By 1953 the Party-State was beginning to instil tighter control over the private publishing houses in general and *Xinhua* was restricted from buying publications from them without first examining their content (Du 2014, 116). An important development for the *lianhuanhua* industry in 1954 was that *Lianlian* bookstore organisation, which had been taking a lead role in the dissemination of *lianhuanhua* (discussed in chapter seven), was given a more authoritative role in the industry, not just in terms of distribution, but in terms of overseeing developments in the industry. In May 1954 the *Lianlian* bookstore organisation stipulated that from then on it would hold conferences and seminars in every season to assess the progress of the *lianhuanhua* publishing industry. This was intended to act as a reference for artists, publishers and others involved in *lianhuanhua* production and provide an organisational function (Lianlian Bookstore 1954).

---

[59] He Youzhi garnered acclaim early on for his 1952 comic about armed revolution, *The Struggle on the Train* (*Huoche Shang de Douzheng*).

The first conference in May 1954 discussed three issues: the genres of comic available, their numbers and their binding and layout. *Lianlian* concluded that the 45 comics in its sample were severely divided in terms of quality, but with the majority consisting of 'mediocre' work (Lianlian Bookstore 1954). However, a particular point of concern about these comics was the persistence of low-level historical stories focussing on the peasant revolution and Soviet folktales, such as *The Magic Ring*.[60] These were critiqued because it was said their comic creators lacked knowledge of 'real' life' (Lianlian Bookstore 1954). The offshoot of these poorly produced stories of the revolution and adaptations of Soviet stories attracting criticism was that classical tales and folk tales were brought in to replace them, which 'did not serve the requirements of the current political situation' (Lianlian Bookstore 1954).

The conference also highlighted the importance of artists and publishers keeping up-to-date with developments in political culture in general, with particular reference to operas. Reflecting on the earlier 1951 case of the comic *Living Buddha*, *Lianlian* stated 'we need to improve quality and be careful in dealing with operas, which have not yet been dealt with and given a judgement on' (Lianlian Bookstore 1954). The conference concluded that of foremost importance for *lianhuanhua* publishing in general was to have a clear plan for selecting texts for adaptation, as the editors (*bianji gongzuoren*) were so far not up to it. *Lianlian* did not at this point recommend specific titles but merely stipulated publishing houses should focus on not producing adaptations of classical novels. Issues over quality stretched to form as well as content and included problems with the layout, front cover, artistic composition and colour. Pages were also irregularly sized, out of order, not clearly printed and often in need of proofreading. Publishers were lauded for immediately throwing away badly printed comics. Furthermore, in order to simulate the idea that the public were involved in the decision making process, *Lianlian* allegedly collected 'readers' comments' and these were put forward in the Third Congress of Shanghai (Lianlian Bookstore 1954).

---

[60] This was one of the Soviet 'magic tales,' which were allegorical in nature. The ring in the story is a symbol of the scientific tasks which a group of polar explorers have to solve (Oinas 1975, 169).

In 1954 the Beijing News Publisher was still concerned that Beijing not replicate, as they saw it, Shanghai's mistakes and leave an opportunity for 'speculators' in the publishing houses to take advantage of the situation (Beijing News Publisher 1954). In order to eliminate the problem at the source, the News Publisher highlighted publishers such as the Dynasty Publishing House (*Wangjia Chubanshe*) who had allegedly been caught publishing 'bad' content and asked them to send samples of their comics to be scrutinised and categorised.[61] Thereafter, Wangjia's comic sales and stocks were monitored monthly (Beijing News Publisher 1954). Furthermore, the *Lianhuanhua* Comic Forum (*Lianhuanhua zuotanhui jilu zhai*) in Beijing noted that some 'bad' comics had been identified in Shanghai and critiqued in *The People's Daily.* However, the publishers of these comics were located in Hong Kong or Taiwan and therefore could not be cracked down on directly. The forum declared its job was to keep a lookout for these kinds of comics and handle any in circulation (Beijing News Publisher 1954).

---

[61] I don't have any examples from this particular set of 'bad' comics, but chapter five goes into detail on the kind of content which was censored and how.

At the same time, in Beijing there were issues over how to make Socialist content exciting. The report tellingly found that new *lianhuanhua* lacked excitement and 'don't tell very interesting stories and the content is poor' (Beijing News Publisher 1954). The content was deemed to be monotonous, but conforming to our 'educational' principals. Liu Xun, an artist for the People's Fine Arts Publishing House in Beijing, complained in *Meishu* that comics focussing on industrial spirit and agricultural production were 'dull and formulaic' and that real life was much richer than that portrayed in the comics:

> When someone reads the beginning, he or she can guess the ending. Most stories are about workers who work hard to put others first and invent a new machine or improve a technique (Liu 1954).

Liu called for more adaptations of literature by Lu Xun and other May Fourth writers. In terms of style, he complained that the characters were too stereotypical and that the artistry and written scripts were poor as *lianhuanhua* producers were too rushed.[62] Conversely, the government-led publishing houses recognised that 'old comics' included various climaxes and peaks and troughs in the action and were therefore more entertaining to read (Beijing News Publisher 1954). The News Publisher's report stipulated that in the future children's fairy tales (*tonghua*) should be adapted into *lianhuanhua* to make them more attractive to their readership. This allowance was based on the precondition that they conform to propaganda principles (Beijing News Publisher 1954).

---

[62] It must be noted Liu was not suggesting doing away with 'revolutionary *lianhuanhua*,' in fact he advocated producing more comics about Mao in particular, just ones which focussed on his day to day life, rather than heroic achievements.

In addition, in 1954 a policy of trying to produce traditional stories or at least not actively discourage their adaptation into *lianhuanhua* was issued. Liu Xun (1954) stated: 'We have not paid sufficient attention to some historical subjects and these stories have passed through the baptism of time and solidified the excellent qualities of the Chinese people--their bravery, diligence, kindness and modesty.' At the same time, *lianhuanhua* publishers actively sought to produce historical narratives, taken from Chinese classical literature, myths and folktales. The staff at the New Art Press were reorganised into four groups specialising in propaganda campaigns, children's literature, translated literature and classical literature (Andrews 1994, 129). Particularly popular was Zhu Guangyu's (1928-) *Havoc in the Heavenly Palace (Da nao tian gong)*. By 1960, 1 million 519 thousand copies of the comic had been produced (SPFAPH 1960b). The comic published in 1956 pre-dated the highly popular and influential animated films, the first part of which was released in 1961 and the second part in 1964 (both parts of the film were screened together for the first time in 1965). However, the film was in the pipeline by the mid-1950s and it is probable that the *lianhuanhua* was released while the animation was in production to bring the Monkey King back into the cultural agenda, in the same way that comics were released prior to films during the Republican era.

However, the policy of actively encouraging traditional-style *lianhuanhua* to be produced did not last for long and attacks were launched on publishers for producing too many of them in 1955 and 1956. This move against traditional *lianhuanhua* was ostensibly the result of the meeting of the Sixth Plenum of the Seventh Central Committee, which critiqued 'rightest tendencies' (Andrews 1994, 130). At the same time, the private publishers still producing *lianhuanhua* were gradually assimilated into the New Art Press and by 1955 the New Art Press employed 126 artists and writers and published ten new *lianhuanhua* a week (Andrews 1994, 129). However, by 1956 the Shanghai publishing industry and thus the *lianhuanhua* press had been completely nationalised and the New Art Press subsumed into the SPFAPH (Andrews 1997, 28).[63] The effects of nationalisation on the *lianhuanhua* artists themselves and the emerging dominance of the SPFAPH is discussed in chapter six.

Conclusion

Chapter two analysed the development of *lianhuanhua* during the Republican era and concluded that the CCP had little contact with the comics during the Civil War. Despite this, *lianhuanhua's* accessibility in terms of vocabulary and imagery, ease of mass reproduction and popular appeal ensured that the Party-State recognised the medium's potential as a source of propaganda in the early 1950s. In particular, *lianhuanhua* were key in connecting with urban audiences, whom the Party-State had little experience of governing, and fulfilled Mao's twin policies of popularising literature whilst also inculcating Party rhetoric.

However, although the medium was envisaged as a form of propaganda from the outset, it was institutionalised more slowly than other media. This was because *lianhuanhua* was under the auspices of the civil administration and was separated from other artistic institutions. This had implications for the styles that artists adopted in the early 1950s and the ways in which artists were trained and employed. In addition, there was a lack of funding and personnel and the transformation of the publishing industry constituted an 'experimental process'. Publishing houses were supposed to self-censor, but many producers of *lianhuanhua* were not sure what the actual rules were and who should be doing the censoring. Moreover, because *lianhuanhua* were essentially a 'foreign medium' for the CCP, the Cultural Bureau initially made mistakes in assuming that the medium could be treated in a similar way to other cultural forms, which the Party had experience of successfully utilising during the 1930s and 1940s. At the same time, the medium was indigenous to China and Party-State agencies could not take the lead from Soviet advisors in how *lianhuanhua* should be produced. Thus from 1949 to 1956, Party-State agencies sought to continually redefine what *lianhuanhua* was and how the comics could be regulated.

---

[63] By 1956 all private publishing houses had stopped operating or had been incorporated into joint Party-State entities. Licences for private publishers were withheld and they were refused bank loans. Party-State officials were assigned to lead joint private-public publishing houses, private shares were transferred and so were the majority of employees (Du 2014, 116).

The banning of the *paomashu* was a turning point in the way in which the *lianhuanhua* publishing industry was permitted to operate because it was a deliberate reaction against the speedy publishing which had characterised Republican *lianhuanhua*. These rapidly published texts could not be adequately checked and therefore misconceptions of Party policy were either purposefully or accidently circulating. However, the Cultural Bureau also complained that revolutionary comics were not popular with audiences and instead emphasised the artistry, style and language, hoping to build up readership. Later in 1954, Party-State agencies again expressed concern that 'revolutionary' *lianhuanhua* were failing to attract audiences as they were too formulaic. Ultimately, *lianhuanhua* needed to be 'reading for the masses' (*dazhong duwu*) and to engage and attract the public (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951a). This was the rhetoric used to describe culture in general, but in *lianhuanhua's* case it was particularly important as individuals chose to buy or rent the comics in their leisure time.

In the early 1950s, there was tension between *lianhuanhua* as a popular form of culture which would attract a readership, and *lianhuanhua* as a form of ideological tutorship that fulfilled Party propaganda initiatives. Ultimately, *lianhuanhua* was able to function as both and thrived before the Cultural Revolution. The subsequent chapters go into detail about *lianhuanhua's* role as a form of propaganda and how the Party combatted comics labelled poisonous. However, contrary to what we might expect to be the case in early socialist China, content labelled at best ‘un-educational’ and at worst ‘harmful’ was not eradicated with the dismantling of the private publishing industry and continued to circulate in urban areas right up until 1966.

Chapter 4: ‘A Weapon for Education and Propaganda’ in the ‘Combat Zone’

Introduction

In 1960 the SPFAPH (1960b) claimed in a report that ‘art is a combat zone where two ideologies battle [each other] and sometimes the battle is also very intense’. For Party-State agencies and publishing houses involved in the production and administration of *lianhuanhua* this ‘battle’ manifested itself in the continuous push to promote propaganda comics over content labelled poisonous. This chapter explores how these agencies sought to carve out a propaganda function for what, prior to 1949, had been a form of popular culture.

With its ideological grounding and dogmatic rhetoric, there is no doubt that Chinese Communist political culture in general constituted a ‘propaganda tool’ and was intended to instruct (Hung 2001, 5). The SPFAPH (1960b) voiced this sentiment in regard to *lianhuanhua,* claiming that ‘comics are read widely by workers, farmers, soldiers and children and therefore have a strong social impact. Consequently, directives should focus on how they can be used for educational purposes.’ Broadly speaking *lianhuanhua*, as envisaged by the Party-State, were intended to encourage these readers to work hard to build an ‘idealised Communist society’ (SPFAPH 1960b) (termed ‘real life’/*Xianshi Shenghuo*). King (2013, 48) notes that this focus on ‘reality’ is not about the portrayal of the realities of the moment, but is instead a focus on a supposedly near-at-hand Socialist future and engages in a form of myth making and romanticism.

In this context, *lianhuanhua* shared three ‘educational’ functions. Firstly, there was a direct link between comic reading and literacy campaigns. Secondly, *lianhuanhua* were published to support specific political campaigns.[64] Thirdly, and perhaps most frequently, *lianhuanhua* contributed to teaching Party history and in an 'entertaining' way propagated tales of CCP heroics during the anti-Japanese War. This narrative was intended to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of CCP rule, when the nation was economically fragile and isolated globally.

In this chapter, I discuss the three primary 'educational' functions described above and the unique ways in which *lianhuanhua* contributed to propaganda discourses. However, I also discuss the unique challenges that publishing *lianhuanhua* posed in terms of keeping abreast of constantly changing political discourses. Moreover, I analyse the issues publishing houses faced in adapting content from other media. In general, this chapter provides a point of contrast to chapter five where I analyse the censorship of *lianhuanhua*.

'Eliminate Illiteracy'

In the early 1950s, the Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1952a) stipulated that one of the key goals for *lianhuanhua* should be to play a role in 'eliminating illiteracy' (*saomang*). As early as 1932 Mao Dun had described how reading *lianhuanhua* could contribute to building literacy (Mao 1932). Party-State agencies in the PRC were quick to recognise this potential and to call for *lianhuanhua* to be adapted to better fulfil this goal. The Cultural Bureau (1952a) claimed 'workers have to learn a large number of characters very quickly – 2000 characters in two months – and we need to support this'. Pre-1949 comics were seen to use too sophisticated a vocabulary and were therefore argued to be not conducive to learning for those with a limited written vocabulary. Instead the vast numbers of new *lianhuanhua* were directed to include simple, continuously repeating vocabulary (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). In conjunction with this, the language and grammar in *lianhuanhua* was expected to avoid long sentences, clichés and dialectal language and the images aligned closely with the text so the comic was easier to understand (Jiang 1956a). This use of simple sentence structures and language can be seen in the set up for *The White Haired Girl*. In the first frame the reader learns the location of the story and the villains of the piece are identified in three short sentences: ‘This story did not happen long ago, it occurred in 1935. In Hebei province there is a village, outside the village there is an area for crop growing. All of this belonged to the local despots, the Huang family and every month, all year round, the peasants were forced to labour for Huang family’ (Appendix Figure 13).

---

[64] In this case, it must be noted that the parameters of what was considered instructive shifted with changing campaigns and thus so did the definition of 'educational' *lianhuanhua*.

The propagation of *lianhuanhua* for literacy purposes began in the early 1950s with the establishment of libraries in schools and factories and continued well into the 1950s and 1960s, eventually spreading out to the countryside reading programmes described in chapter seven. In 1958 the SPFAPH edited ten existing comics for the purposes of turning them into a series which could be used specifically to improve literacy in Shanghai. This was considered a substantial undertaking and worthy of being titled a new publishing initiative. The comic’s size had to be enlarged, the text written in vernacular Chinese, and bold typeface and pinyin were utilised (SPFAPH 1958a). Subsequently, the SPFAPH (1960b) created the *Study Culture Series* (*Xue wenhua congshu)* and the *Study Culture Using Simple Words Series* (*Xue wenhua xiao hua ku*) to teach the illiterate to read with pinyin and comply with a concurrent literacy campaign. In 1962 the inclusion of pinyin on the flyleaf of each *lianhuanhua* was made mandatory in line with a notification from the People’s Republic of China Culture and Chinese Character Revolutionary Committee (SPFAPH 1962a). However, in general the incorporation of pinyin throughout was a hallmark of younger children's[65] *lianhuanhua.* The watercolour *lianhuanhua* for children entitled *The Lights of Yan'an* (*Yan'an de denghuo*) by He Youzhi and Zhao Hongben (1965) incorporated pinyin to help with children's reading, for example (Appendix Figure Six). Unsurprisingly, comics inevitably encouraged literacy, while simultaneously celebrating the CCP and political and social campaigns. In He Youzhi's (1960, 37) *An Immortal Life (Buxiu de shengming)* a group of students are taught to read, and the narrative states 'very quickly studying literacy becomes a political propaganda activity' (Appendix Figure 3). This double purpose is replicated in the content and function of *lianhuanhua* themselves.

'A Weapon for Education and Propaganda'

In a wider sense, cultural discourses supported political campaigns and social programmes and *lianhuanhua* were an important part of this (Shen 2000, 157). In June 1951 a Shanghai Cultural Bureau report (1951e) declared that the improvement of *lianhuanhua* constituted a top priority because they were 'a weapon for education and propaganda'. *Lianhuanhua* were disseminated for the purposes of propagating specific foreign policy initiatives and mass socio-political campaigns.

These campaigns relied on popular participation. Strauss (2006, 898) argues that it was the CCP's confidence that a broad section of society would support and get involved in its policies and its initiatives during the implementation of these campaigns, which set it apart from other single-Party-States. With their status as a form of popular culture, *lianhuanhua* played a key role in connecting with and mobilising firstly urban audiences in the 1950s and increasingly rural audiences in the 1960s. *Lianhuanhua* could detail the specifics of the political campaign, while at the same time allowing readers to follow characters' personal development and experiences. In this way, *lianhuanhua* could both humanise campaigns and provide models for readers. This section discusses the role of *lianhuanhua* in some particularly prominent campaigns and the implications of this; however, it is by no means an exhaustive assessment of the role they played in mobilisation campaigns.

---

[65] While most *lianhuanhua* titles were aimed at a broad audience of youth and adults, particular genres focussed specifically on younger children. For example, during the Great Leap Forward, a new genre of *lianhuanhua* emerged. These were a series of small concertina style *lianhuanhua* (*xiao xiao lianhuanhua*) published by the People's Fine Arts Publishing House in Beijing for preschool children. They had concise text and incorporated songs about rural production (*The People's Daily* 1959a).

One of the first mass campaigns to use *lianhuanhua* extensively was the 'Resist America, Support Korea' campaign, to which great swathes of propaganda art were devoted from 1951 to 1953 (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951c). Going to war with America over Korea was substantially risky for the young PRC Party-State. The 'Resist America, Support Korea' propaganda campaign was initiated to explicate the reasons for the war, mobilise support and allay public fears of an American victory (Rawnsley 2009, 286). Rawnsley (2009, 308) argues the campaign was highly sophisticated and was ultimately successful because it was able to integrate different forms of communication, respond to changing circumstances, provide clear themes and images, and draw on uniquely Chinese techniques to propagate its messages. As a key indigenous art form with popular appeal, *lianhuanhua* were co-opted for this purpose.

In 1951, the Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1951h) declared that although the overall campaign had thus far been successful, in order to further disseminate rhetoric about the war *lianhuanhua* needed to be more heavily utilised because they had such a broad appeal. In that year alone, more than 1500 comics were circulated (alongside 5338 *manhua*) to support the war effort. The Comic Committee later concluded that *lianhuanhua* about the Korean War had, for the most part, been a success in supporting propaganda work and they estimated that these comics accounted for 60% of the comics emerging at the time (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951f).

The virulently anti-imperialist sentiment of the time was reflected in *lianhuanhua* such as *Revenge the Children Who Died at the Hands of the Bloody Imperialists* (*Wei Cansi Zai Diguo Zhuyi Xue Shou Xi De Ertong Fuchou*). The short story shows children in an orphanage owned by foreign nuns who are beaten (sometimes to death) and starved.

> When the children arrive they are put in a cellar for a day, if they don't die they are baptised….The house is damp, when the children are ill there is no medicine, most of the children have pneumonia, and eat rotten food…The dead children are dropped into a well…In one year three wells were filled, 2216 children arrived, and only 48 lived (*Lianhuanhuabao* 1951a, 15).

The graphic images also show children dying with insects crawling all over them. Myers (2010) references stories similar to this circulating in North Korea at the same time, including one in which an American soldier injects a Korean child with germs. This suggests that such stories were not unique to China, but that the conflict in Korea engendered some significant interactions in terms of tropes and narratives.

However, the Committee also argued that these kinds of comics needed to be changed as 'there are too many which review the violent behaviour of the Americans and not enough on the resistance' (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951f). These *lianhuanhua* were not in line with the principal themes of the propaganda effort, which were to promote the idea that China was fighting a 'just cause,' that the Chinese forces outnumbered the American forces and that their morale and the morale of the North Korean troops was higher than that of the Americans (Rawnsley 2009, 205). The comics were also said to have done an excellent job of demonising the enemy, but not doing enough to build morale and belief in victory for China and North Korea. For example, *A North Korean Auntie's Devotion* (*Chaoxian laodaniang de re'ai)* was critiqued in a letter to the editor of *The People's Daily* (1952b) for 'depicting a Korean women willing to endure insult at the hands of the American invaders in order to save her father'.[66] The letter complained that the 'heroic Korean people, through this author's pen, become tame and weak. There is no struggle or courage, and they lack national integrity' (*The People's Daily* 1952b).

Conversely, standout *lianhuanhua* to emerge during the campaign, which were widely praised, such as *Korean Anger* (*Kangmeiyuanchao de nuhuo*) Comics such as this supposedly 'revealed the cruelty of the American capitalists, but also more importantly given the criticisms made of other comics by the Committee, 'eulogised the brave fight of the Chinese and Koreans against the enemy' (SPFAPH 1959f). *Korea's Anger* was one of the ten exemplary comics awarded in 1951 (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). By November 1951, 55,000 copies of this title had been printed.

However, after the war had ended, *lianhuanhua* about the conflict continued to emerge and publishers were critiqued for not keeping up with changes and for continuing to produce war propaganda in a time of peace (Andrews 1994, 129). This is an early indication of the difficulties the *lianhuanhua* industry had in keeping up with changes in policy because they took longer to produce than other forms of propaganda and printed media, such as posters[67] and *nianhua*. Hua Junwu (1951) complained about this, stating that as *lianhuanhua* were longer and took more time to publish production could not respond to changes in campaigns in a timely manner. As chapter six will discuss, the magazine *Lianhuanhuabao* was created to partially fill in the gap and link the medium to campaigns.

---

[66] The issue of women's treatment at the hands of the enemy was sensitive. An article in *The People's Daily* (1952b) criticised a comic about the revolutionary war stating that the author's approach to the subject matter of a Chinese women being raped by a Japanese solider was too 'subjective' (*keguan de*). However, the author does not give any other information about the comic or why it was considered subjective.

[67] For example, Shen (2000, 195) argues posters were an instantaneous expression of Party policy and could reflect the smallest changes in the thinking of the Party leadership.

In fact, *lianhuanhua's* occasional inability to provide timely commentary on current events was one of the significant aspects which differentiated it from *manhua*. Rapidly produced *manhua* could act as a direct commentary on current events, reminding the reader of ongoing foreign conflicts and mass campaigns (Hung 2011, 14). Altehenger (2013, 80) argues that this commentary on current events was ultimately *manhua*'s downfall in the 1950s because cartoonists found it impossible to engage in satire and critique with the controls placed on them by the ever-expanding cultural bureaucracy. In contrast, *lianhuanhua* continued to increase in popularity and to be published in greater numbers. *Lianhuanhua* were entertaining stories with a serious political message, which focussed on building Party legitimacy through recounting heroic war stories (discussed in the next section). Therefore, while the medium might sometimes be 'behind the times' as far as keeping up with policy was concerned, it had an on-going function in Party-State discourses throughout the 'seventeen years' beyond a focus on concurrent campaigns and events alone.

The Korean War was not the last time *lianhuanhua* played a role in propagating foreign policy discourses, however. In the mid-1960s a series of *lianhuanhua* were released about American actions in Vietnam by the People's Fine Arts Publishing House in Beijing. The *Southern Anger* (*Nanfang nuhuo*) was praised by *The People's Daily* (1965b) and told a story of North Vietnamese forces cooperating with guerrillas in the south to destroy a strategic American base. At the same time, small concertina-style *lianhuanhua* were introduced for younger children with titles such as *Our Vietnamese Brothers Are Really Great* (*Yuenan gege zhenshi bang*) and *The Vietnamese Little Girl* (*Yuenan xiao guniang*) (*The People's Daily* 1965b).

Lianhuanhua were also used to delineate new social policies. The comics were regarded as particularly powerful in propagating social policies because, through reading about a character's development, audiences could supposedly make associations with their own lives and gain a deeper understanding of Party rhetoric. Early examples of this medium of comic include those published during the Land Reform campaign from 1950 to 1953, such as *Zhao Baiwan*[68]*(Zhao Baiwan)* and *Land* (*Tudi*). These two comics depicted the 'feudal' land system as cruel and eulogised the new lives of the farmers who had fought against it (SPFAPH 1959f).

One of the other social campaigns to make early use of *lianhuanhua* widely was the campaign for the 'New Marriage Law'. In March 1953 a directive from the Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department of Public Utilities (*Zhonggong Shanghaishi gongyong shiye weiyuanhui xuanchuanbu*) and the Marriage Office detailed how to use *lianhuanhua*, propaganda posters and films to prevent the issuance of 'misleading and 'incorrect' information about the 'New Marriage Law'. The directive suggested which comic titles could be used for this purpose, including *Marriage Registration*, (*Jiehun dengji*), *A Happy Couple* (*Yi dui meiman fufu*), *Wang Baoling Gets Married* (*Wang Baoling jiehun*) and the 'famous and popular' *Xiao Erhei Gets Married* (*Xiao Erhei jiehun*) (Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department of Public Utilities 1953).**[69]** The comic entitled *An Image of the Marriage Law* (*Hunyinfa Tujie*) proved particularly popular and 20 million copies were distributed (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952).

Two other titles were specially celebrated in *The People's Daily*: *Bao Tonghua* (*Bao Tonghua*) and *Reunion* (*Tuanyuan*). *Bao Tonghua* was described as one of the better propaganda works about the Marriage Law in circulation because it supposedly paid close attention to the 'psychological change' experienced by women and men in coming to grips with the new law (*The People's Daily* 1953). *Reunion* was praised for its so-called abandonment of the ‘one size fits all model’ of focussing on young people’s experiences and instead focussed on an elderly couple. The couple go to register under the new system and a flashback tells of how they suffered under the old regime, when their marriage was not official and the landlord bullied them. Another comic used images to clearly demonstrate that a husband should not file for divorce when his wife was pregnant, by showing a woman with a pregnant belly and a man in front of a judge, who stretches out his arm to give the man a firm gesture of denial (Chen 2011, 48).

---

[68] *Zhao Baiwan* was considered a particularly exemplary example of this genre of comic and appeared in one of the first exhibitions on *lianhuanhua*, discussed in chapter seven (Cheng 2011, 28).

[69] The comic adapation of *Xiao Erhei Gets Married* was based on the famous 1943 folk literary short story by Zhao Shuli (1906-1970) of the same name.

Lianhuanhua were also featured in denunciation campaigns. Hu Feng was targeted as a counter-revolutionary and detained by the CCP leadership in 1955 because he had objected strongly to the politicisation of art. He criticised the revolutionary romanticism which Mao seemed to have been advocating in his Yan’an talks, and instead called for literature which was more in touch with the real lived experiences of those it talked about (Denton 1996, 407). The campaign against Hu Feng extended to all cultural domains, with *manhua* artists in particular taking the lead in satirical attacks (Galikowski 1998 46). In this vein, a *lianhuanhua* was published at the time detailing Hu’s alleged crimes entitled *The Crimes of the Hu Feng Counter-revolutionary Group* (*Hu feng fangeming jituan de zuixing*) (*The People’s Daily* 1955).

In 1959 a joint meeting of the Cultural Bureau, the Education Bureau, the Writers Association, and the Propaganda Bureau affirmed ‘that comics should continue to be an educational weapon for the Party’s propaganda’ (SPFAPH 1959f). In particular, there was an out pouring of *lianhuanhua* during the Collectivisation campaign and the Great Leap Forward. Galikowski (1998, 82) states more generally that the emphasis in cultural production during the Great Leap was on quantity. In this context, *lianhuanhua* production was linked to campaigns such as the ‘Three Red Banners’ (*Sanmian Hongqi*), which called for people to build socialism and participate in the communes (SPFAPH 1960b). The CCP central government issued a directive that the comics should reflect policy issues, concerning the rural communes and ‘should emphasise the pioneers and their achievements in agricultural production’ (SPFAPH 1960b). Notably, the SPFAPH (1959f) published *Lao Sun Returns to the Commune (Lao sun gui she)*, which focussed on the farmers’ path towards collectivisation under the leadership of the Party. Likewise, later in 1961 SPFAPH published two ten-book series (*huaku*) entitled *The People’s Communes Are Good* (*Renmin gongshe hao*) and *The Pioneers of the Agricultural Frontline* (*Nongye zhanxian de jianbing*). Both of these, the publishing house was confidently assured, would be ‘welcomed by the peasants’ (SPFAPH 1960b).

The influence of these *lianhuanhua* in celebrating the triumphs of the workers and ultimately on production was also proudly claimed by the SPFAPH. The publishing house alleged that after reading *A Leap Factory (Yige yuejin de gongchang*) the workers at the National Cotton Number 7 Factory said ‘We are praised by the comics so we will work harder to fulfil the People’s expectations’ (SPFAPH 1960b). Meanwhile, in his article in *The People’s Daily* the famous painter Rou Jianshen (1960), professed that factory workers were inspired to create a new record in steel making and recapture the red flag after reading *The Good News No One Accepted* (*Mei ren jieshou de xibao*). According to Rou, *lianhuanhua* were expected to provide an advisory function.

Whether workers glorified the comics and attributed particular titles as directly influencing them is highly questionable. However, stories about workers and production featured particularly heavily in *lianhuanhua* and comics were critiqued for showing the ‘unreal’ situation of the workers. In 1960 the SPFAPH (1960b) proclaimed that comics ‘should better express…our workers fighting spirit (*douzhi angyang*) and vigorously develop socialism’. In this vein comics were expected to glorify model workers. Subsequently, during the ‘Learn from Lei Feng Campaign’ *The People’s Daily* (1963a) praised *lianhuanhua* artists for producing material about him for newspapers and the People’s Fine Arts Publishing House.

While *lianhuanhua* were published in support of campaigns, at times their existence was short-lived, and they were critiqued, edited, replaced or banned. Comics about Korea, which continued to be published even after the war had ended, were an early example of this. However, this case is particularly evident with the comics produced during the Great Leap Forward. As King (2007, 9) suggests, literature during the Great Leap ‘romanced’ Party policy. The desperate reality could not have been further from the exaggerated stories of bountiful harvests, heroic feats of productive endeavour and targets exceeded. By 1961 the economy was on the verge of total collapse and the Great Leap policy was reversed by Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping and others. *Lianhuanhua* which had been produced during the period were now seen as outmoded and out of touch with current policy. This was a problem for all propaganda, but as I have already demonstrated, this was a particular problem for *lianhuanhua* because of the slow speed of production. Party-State agencies were also under pressure to deal with the comics already in circulation about the Great Leap and these were either adapted to fit the new rhetoric or banned.[70]

One significant example of a story which emerged during the Great Leap but survived and was later adapted is the tale of *Li Shuangshuang*. The two most famous comic adaptations of the story, which also optimise the changing political discourses, were produced by Hua Sanchuan and He Youzhi. The novel, *A Biography of Li Shuangshuang* published in 1959, was the most widely read work of fiction of the Great Leap period (King 2013, 71). The two subsequent *lianhuanhua* adaptations by Hua and He respectively were based on the novel and a 1962 film (*The People's Daily* 1963a). In the story the heroine spiritedly argues for the inclusion of women as a productive force in the commune. However, the pivotal role of women is different in the film and the novel versions of the story. In the 1959 version, Shuangshuang passionately endorses the communal kitchens. However, as the communal kitchens were a short-lived and disastrous policy, in the film version she instead focusses on the equitable distribution of work points (King 2013, 72). Hua Sanchuan produced a serialised version of the story for *Lianhuanhuabao* in 1960, which was closely based on the original novel. In this version Shuangshuang while working in the canteen develops a special kind of noodle to feed the commune, which she names for the Great Leap. This plot line is absent from He Youzhi's (1964a) later comic version, where the emphasis is no longer on the canteen and producing food, and much more on the marital relationship between Shuangshuang and Xiwang played out against a backdrop of idyllic rural surroundings. Stylistically the two comics differ too, with Hua's bold and simple lines contrasting strongly with He's very detailed fine line drawing. Hua's style was common of Great Leap cultural products which had to be finished at speed (King 2013, 89).

---

[70] As I will show in chapter eight, agencies often failed to actually remove these banned texts from circulation.

While the story of *Li Shuangshuang* was able to adapt to fit new Party dictates, other *lianhuanhua* from the Great Leap period were summarily banned. For example, in September 1959 the SPFAPH (1959b) was banned from continuing to print the two comics *Shanghai Waves* (*Shanghai de langhua*) and *A Tortuous Struggle (Yi chang wuxing de douzheng)*, or from releasing the copies of these it held, because they propagated gigantism. These policies were then out of favour and consequently the two *lianhuanhua* were attacked for engaging in 'exaggeration:'

> *Shanghai Waves* describes last year's competition for production within factories. They wanted quantity over quality. This is not a good way to handle production…The upper

> levels stipulated it should not be re-published and we did not release the 60,000 books that had already been printed (SPFAPH 1959b).

Meanwhile, *A Tortuous Struggle* was lambasted for ‘promoting the planting of 6000 seeds per *mu’* (SPFAPH 1959b). At that point, this did not marry with the Central Government’s more measured principals for agricultural production. In addition, the comic apparently erred in discouraging young people from communicating with the farmers and separating farmers into two groups, which was also considered problematic at the time as it might encourage elitism (SPFAPH 1959b).

Changes in policy, however, were not always immediately reflected in the content of all the comics available or their censorship. For example, although *Six, Seven, Eight* (*Liu qi ba*) depicted three children producing unrealistic amounts of crops and was produced during the Great Leap Forward it was not banned until 1965 (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). In 1965 the *Lianhuanhua* Review Group (*Lianhuanhua shendu zu*) labelled the comic ‘outdated’ and ‘going against the principal policies of the CCP’ and stated that the comic should be collected and disposed of by the City People’s Committee Culture and Education Office (*Shi ren wei wenjiao bangongshi*). Similarly, *Treading Shuangfeng Mountain* (*Taping shuangfeng shan*) depicted a commune with ‘militarised management and agricultural production like combat’ that was also to be collected at the same time, but this was six years after other comics in the same vein had been banned (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). As will be explored in more detail in the next chapter on censorship, the process in itself was therefore fairly ad hoc.

Additionally, other forms of political culture, such as novels, plays, cinema and *manhua* with similar subjects went out of fashion with changing campaigns. However, *lianhuanhua* were distinctive in that recalling the comics already in circulation was more difficult. Plays could be removed from the large theatres set up by the Party-State to house them (Dolby 1976, 233). Films could simply be taken off screens. *Manhua* were primarily produced in newspapers or displayed on blackboards in factories and schools, so they too were easier to regulate (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1959g). Meanwhile, propaganda posters were highly visible and easy to take down from public places. In contrast to all of these other mediums, however, comics were much more difficult to remove from circulation due to the limits of the Party-State control over the grass roots distribution network (discussed in chapter eight). Hence these comics could become an enduring reminder of the shifting nature of CCP doctrine. The prevalence of such *lianhuanhua* on the street stalls even long after the culmination of a campaign, was a visible testament to the swiftly changing Party rhetoric. Although *lianhuanhua* played a role in mass mobilisation campaigns by providing stories which could convey changes in thinking and provide examples to follow, these *lianhuanhua* were only a subset of the *lianhuanhua* produced and could also be regarded as 'problematic' by Party-State agencies as they failed to keep up with policy changes.

Master Narratives

Beyond their propaganda function and role in supporting literacy campaigns, *lianhuanhua* also functioned as broadcasters of 'correct' revolutionary history (*Geming Douzheng Lishi*). The Party-State used *lianhuanhua* to write history and values for the readership and consumption of the wider population in what was intended to be an entertaining and accessible manner. The telling of history was the most dominant and enduring narrative in 'revolutionary' *lianhuanhua*. This narrative was of paramount importance as it propagated Party-State sponsored memory, erased complexities and affirmed the Party's legitimacy and right to rule (Hung 2011, 18). The historical master-narrative highlighted the CCP's role in the Anti-Japanese War, while at the same time playing down the actions of the Guomindang or casting them as outright enemies of peace. The dominance of this narrative is a key theme in *Mao's New China* (Hung 2011). Hung examines how the historical master narrative was propagated through 'the cult of the Red Martyr,' and reflected in oil paintings, monuments, public celebrations and other forms of cultural expression.[71]

Lianhuanhua focussing on revolutionary history predominantly concentrated on stories of war and included adaptations of existing literature and film, as well as original scripts (Wu, Wenhuan 1966). *Lianhuanhua* centring on defending socialist construction and fighting enemies on the home front were also categorised as war related, such as *Taking Tiger Mountain Using Strategy* (*Zhi qu wei hu shan*). Meanwhile, the comics focussing on the 'revolutionary wars' concentrated on a number of historical periods including the Civil War (*The Red Detachment of Women, Hongse niangzijun* and *Taking Huashan by Strategy, Zhiqu huashan*) and the Anti-Japanese War, (*Railway Guerrillas*, *Tiedao youji dui*) (Wu, Wenhuan 1966).

Railway Guerrillas by Gu Bingxin was a particularly notable example of this war-related genre of *lianhuanhua.* The comic was based on a film and a novel of the same name and told of a group of railway workers and coal miners who joined the Communist guerrilla forces to fight against the Japanese along the Lin-Zao railway line in Shandong province.[72] *Railway Guerrillas* gained widespread recognition when it was awarded one of the four first prizes at the first national comic book awards in 1963 inaugurated by the Chinese Artists Association (*The People's Daily* 1963b). *The People's Daily* declared that the inauguration of the national award was intended to ‘encourage the work of the entire comic industry…and reflect the People’s love of the comics’ (Ma 1963, 6). Meanwhile, the Deputy Minister of Culture called on ‘Chinese literary and art circles to achieve new and greater comic results’ (*The People’s Daily* 1963).

---

[71] The 'cult of the Red Martyr,' served several purposes: diverting attention away from the destruction of war, justifying combat, consoling the bereaved and encouraging future generations to serve and win honour (Hung 2011, 16). At the same time, the Museum of the Chinese Revolution was established on the eastern side of Tiananmen Square and was one of ten monuments built to celebrate the Chinese Communist Revolution and Mao's central role. A series of oil paintings showing the Party's victorious history were also especially commissioned for the museum and the themes were selected by the Party and the final products approved (Hung 2011, 13).

[72] Another (if less famous) example of this genre of 'anti-Japanese' war comic is *The Flaming Warrior: Shi Gengxin Breaks the Siege with One Shell* (*Liehuo jingang: shi gongxin yi dan tuwei)* by Hua Sanchuan (Cai and Hua 1961). This story was part of series with sequels released in 1962 and 1963 (Cai and Wang 1962; Cai and Wang 1963).

However, one of the first and most notable *lianhuanhua* to emerge focussing on the actions of the heroic CCP during the 1930s and 1940s was Zhao Fengchuan’s *The Lianhuanhua of the Thirty Years of the Communist Party of China* (*Zhongguo gongchandang de sanshi nian lianhuanhua*) published in 1951. The comic was praised by *The People’s Daily* (1952a) for offering a ‘vivid, concise and systematic demonstration of the historical struggle of the CCP’. Zhao was awarded a prize of 3 million yuan for the comic by the North China Bureau of the CCP Central Committee Propaganda Department (*Zhongguo Zhongyang Huabei Ju Xuanchuan Bu*) and later was offered a dominant position in the Chinese Artists Association. By 1952 4.5 million copies of ‘…the *Thirty Years*…’ had been printed (*The People’s Daily* 1952a). In addition, such was the import of the comic that it was also converted into colour propaganda posters, which told the story over two posters and 40 frames, with the exact same text and accompanying images as the *lianhuanhua* (Zhao 1952). The comic was even used as a textbook to explain Party history to illiterate rural cadres in particular, as it was argued to provide a grounding in class analysis (He 1952).

In the 1960s the SPFAPH (1960b) claimed *lainhuanhua* ‘need to be anti-imperialist and anti-nationalist and do more to strengthen the education of revolutionary history’. In order to strengthen the comic’s propaganda function in this respect, the SPFAPH stated it would adapt revolutionary memoirs into *lianhuanhua* to contribute to the historical discourse. The production of these revolutionary historical comics was also in accordance with the doctrine in the *Selected Works of Mao* (*Mao Zedong Xuanji*) Volume Four. Children especially were argued to be positively influenced by the revolutionary heroes in these history comics:

> After Yang Shixiong, a third grade student, at Number 1 Primary School, Haining Street read *Liu Hulan* and *Wang Xiaohe*, he said ‘Liu Hulan served the people from a very young age, I will learn from her. Our happiness today rests on the sacrifice of their blood, sweat and tears’ (SPFAPH 1960b).

Wang Xiaohe[73] and Liu Hulan were considered exemplary proletarian heroes. The *lianhuanhua* adaptions of their life were noted as exemplary in *The People’s Daily* and it is unsurprising that the SPFAPH selected them (Jiang 1960). Wang joined the CCP in the 1940s and helped organise strikes in Shanghai, while Liu Hulan was a young female spy operating during the Civil War.

The SPFAPH thought it necessary to stipulate the role of their *lianhuanhua* in contributing to the historical discourse of sacrifice through ‘blood, sweat and tears’ and its transmission to children (SPFAPH 1960b). Tales of the revolutionary wars also were intended to encourage a hatred of ‘bad men’ (*huairen*) and ‘love for the PLA uncles’ (*jiefangjun shushu*) (SPFAPH 1960b).[74] *Lianhuanhua* were a suitable format for the telling of these stories to children as they incorporated simple plots and easily artistically recognisable heroes and villains.

War comics abounded from 1949 to 1966. On the eve of the Cultural Revolution however, Wu Wenhuan (1966), a close associate of Jiang Weipu, the head of the *lianhuanhua* press, complained that thus far too many ‘revolutionary *lianhuanhua* which do not represent the spirit and the thought of the People's war' had been published.[75] Wu drew attention to one particular comic entitled *The First Battle for Pingxing Pass* (*Shou zhan pingxingguan*). In terms of subject matter the comic 'correctly' focussed on one of the greatest victories of the Eight Route Army in September 1937. However, it was accused of fixating on the failures of the Guomindang against the Japanese, rather than the successes of the CCP (Wu, Wenhuan 1966). As the criticisms made of comics during the Korean War also suggest, *lianhuanhua* were supposed to give agency to the CCP and not just demonise enemies. In this vein, stories about warfare were not supposed to focus on the grimier affects, or include images of corpses or blood (Gu 1965, 79). Comics focussing on the CCP historical narrative and in particular war abounded after 1949 and there was much concern that the 'correct narrative' dominate. Despite this outpouring of the Party-State's narrative on revolutionary history into *lianhuanhua*, on the eve of the Cultural Revolution, the SPFAPH was still under pressure to do more to publish this genre of comic. Subsequently, as the result of a trip to Beijing the SPFAPH was chastised and instructed by Cheng Hanbo of the Ministry of Culture to publish 20 to 30 comics 'reflecting the People's War' by June of the following year (Wu 1966).[76]

---

[73] Hua Sanchuan produced a particularly famous comic adaptation of the story of Wang Xiaohe and though there is no way to confirm it, this may have been the version that Yang Shixiong allegedly praised. The prevailing popularity of Hua’s comic even today is noted by the fact it is sells for upwards of 1500 yuan on online bookstore kongfz.

[74] Chapter five explores the fact that depictions of the PLA were particularly sensitive in the comics.

'Serviceable for Today's Society'

In 1938, Mao Dun had commented that traditional stories and literary forms continued to have a popular appeal, although they had been lambasted by many of his fellow intellectuals during the May Fourth Movement. Mao Dun believed it therefore made sense to use these traditional literary forms to popularise important ideas and concepts. He argued that making use of these forms did not necessitate wholesale acceptance of them and that their use would not mean impending doom for the emergent 'new' May Fourth literature (Mao Dun 1938 translated in Denton 1996, 434). Later, in 1942, Mao (translated in Denton 1996, 470) also argued that traditional stories and foreign texts should not be abandoned out of hand because they could be of use if examined critically. This belief in using traditional forms and stories to popularise literature and make the CCP messages conveyed in the texts more accessible to audiences continued after 1949. Tang (2015, 8) argues that this was part of the Party-State's project to create a culture, 'revolutionary cosmopolitism,' which synthesised the native, foreign, traditional and modern.

---

[75] In 1951, the comic committee first categorised these *lianhuanhua* as those which 'distorted history' (*waiqu lishi*) (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951f).

[76] Due to the advent of the Cultural Revolution and the dismantling of the industry, these comics were probably never actually published.

Aspects of Chinese traditional culture circulated in literature more generally during the 1950s and 1960s (Zaniello 1978, 181). As Dolby (1976, 231) has argued, this was the case for drama. He establishes there was some leeway in approaches to drama before the Cultural Revolution.[77] For example, there were concerted attempts to both compile plays from the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, as well as, although to a lesser extent, translate foreign titles in the first half of the 1950s (Dolby 1976, 232). In the case of *lianhuanhua*, adaptations of classical novels, folk stories, martial arts and romance were tolerated, if not always embraced, as long as they did not contravene any of the specific bans discussed in chapter five (Liang 2012, 94). During the Hundred Flowers Campaign (discussed in chapter six), Jiang Weipu (1956a), head of the *lianhuanhua* press, even claimed in *The People's Daily* that 'of course we do not oppose the use of historical themes and folk stories in comics as these are many people's favourites'. However, these stories also needed to be 'serviceable for today's society'

---

[77] This differentiates these forms of art and literature from other propaganda, such as posters which had to stick to more rigid guidelines in terms of content. For example, Shen (2000, 184) argues that posters published prior to the Cultural Revolution performed one of five functions: publicising party slogans, supporting mass campaigns, idealising the life of workers or peasants, urging solidarity or popularising military goals.

(*gu wei jin yong*) (SPFAPH 1960b). In some cases, this might have been because a particular story offered moral philosophies which could support the Communist cause. *The Nation of Women* (*Nü'er Guo*), part of a famous nineteenth century classical novel in which women and men switch social roles, was presumably deemed ripe for adaptation into *lianhuanhua* as it supported Maoist rhetoric that women hold up half the sky (Zong and Chen 1958).

In other cases the reasoning behind what was allowed and disallowed does not seem to have been so clear. *The Snail Shell Girl* (*Tianluo Güniang*) is a comic about a hard-working man and his mystical lover, who are harassed by an evil landlord (Shui 1957). The story advocates popular policies at the time of publication, such as 'class struggle,' manual labour and cultivating wasteland. However, the Party does not feature in the story and the 'good' characters adhere to Confucian values, such as filial piety. Furthermore, their reward is love and wealth by way of mystical intervention, which was usually decried as superstitious. At the end of the story, the Snail Shell Girl uses her supernatural powers to summon a great wave to wash away the landlord and his cronies who are persecuting them (Shui 1957, 67) (Appendix Figure 4). Despite this narrative, the comic was published in 1957 (after the Hundred Flowers Campaign had ended) and republished in 1962.

Certain *lianhuanhua* based on traditional stories went beyond being tolerated and received widespread critical acclaim. One *lianhuanhua* which re-told a tale from *Journey to the West* received high-level political attention. *Monkey Thrice Beats the White Boned Demon* (*Sun Wukong san da bai gujing*) was illustrated by Zhao Hongben and Qian Xiaodai and won the national comic book award (*The People's Daily* 1963b). The story itself had provoked a poetic debate between Mao and Guo Moruo in 1961 (Farquhar 1999, 230). *Lianhuanhua* frequently adapted classical tales, and these needed to be 'serviceable,' although what constituted 'serviceable' was not always clear cut.

Adapting Content for *Lianhuanhua*

Publishers drew inspiration from a range of different sources, including journals, novels, films and other forms of political culture to formulate content for *lianhuanhua*. As was common among political cultural mediums, literature and art from Yan'an was a source of inspiration. With reference to CCP rhetoric, the SPFAPH (1960b) proclaimed it would 'adapt and publish *lianhuanhua* based on the excellent literature produced after the Yan'an forum'. This was inevitably an attempt to bring *lianhuanhua* under the banner of Yan'an, as there were no actual notable *lianhuanhua* from that period which could be reissued.

Artists and publishers also drew on published resources in other mediums as inspiration for *lianhuanhua* adaptations (Gu 1965, 11). For example, in 1958 the SPFAPH (1958a) drew inspiration from the journal *Emerging Artists* (*Xin Miao*) to produce *The Triumphant Expedition to the South* (*Nan zheng kai gui*):

> Our publishing house selected the article 'An Essay on the 359th Brigade's Movement South' (*Sanwujiu Lü Nanxia Sanji*) and turned it into the comic script. This story describes an expedition… It describes the real life stories of the Chinese Communist Central Party Committee Members Wang Zhen and Wang Shoudao (SPFAPH 1958a).

In addition, the comic *Following Chairman Mao's Long March (Gensui Mao Zhuxi changzheng)* was based on a novel written by Chen Changfeng and published by the Writers Publishing House (*Zuojia chubanshe*) (SPFAPH 1959c). This story was considered particularly exemplary and ripe for adaptation as it supposedly used 'simple and pure language to depict the bravery of Chairman Mao and the Chinese Red Army before, during and after the Long March' (SPFAPH 1959c). This allegedly 'helped readers better understand revolutionary history and also learn from Chairman Mao's simple lifestyle and thinking' (SPFAPH 1959c).

However, artists experienced significant challenges when it came to adapting *lianhuanhua* from long novels. Artists were required to embellish the appearance of revolutionary heroes and uglify class enemies (Gu 1965, 52). However, *lianhuanhua* artists were less inclined to use extreme caricature as *manhua*, in which, for example, Chiang Kai-shek was typically illustrated as a dog or a rat (Hung 2011, 160). Instead, the challenge for *lianhuanhua* artists was to sufficiently distinguish characters artistically, especially the secondary characters in the novel. He Youzhi stated this was a challenge in adapting his famous *Great Changes on the Mountain* (Lu, Zuohua 1962). In general the function of the secondary characters was to contrast with the primary characters and thereby highlight their importance and behaviour (Gu 1965, 55). While there might be details about the primary characters in the sparse *lianhuanhua* script, usually there were no details about the secondary characters and it was the artists' job to create them. For these purposes, artists often referred back to the original novel, where these characters might have been expanded upon more (Gu 1965, 13). Ding Binzeng and Han Heping, who created *Railway Guerrillas*, handled this issue by borrowing the exact gestures of the characters from the film (Shi 2010). Artists also had the challenge of creating characters with which audiences were already often very familiar and had certain expectations (Ma 1964). Some of the characters in *Great Changes on the Mountain* apparently changed ten times in the sketch preparation for the comic (Lu 1962).

Lianhuanhua also drew on film and traditional opera plots. As early as 1951 the Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1951a) was recommending that *lianhuanhua* draw on film and opera for inspiration, although it was believed that *lianhuanhua* differed in that they had the capacity to be more colloquial then these two mediums. In addition to drawing inspiration for stories and content from other mediums, comic artists frequently conducted research in the field to complete their strips and this informed their artistic approach. The characteristics of the times had to be illustrated in *lianhuanhua*, to show local customs, and provide 'a natural look' (Wan 2012, 46). Panoramic shots were often included in *lianhuanhua* to provide a sense of setting and the topography of the landscape (Gu 1965, 25). Artists also drew on folk art as a source of inspiration. Hua Sanchuan collected a large amount of material, including *nianhua*, to create his comic masterpiece *The White Haired Girl* (Deng 2010, 34).

However, drawing inspiration from other sources of political culture and published materials could prove problematic in a number of ways. As I established, the case of *Living Buddha* highlighted a very early 1950 example of a publisher and an artist attracting criticism for copying a story that was accepted on the stage, without thoroughly checking to see whether the content complied with the Party-State's loose regulations. Subsequently, the Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1951b) began urging publishers to take care when adapting *lianhuanhua* based on other mediums. It was particularly concerned that the publishers were reusing images and art work from the Shanghai Fine Arts Association, the People's Publishing House and *The Liberation Daily* (*Jiefang Ribao*). According to the Cultural Bureau, publishers and artists were then revising it and adapting publications for *lianhuanhua* and copying the content 'incorrectly'. Finally, they were then designating the comics the collective work of the Shanghai Fine Arts Association, which was an embarrassment to the Association. This was because it made it appear as if the Association itself, a leading part of Shanghai's art scene, was making political mistakes (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 19512a).

On one particular *lianhuanhua* censorship list, 'adapting *lianhuanhua* and in the process distorting the original source material' was listed as one of the four major reasons for censorship (Nanjing Library 1954). Significantly, in this we can see another link back to the Republican period. Mao Dun expressed concern in 1932 about the potential problems that could occur if Chinese and foreign literature was adapted for *lianhuanhua*. He believed the message could be distorted, narratives mixed up and superficial changes made when longer more complex pieces of literature were adapted into comic form (Mao 1932).

The issues with speedy and repeat publishing of *lianhuanhua* attracted the attention of the art establishment during the Hundred Flowers Campaign (discussed in chapter six). Writing for the journal *Fine Art (Meishu*), Xian Zhe (1957) called for artists and writers to come up with original scripts, arguing that *lianhuanhua* based on stories from magazines, the press and novels were being repeatedly and quickly published and this was a waste of time and resources.[78] Moreover, the author stated that the same content was being repeatedly published, but under different titles, and there was little discussion between publishers in Beijing and Shanghai. Xian (1957) recommended that those in charge of comic production should regulate the publishers and help them develop a better cooperative relationship by exchanging publication lists and providing mutual aid. However, the repeat re-issuing of stories did not attract the fixed attention of the cultural bureaucracy until the mid-1960s and, as the next chapter will subsequently detail, resulted for the first time in calls for a national *lianhuanhua* production strategy on the eve of the Cultural Revolution.

Furthermore, in addition to the ‘errors’ being made in adapting content, Party-State agencies were also concerned that publishers were not demonstrating due diligence in thoroughly checking that the content they were utilising complied with Party-State agencies’ albeit loose political guidelines. This can be seen in the case of the comic *The Mastermind Raids the Prison (Zhiduoxing huxue qiao jieyu)*. The original source material was drawn from an article in the publication *Mengya* published in February and March 1958 and the SPFAPH (1959d) assumed in adapting it that there would be no problem. However, the comic was charged with 'not accurately depicting the Party's underground work' and 'describing underlying Communist policy wrongly' (SPFAPH 1959d). This supposed 'distortion of policy' was another of the four foremost offenses according to the censorship list (Nanjing Library 1954).

---

[78] *Renmin Meishu* was superseded by *Meishu* in 1954 and the publication was sponsored and controlled by the Artist’s Association (Galikowski 1998, 16).

Specifically, *The Mastermind Raids the Prison* was accused of 'distorting the image of the underground resistance,' which was considered 'a serious crime,' given *lianhuanhua*'s focus on telling revolutionary history (SPFAPH 1959d). The SPFAPH (1959d) claimed the comic would 'horrify people and will have a very bad political influence' because it showed governing CCP bodies supporting a 'mastermind', an underground fighter, in his 'cruel killing plan'. The comic was also lambasted for 'too much description of the paralysis of the enemies' because the central protagonist was easily able to infiltrate a prison; 'it looks like he is operating in an unpopulated world and is [therefore] childish and unrealistic' (SPFAPH 1959d). Moreover, the comic was accused of elevating the individual, at the expense of showing 'the political power of the Party to motivate citizens to fight against and break the enemies defence' (SPFAPH 1959d).

> We only see a solitary figure fighting, so people will think the Party's underground activities had no support from the people (SPFAPH 1959d).

The comic was criticised for being a 'Sherlock Holmes story' for its emphasis on the role of the individual, was subsequently banned and over the course of six months all copies were recalled (SPFAPH 1959g). More generally, the insult of being a 'Sherlock Holmes'-type story was often thrown at *lianhuanhua* which focussed on the endeavours of one individual and ignored the role of the masses (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965). It must be noted, however, that an emphasis on the role of the individual and ‘unrealistic’ acts of extreme heroism did not always result in a comic being categorically banned. In *The Flaming Warrior: Shi Gengxin Breaks the Siege with One Shell (Liehuo jingang (1): Shi Gengxin yi dan tuwei),* the hero, nicknamed Shi Da (Tall Guy) and ‘Heavenly King, is surrounded by 2000 Japanese soldiers, and although injured (surviving a bullet through the head), single-handedly defeats them all with a shell (Cai and Hua 1961). The comic was not banned, but the subsequent two volumes in the series adopted a very different narrative thread, focussing on the smaller scale heroics of a band of soldiers and peasants working together (Cai and Wang 1962; Cai and Wang 1963).

In 1959 the SPFAPH made a self-criticism for not ‘adequately checking’ the political content of material in line with Party-State guidelines before adapting it into comics:

> We do not have a full enough understanding of the Party’s policy and its use in checking the texts produced. We always think that if a story has been published in other formats it must be appropriate. We trust the already existing comments and the author’s authority. We often get confused by the stories which are told in books, so we neglect the political ideas behind them (SPFAPH 1959d).

The slightly unpredictable nature by which content was found prohibitive suggests the SPFAPH struggled to keep abreast of fluctuating policy. In any case, from then on, the publishing house claimed it would develop a better understanding of the Party’s policies on censoring material and would abandon their policy of blind trust in adapting content into *lianhuanhua* (SPFAPH 1959d). It is clear that the publishing houses at some point towards the end of the 1950s came to the conclusion that they had to act as their own censors and that simply bringing in material from outside to adapt could be ‘problematic’ in terms of the ‘vision’ for *lianhuanhua*.

This suggests that by the early 1960s the Party-State had installed an element of self-reflexivity into the *lianhuanhua* industry and publishing in general. Reflecting on their last decade of comic production the SPFAPH (1959f) stated that: 'We also did not properly reflect and learn from our experiences so the theoretical building work did not progress well.' The following year the SPFAPH (1960b) self-criticised again, stating that 'poisonous comics had been published because we do not scrutinise things carefully enough and pay enough attention to quality over quantity'. In conjunction with the concern that adapting unchecked material into comics could constitute a serious political issue, Party-State agencies went on to question the veracity of republishing the same story in multiple different formats (SPFAPH 1965a).

Conclusion

Ostensibly, art produced after 1949 functioned as a tool to glorify the Party leadership, its history and policies and the lives of workers, peasants or Socialist heroes. These ideological themes were reflected in the new 'revolutionary' *lianhuanhua* which emerged in the 1950s and these comics had three specific functions. Firstly, *lianhuanhua* were published with accompanying pinyin and simple language to support literacy campaigns, particularly among workers and for children's education. Secondly, they had a supportive role in propagating particular socio-political campaigns and in this context the strength of the comics was in creating characters that audiences could identify with and telling the story in a straightforward manner. However, despite the fact that the medium had widespread popular appeal, *lianhuanhua* were also problematic in terms of their ability to support political campaigns. Campaigns often had a relatively short life span due to the changing political climate, and *lianhuanhua* production could not always keep up with this pace of change because it took a minimum of three months for an artist to produce their work. This strongly differentiated the comics from other mediums, such as *manhua*. Thirdly, *lianhuanhua* were continually used to propagate the Party-State’s historical master narratives, specifically focussing on the ‘revolutionary wars’.

‘Revolutionary’ *lianhuanhua* was not all that was published, however, and not all comics fulfilled the three overriding prescribed functions. Traditional stories and folk tales featured heavily in *lianhuanhua* particularly in the 1950s. These tales were supposed to be ‘serviceable for today’s society’ but this was not always the case. My exploration of the censorship of *lianhuanhua* will subsequently reveal that what was allowed and disallowed was quite ad hoc, both in terms of foreign literature and folk tales.

Chapter 5: Censorship and the Lack of a National Strategy

Introduction

In 1960 the SPFAPH (1960b) complained that although it had published politically ‘high level revolutionary comics’ in the preceding decade, poisonous comics were still abundant (SPFAPH 1960b). Comics which did not support Party-State propaganda initiatives could be banned outright or partially censored. However, the rules as to what content was allowed or disallowed were often quite nebulous, and censored comics were generally dealt with on a case-by-case and ad hoc basis. Moreover, as established above, the eligibility of certain comics was tied to particular campaigns and thus changed with fluctuating political climate. Nevertheless, this chapter discusses certain issues which proved persistently sensitive from 1956 to 1965.

In this chapter, I focus on the mechanics of the censorship process and how and why certain comics were targeted. Content labelled as poisonous included that which was purported to malign the PLA, Party cadres or leaders. Significantly, and contrary to what we might expect, however, the *lianhuanhua* industry as a whole demonstrated a marked reticence about incorporating Maoist slogans in the 1950s, and chose to ignore Mao as a topic wherever possible. Comics with characters labelled as ‘rightists’ by the Party-State, but shown in a favourable light were also targeted. *Lianhuanhua* were also sometimes censored if they were seen to be propagating an ‘imperialist lifestyle’ or referencing the supernatural. At the same time, and for often unclear reasons, other classical tales were permitted and proliferated in number (as discussed in chapter four). Adaptations of foreign classics went in and out of favour, as can be seen with Soviet stories before and after the Sino-Soviet split.

In addition to discussing the censorship of *lianhuanhua*, in this chapter I establish how production was envisaged nationally and the fact that it essentially lacked a national strategy up until 1966. This is a highly significant point contributing to wider debates on the mechanics of cultural production in Maoist China as it challenges notions of the primacy of Beijing. As the basis of *lianhuanhua* production, Shanghai dominated the industry; however, comics from other cities played a role in PRC political culture. *Lianhuanhua* from publishing houses nationwide differed in terms of artistic style, and each publishing house kept an eye on developments in other areas so they could poach ideas and artists from other cities, but they did not have a common strategy to develop comic production. By the mid-1960s, Party-State agencies were re-thinking this disparate approach and there were initial steps towards making publishers in different cities cooperate with one another, in part to cut down on the replication and duplication of content as this was considered a waste of time and resources. However, on the eve of the Cultural Revolution, *lianhuanhua* production still crucially lacked an overall national production strategy led by Beijing.

The Censorship Process

A list of 30 banned *lianhuanhua,* published in 1954 by the News Publisher and the People's Publisher, stipulated that the comics had generally improved in terms of quality and quantity over the preceding five years. However, 'unhealthy content' (*neirong bu jiankang*) and 'poisonous weeds'[79] (*dusu ducao*) continued to be produced. The list went on to instruct that 'in order to encourage readers to choose first-rate reading material (*youliang duwu*) we need to get rid of bad comics' (Nanjing Library 1954). From 1949 onwards various Party-State agencies and publishing houses were engaged in an ongoing battle to eradicate such 'poisonous weeds'.

---

[79] 'Poisonous weeds' was the term used to describe things which had survived 1949 and had to be destroyed (although, importantly, this did not include everything from the pre-1949 era). It was, of course, common in debates about various forms of cultural production in this era.

From 1949 to 1966, *lianhuanhua* censorship was presided over by a number of different agencies including the Education office, the Cultural Bureau, district libraries, the children's libraries, the *Xinhua* bookstore and the publishing houses themselves. In particular, during the early 1950s, the Cultural Bureau took a dominant role in identifying 'harmful' comics. However, later on, when a sense of self-censorship had been instilled and the Party-State had nationalised the publishing houses, the SPFAPH and other publishing houses took to censoring their own *lianhuanhua*. In turn, these publishers reported to the Shanghai Publishing Bureau on what comics had been censored and banned, and kept agencies like the *Xinhua* bookstore 'in the loop' in terms of communication. On the eve of the Cultural Revolution, in a seeming shake-up of the industry, the specially established *Lianhuanhua* Review Group took over in demarcating 'harmful texts,' when 20% of the comics in circulation were found to be poisonous. This coincided with the emergence of a more nativist, militant style of Chinese communism in 1964 and 1965 and these changes were replicated in other areas of the industry, such as overall national approaches to *lianhuanhua* publishing, as will be discussed later in this chapter (MacFarquhar 1997, 445).

Lianhuanhua published prior to 1949 were frowned upon. However, in the early 1950s, there was a general distinction made between comics regarded as 'unhealthy,' (i.e., not in line with the Party-State's propaganda discourses) and *lianhuanhua* which were regarded as poisonous (Nanjing Library 1954). The most 'harmful' titles and the ones which were banned outright were those branded 'pro-Guomindang'. Those labelled 'anti-Soviet' and 'anti-Communist' were more difficult to deal with because the meaning of these two phrases was open to changing interpretation. Meanwhile, due to fluctuating campaigns, the distinction between 'good' and 'bad' content was constantly shifting. In addition, despite the general censorship guidelines, there appear to have been no 'hard and fast' rules about what was banned. Instead of banning genres as a whole, the Party-State apparatus dealt with titles on an individual basis depending on the political climate of the time.

In 1951 the Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1951d) protested that most pre-1949 comics 'talked about feudalism or the supernatural and engaged in superstition'. It stipulated that martial arts stories accounted for the largest single genre (one quarter of the comics available) (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951d). However, the Cultural Bureau also noted the challenges of dividing comics into different genres and thereby deciding what to do with each genre in its entirety. The challenges Party-State agencies faced in demarcating 'good' and 'bad' content is further elaborated in the next section, in which I trace some general patterns in the kind of content which was censored, but also show that censorship was in many instances ad hoc.

During the censorship process, Party-State agencies and publishers produced records stipulating why and how a particular comic needed to be censored. Censors chose what to pick rather than adhering to a set of central guidelines and in some cases, as will become apparent, the specifics of why a comic had been banned were exceptionally detailed, while in other cases the reports were much vaguer. For example, *Jade River (Yutang chun*) was banned because 'the story is boring and it does not have educational meaning' (SPFAPH 1959h). Why specifically it was considered 'boring' and why it was not considered educational is never specified in any detail. In addition, some *lianhuanhua* were lambasted with vague criticisms of their artistry or because their plots were deemed too 'plain' and of 'unsatisfactory quality,' as in the case of *The Indomitable Warrior* (*Buqu de zhanshi*). In stipulating that *lianhuanhua* needed to be censored, Party-State agencies could also include inexplicit phrases such as 'too narrow,' or claim the story was deemed to have 'no social significance' or 'positive reference' (SPFAPH 1959d). However, other instances, such as the case of *The Mastermind Raids the Prison,* suggest that agencies were much more explicit about why a comic was censored.

If *lianhuanhua* were deemed particularly problematic by prevailing standards in terms of theme or artistry they would be banned and any copies in circulation collected. However, if minor errors were found, the text was edited at the production stage. In some instances, only certain elements of text or selected images were censored. For example, the SPFAPH (1959e) asked the Shanghai Municipal Publishing Bureau whether it should correct a particular sentence and then republish *The Iron Oxen Tractor Driver* (*Tie niu hao tuolaji shou*). The story featured a truck driver called Wu Lianshen, who transported timber. A sentence on page seven was considered problematic because the leader in the story played an unfair trick on the young men in his team to test their commitment to the Communist cause. The 'mistake' was considered serious enough that the publishing house was ready to abandon the 70,000 comics in stock to make this single change (SPFAPH 1959e). In another case, a comic was recalled and then edited for not giving the correct name for a type of submarine (SPFAPH 1959d) and another for showing an American soldier not falling in a realistic way after his chest was pierced with a bayonet (Chen 1952).

Before analysing the kind of content which was censored it is important to note that 'quality' in terms of the *lianhuanhua* was not always a matter of content. 'Quality' could also refer to artistry and language, indeed comics could be banned or changed if they were thought to be not engaging enough. Under Mao, the very notion of art being 'for art's sake' was not accepted. However, attention *was* definitely paid to the 'quality' of the comic story and the art work in terms of whether it would attract and excite an audience. For example, in 1963, *The Spinning Wheel* (*Chelun feizhuan*) was described as a 'listless effort' by *The People's Daily*. Even though the comic supported the Party-State's current focus on *lianhuanhua* for and about rural communities, the paper complained that there was an over-emphasis on technological details and not enough focus on character development, which made the story tedious (Shen 1963). This was compared to He Youzhi's *Great Changes on the Mountain,* which was praised for three reasons. Firstly, the comic was celebrated for detailing individual characters' personalities and using interactions between characters to make the personality of each clearer. Secondly, the comic was praised for allowing the narrative to develop gradually, with each frame telling the audience something new about the characters' personality. Thirdly, *The People's Daily* applauded the use of different angles in the art work and praised the fact that the illustrations appeared more like sequences in a film, as He Youzhi was able to create a sense of movement and action in them. For example, in one picture in which the characters are drunk, they were said to actually look as if they were falling about (Shen 1963) (Appendix Figure five).

Poisonous Comics

Maligning the Heroes

In the early 1950s, 'smearing heroes' and 'sullying good characters' both artistically and in terms of character was identified as one of the four major reasons for comic censorship (Nanjing Library 1954). However, despite ongoing discourses on how to represent classes (as in the case of those labelled 'class enemies'), 'mistakes' continued to be made over the representation of the 'heroes of the Revolution'. In the case of *lianhuanhua* depictions of the PLA, party cadres and the CCP leadership appear to have been particularly sensitive partly because of the comics' role in delineating Party history.

One of the ways in which comics were quick to garner censorship was if they were seen to be portraying the PLA negatively. In 1951 *The People's Daily* critiqued a comic about the Long March for showing PLA soldiers freely taking turnips from the fields of the peasants, without asking their permission. The comic was also criticised because some enemy soldiers were depicted wearing red stars, the preserve of the PLA, on their caps (Wu 1951).[80] A year later, *The People's Daily* (1952b) lambasted a comic for showing PLA soldiers as uneducated, short and ugly, and not wearing the correct uniform.

This issue of depictions of the army was particularly sensitive in the early 1950s as part of the newly established Party-State's legitimacy rested on the notion of the courteous behaviour of the PLA in dealing with peasant civilians during the Civil War. Furthermore, with the outbreak of the Korean War the Party-State was in desperate need of new recruits and was attempting to raise the profile of the army, as traditionally soldiering had not been seen as a coveted profession (Ross 2008, 15). As many of the readers of the comics were young men and women, it was important that propaganda aimed at them glorify the army and that general audiences were impressed with tales of the PLA's behaviour. In this way, readers would be more likely to support the 'Resist America, Support Korea' campaign.[81]

Depictions of the army as a potential career path continued to be a sensitive issue, however, even after the Party-State had succeeded in swelling the ranks in the early 1950s. *A Fighter in His Hometown* (*Zhanshi zai guxiang*) was derided for depicting the post-war life of Zhang Weiming, a paralyzed revolutionary solider, and thus supposedly failing to show a victorious and happy hero (SPFAPH 1959h).[82] Ultimately, drawing the emblems of the PLA correctly was listed as one of the four key motifs *lianhuanhua* artists had to master, alongside reproducing flags, slogans of the period and accurate portrayals of Party leaders (Gu 1965, 79).

---

[80] These particular mistakes were also backed up by a supposed general lack of awareness of the Party's actions and the leadership of the CCP (Wu 1951).

[81] Undoubtedly, the comic was also targeted because there was a general fear about upsetting PLA sensibilities as they had military resources.

[82] In addition, in a similar fashion to *The Mastermind Raids the Prison*, the comic focussed on Zhang Weiming's personal experiences rather than the Party's collective leadership. Therefore, the comic's publication was also prohibited in 1959 (SPFAPH 1959h).

Comics were also banned if they suggested Communist cadres were morally corrupt or licentious (SPFAPH 1960b). For example, *The People Who Are Abandoned* (*Shui shi bei paoqi de ren*), also a 1958 film, told the tale of a cadre who abandons his wife in the countryside after the Civil War; he subsequently gets another woman in the city pregnant. Both women ultimately learn of his deceit and his wife divorces him. However, the comic was lambasted for 'suggesting cadres are immoral' (SPFAPH 1960b). *The Son who Made Trouble on the Wedding Night* (*Qinsheng erzi naodongfang*) was critiqued for the same reason, as it showed a cadre abandoning his wife for a younger woman (SPFAPH 1960b).

Comics with images of high-ranking CCP members went through special checking procedures. This was particularly the case for comic biographies of Mao, for which the Central Government set up specific regulations and repeat checking procedures (Shanghai Publishing Bureau 1958a). In June 1959 the SPFAPH urged caution when representing Mao:

> *Following Chairman Mao's Long March* discusses the Long March. It emphasises the work and life of Chairman Mao during that time and it shows his image as a leader. However, the previous leaders have always said we needed to be serious and cautious when producing this kind of work (SPFAPH 1959c).

The SPFAPH asked the Shanghai Publishing Bureau about the advisability of publishing such a comic. The Publishing Bureau responded by warning 'caution and seriousness when dealing with topics to do with the leaders' (SPFAPH 1959c). The Bureau stated that two drafts needed to be checked, the first by the publishing house and itself, and the second by the Municipal Propaganda Bureau and the Central Government Bureau. In addition, they endorsed the SPFAPH (1959c) sending people to Shandong to talk to Chen Changfeng, the author on whose novel the comic had been based.

In another instance in 1958, the SPFAPH delivered two *lianhuanhua, Blind Scouts* (*Xiazi Zhencha Bing*) and *Ouou Goes to See Chairman Mao Zedong* (*Ouou Jian Daole Mao Zhuxi*), which elaborated on the achievements of Chairman Mao and the hero Fan Zhiming, to the Publishing Bureau to check. The Bureau sent them upwards to the Central Government Propaganda Bureau for inspection. In this case, the comic text was checked and then it was sent back a second time to check the images (Shanghai Publishing Bureau 1958a). In another later instance of producing a comic about Mao, the Shanghai Fine Arts Comic Newsroom urged a similar level of caution:

> Our publishing house plans to print the comic *The Story of Chairman Mao* (*Mao zhuxi de gushi)* in 1961 and we have chosen some stories. We thought we should choose some stories from the *Revolutionary Memoirs* (*Geming huiyilu*) and adapt them into *lianhuanhua.* This will be a very meaningful comic. But we should be very cautious when we do this work (SPFAPH 1960a).

In 1965 on the eve of the Cultural Revolution, *The Story of the Leaders* (*Lingxiu de gushi*) was labelled as ostensibly showing 'non-serious representations of the leadership' (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). The comic contained short stories about Mao, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De and others engaged in various small scale activities. For example, one story depicted Mao engaging in pig farming and injecting a pig with medicine. Perhaps on the verge of the Cultural Revolution, this kind of laymen's activity did not match the cult and Great helmsman status Mao was building for himself.

Particular attention was paid to the images of the leaders in the publication of *lianhuanhua*. Maoist doctrine and the image of Mao were sometimes incorporated into *lianhuanhua* before 1966, but this incurred multiple checking procedures and there was always the possibility that serious political mistakes might be made inadvertently. What is most striking, however, is the fact that Mao and Mao Zedong Thought are rarely mentioned in the archival documents from 1949 to 1966 concerning the running of the *lianhuanhua* industry and publishing (except in the few cases I have outlined above). Thus, while Hung (2011), Mittler (2013) and others may argue that Mao and his pronouncements infused cultural discourses throughout China well before the onset of the Cultural Revolution, my research suggests that *lianhuanhua* represented a major divergence from such trends.

Anti-Party Figures

Comics had an educative function as purveyors of literacy, but within this context it was considered important that as well as ‘reading well,’ individuals ‘read good books’. Not all book reading was considered ‘good reading’; in particular, books with links to labelled ‘anti-party’ figures were not ‘good’. The comic *Love Reading, Read Good Books, Reading is Good* (*Hao dushu, du hao shu, dushu hao*) is one example. The SPFAPH (1959g) stated that ‘*Good Reading…’* was banned in 1959 because it made the reader think of the Hu Shi (1891-1962) maxim ‘save the country through reading books’. Hu Shi was a liberal scholar, essayist and philosopher who had participated in the May Fourth Movement,[83] but had moved to Taipei in 1949. His philosophies were labelled ‘anti-Party’ as he encouraged reading, but not Party education and production (SPFAPH 1959g).

Moreover, the cover of *Good Reading…* was considered unacceptable. It showed a girl holding a book entitled the *Songs of Youth*. The censor claimed ‘the image of the female student looks unhealthy because her fingers are very thin and she has the look of a capitalist’ (SPFAPH 1959d). She was probably deemed to have ‘the look of a capitalist’ because her appearance suggested she did not do hard labour, specifically work with her hands. Unfortunately, unlike some banned comics, it is currently impossible to find a copy of this *lianhuanhua* to visualise exactly what the censor at the SPFAPH was referring to. Comics were also banned if they depicted or had been created by individuals labelled as anti-party or Rightist. These kinds of comics were often labelled poisonous (SPFAPH 1960b).

---

[83] During the May Fourth Movement Hu Shi was even criticised for being too liberal by Lu Xun.

Other comics which were censored by the SPFAPH included the comic Lake Tai (*Taihu),* which was banned as it showed the 'Rightist individual Liu Haisu' (1896-1994) (SPFAPH 1960b). He was a famous Chinese painter who combined Chinese and European aesthetics, but he also scandalised 1920s Republican society as he was the first to use nude models in Chinese painting. This probably did little to raise him in the estimation of the Party-State. However, in the 1950s, as director of China's primary art centre, the privately run Shanghai Art Academy, Liu was attacked for refusing to produce art for the workers (Andrews 1994, 53). As will be elaborated in the next chapter, during the Hundred Flowers Campaign and as a skilled *guohua* artist, Liu was commissioned to work on the covers of traditional-style *lianhuanhua*. However, by the time the comic *Taihu* was lambasted in 1959 he was persona non grata due to his being critiqued in the Anti-Rightist Campaign.

In addition, and as was common for other forms of visual art, historical figures were also eliminated from *lianhuanhua* if they had been labelled 'traitors' (*hanjian*). For example, a comic about the Taiping commander Li Xiucheng was banned as he had been branded a traitor by the CCP. Unsurprisingly, comics were also banned if the writer or artist had been labelled a Rightist. In 1959, *The Highest Reward* (*Zuigao de jiangshang*), originally published in 1955 and based on a Soviet 1939 film, was banned for this reason, alongside twelve other comics (SPFAPH 1959d).

In a mid-1960s case, *Big Red Horse* (*Da hong ma*), which mentioned Peng Dehui, was also marked for collection. Peng had been labelled the leader of an 'anti-party clique' after his confrontation with Mao at the Lushan Conference in 1959 (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965).[84] The *Lianhuanhua* Review Group identified the comic as needing to be banned in their September 1965 sample of the comics in circulation. Identifying the comic, the group partly redacted Peng's name in their file, thus identifying his position as a serious 'class enemy'. However, it is remarkable that despite Peng's living in ignominy for six years and his disgraced status, *lianhuanhua* about him were still clearly in circulation in the mid-1960s.[85] This is a theme which will be elaborated on in depth in chapter eight.

Comics were also censored if they were perceived to have represented 'class enemies' or foreign enemies in the 'wrong' way. For instance, Chiang Kai-shek could only be drawn if he was sufficiently ugly (Gu 1965. 79).[86] In terms of class enemies *The Good Man Tian Mugua* (*Hao ren Tian Mugua*) was banned in 1965 for implying the landlord in the story was a reputable accountant (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). It is significant that these kinds of 'mistakes' in terms of the 'correct' way in which to depict classes had not been totally eradicated by the mid-1960s. This suggests that the actual mechanics of cultural production did not always work efficiently. *The Good Man Tian Mugua* may have been subsequently banned, but this was only after it had been published and was in circulation.

In addition to real-life individuals, some comic adaptations of classical stories were banned because their principal characters, despite being fictitious, had been labelled 'traitors'. This was the case for an adaption of the famous Qing musical play and historical drama *The*

---

[84] He is referred to as Peng XX and his full name is not written in the file because he was classed as a class enemy in 1959.

[85] Two months later in November 1965, in what would become one of the first attacks of the Cultural Revolution, the famous play *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office* was targeted. Yao Wenyuan, acting under Mao's auspices, accused the playwright Wu Han of making the hero Hai Rui an allegory for Peng Dehuai (MacFarquhar 1997, 445).

[86] Taylor (nd) has argued that in propaganda posters produced after 1949 Chiang Kai-Shek was often painted green, grey or drained of colour to suggest ill health or death. This visually distinguished him from images of Mao, who was usually painted in ruddy hues to suggest warmth or radiance.

Peach Blossom Fan (*Taohua shan*). In this story, the young scholar Hou Chaozong marries the courtesan, Li Xiangjun, the Fragrant Princess, and it was she who was labelled a traitor (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). [87] Equally, comics were censored for supposedly propagating the imperialist lifestyle of characters like Li Xiangjun. An example of one such comic was *Monopolising the Courtesan* (*Duzhan huakui)*, which described a man who sold cooking oil, accumulated a large amount of money and then spent his savings on prostitutes, one of which he married (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965).[88]

The banning of these particular comics on the eve of the Cultural Revolution was part of a wider struggle between Maoists and more Reformist elements which began in 1963. At the behest of Mao and signifying a change in the political climate, in 1963 a forum was held in Shanghai led by the East China and Shanghai 1st secretary, Ke Qingshi. Ke instructed cultural workers to focus their work on the achievements of the PRC in the preceding three years and negated adapting classical literature. Following on from this, ghost plays in particular began to be targeted. One of the first targets was the play *Li Huiniang*, which Jiang Qing arranged to be attacked in the press (MarFarquhar 1997, 384). Later that same year, Mao personally warned dramatists who had been producing historical plays that the plays needed to be relevant to contemporary society and not represent emperors, generals and beauties. Subsequently, the Ministry of Culture was criticised for ignoring these ‘feudal things’. In 1964 and 1965, the rectification struggle reached all levels of the cultural sphere.

---

[87] It is unclear when precisely Li Xiangjun was labelled a ‘traitor’. A film based on *The Peach Blossom Fan* was released in 1963, so some time in the intervening two years when traditional tales again began to be targeted, the character must have been criticised.

[88] The comic was based on the Ming novel *The Oil Vendor and the Courtesan* (*Mai you lang duzhan huakui*) by the writer and poet Feng Menglong.

‘Superstitious Beliefs’ and ‘Bourgeois Sentiments’

Comics were sometimes banned if they were seen to be propagating ‘superstitious’ beliefs or feudalistic practices—though this also depended on the wider context and political climate in the PRC throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. In the early 1950s, the Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1951d) noted the challenges of handling comics propagating so-called ‘superstitious beliefs’. The Bureau complained the initial challenge came in dividing these comics into different genres and thereby deciding what to do with each. For example, ‘knight errant’ (*wuxia*) and ‘supernatural fantasy’ (*shengguai*) comics in many instances overlapped, and they were often put together (*shengguai wuxia*) in documents relating to *lianhuanhua*, despite representing two distinct genres. Moreover, further blurring of the distinctions between genres meant that each of these could be combined with the often more ‘problematic’ ‘feudalistic superstitious’ stories (*fengjian mixin*), which were accused of propagating ‘irrational beliefs’ (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951d).

Dolby (1976, 236) shows how plays about ghosts and demons were sometimes banned, but also that there was no actual blanket prohibition of these in the 1950s. He argues that they were banned if they were considered ‘pessimistic,’ ‘feudalist,’ ‘fatalist’ and ‘superstitious,’ but not necessarily for one of these reasons alone. Furthermore, many comics which depicted princesses and princes, or were based on traditional novels and legends were not banned up until 1965 (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). In other words, the decision over what to ban was ultimately complex and ad hoc particularly up until 1963. This in itself is relevant for our understanding of how the censorship of cultural mediums worked at a grass roots level in the PRC during the ‘seventeen years’.

By 1963, however (as explored above), the political climate had changed and there was a new marked intolerance for comics featuring spirits, ghosts and alleged feudal practices. The *Lianhuanhua* Review Group banned *The Girl and the Devil* (*Guniang yu mogui*) in which there were ‘images of ghosts with ugly and threatening faces’ and *Dragon’s Demise Ridge* (*Juelong ling*) which included ‘magic, treasure and a fight between a man and ghost’. These were marked for collection (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). Furthermore, *The Injustice of the Nine Murders* (*Jiu ming qiu yuan*), which told of two superstitious landlords whose mistaken belief in a fortune teller’s words led to the death of nine people, was banned from the bookstalls (Shanghai Municipal People’s Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965). In the instance of adaptations of the famous Qing dynasty novel *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* (*Liaozhai zhi yi*), the *Lianhuanhua* Review Group (1965) proclaimed that the collection of supernatural tales should be banned. This was because the comic included images of men falling in love with women who could transform themselves into foxes, other animals and supernatural creatures (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). Up until that point, however, *lianhuanhua* adaptations of the story had thrived. Indeed, by 1965, 30 volumes of *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* had been published in Tianjin alone and the comics were also published in Beijing, Shanghai, Liaoning, Heilongjiang and Shandong, totalling some 60 editions nationally (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965).

Comics were also critiqued in 1965 for focussing on so-called bourgeois sentiments such as love and seduction. *Starling* (*Bage*) was branded as broadcasting feudalist morality because it was the story of a poor young man living in ancient China who relied on his bird to pick up silver for him; the starling in question ends up acting as a matchmaker for the hero, and eventually the young man marries the daughter of the local governor (Shanghai Municipal People’s Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965). Meanwhile, *Tang Bohu Pursues Qiuxiang* (*Tang Bohu dian qiuxiang*) was banned because it told the story of Tang Bohu who went to work for the governor to pursue the servant girl Qiu Xiang. The whole comic was labelled ‘low and frivolous’ as it was about seduction. Likewise, *The Peacock Girl* (*Kongque guniang*) described a prince who after many struggles fell in love with and married a peacock princess. If that was not bad enough, it also included images of women bathing (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965). Gu (1965, 79) advised that female nudes should be avoided at all costs in his treatise on how to draw *lianhuanhua*. Dolby (1976, 236) affirms that for drama the bans on material perceived as sexually lewd seemed to be more complete than those against 'ghosts and demons,' and this certainly appears to also have been the case for *lianhuanhua*.

Foreign Adaptations

In the 1950s the Ministry of Education permitted a variety of foreign literary titles to be adapted into comics. These included pieces of Russian and French nineteenth century literature, such as those by Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas and Guy de Maupassant (Radomski 2012). East European folk tales and even some Charles Dickens stories were also permitted. Dickens was first translated for a Chinese audience in the early twentieth century and his novels were celebrated at the time for showing Europeans as having foibles, but also the capacity for change (Lin Shu 1908 translated in Denton 1996, 86). However, more importantly, for post-1949 rhetoric, these translations subtly adapted and reinterpreted the focus of novels, such as *David Copperfield* (Lee 2013). Principally, against a back drop of the New Culture Movement, the translations suggested that despite the stories being intensely autobiographical they were reflective of collective experience and critical of mercantile capitalism.[89] These stories' ability to somehow be representative of the experience of the masses accorded with CCP rhetoric and Dickens was in fact one of the most popular Western authors in China between 1949 and 1960 (Hung 1996, 36). Given this context, the production of *lianhuanhua* based on Dickens' stories was not surprising.

---

[89] Lee (2013) argues this was very different from Dickens' emphasis on the self and the unique bourgeois subject.

Some of William Shakespeare's works were also adapted into *lianhuanhua* format. The *lianhuanhua* version of *The Merchant of Venice (Weinisi shangren),* produced in China more than any other Shakespearian play, was described as a comedy showing the nature of bourgeois selfishness (Zhang 1955). Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's life story was told in comic form, because his revolutionary music broke through the narrow-mindedness and conservatism of the Austrian court (Wang 1959). It must be noted that this sharing of stories was reciprocal and certain comic books, such as versions of the *Water Margin* and *The White Haired Girl*, were also allowed to be published as international versions which were distributed overseas by Peking Foreign Languages Press to South East Asia, Hong Kong and Macau (International Bookstores 1956). For example, in 1956, at the same time as the Bandung Conference was encouraging Afro-Asian unity, the Office of Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee made suggestions concerning the export of *The You Sisters of the Red Chamber* (*Honglou er You*) to countries with diplomatic relations with the PRC (Huaqiao Affairs Committee General Office 1956).

However, by 1960, Party-State agencies were starting to question whether adapting foreign literature was in fact 'educational'. *The People's Daily* complained that the impact of Europeanisation needed to be combated and that a national style of comic book with form and content reflecting this would be far more desirable (Rou 1960). The SPFAPH (1960) questioned the benefits of publishing eighteenth and nineteenth century 'capitalist' literature as comics and self-criticised, stating '…in handling this material in the past we did not give sufficient attention to analysis and criticism and therefore these comics lack education for the reader, particularly the child'.

In tune with the more nativist and militant sentiment permeating the Chinese Cultural sphere in 1964 and 1965, the *Lianhuanhua* Review Group (1965) stipulated that some of the foreign and Chinese classical stories which were being adapted were not suitable. It further complained that the stories which had been adapted supposedly without critical judgement and modification included those by Shakespeare, Bergerac, Chekov and Maupassant. Foreign stories adapted into *lianhuanhua* which were later banned included *Robinson Crusoe* for its racist overtones and its portrayal of the character Friday (labelled as 'the local African') as a 'rioter and a robber' (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). As stated in chapter three, western racial discrimination was a key theme in Party-State discourses.

The turn against foreign literature in the 1960s was also accompanied by a banning of *lianhuanhua* which were perceived to be propagating humanist doctrine (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965). For example, the comic *Wang Xiaoqing* was lambasted for not talking about justifiable war and propagating peace. Likewise, *Dove of Peace* (*Heping ge*) was banned for depicting a white dove flying over the world and broadcasting the cruelty of war (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). Another example of such a comic was *The Old Persian Man's Sword* (*Bosi laoren de jian*), in which the protagonist meets his enemy sleeping on a cliff and instead of taking revenge on him, befriends him (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965).

Adaptations of Soviet Tales

The way in which the Chinese Communist government saw itself vis-à-vis the Soviet Union was reflected in the thematic changes in *lianhuanhua*. China was closely aligned with the USSR in the 1950s for strategic and political purposes (Hung 2011, 18). Wan (2012, 87) argues that the desire to promote Communist Internationalism over so-called nation-based, 'narrow nationalism' dominated Party-State discourse and thus a desire to draw on literature from within the Soviet bloc developed. In such a context, many 1950s comics adapted stories from the Soviet Union, reflecting a wider tendency to copy propaganda from the USSR in terms of content (Andrews 1994, 41).

The SPFAPH adapted many Soviet tales into comics in the 1950s. It adapted Maxim Gorky's series *My Childhood* (*Wo de tongnian*), *In the World* (*Renjian*), and *My University* (*Wo de daxue),* classing them as 'excellent literature' (SPFAPH 1959f).[90] Similarly, Mikhail Sholokhov's 1935 *Virgin Soil Upturned*[91] (*Bei kaiken de chunüdi)* was classed as 'international literature which can not only enrich comics, but can also satisfy many types of readers and is beneficial to cultural accumulation' (SPFAPH 1959f). Meanwhile, the *lianhuanhua* adaptation of the quintessential Socialist Realist seralisied novel written by Nikolai Ostrovsky between 1932 to 1934 and entitled *How the Steel was Tempered* (*Gangtie shi zenyang lian cheng de*) (1932-1934) was hailed by *The People's Daily* in 1960 (Jiang 1960). The comic was put on a repeat publishing list (*baoliu shumu*) and continually reissued. This is hardly surprising, as the hero of this novel, Pavel Korchagin, was an officially sponsored model for Chinese youth in this period, and one who was celebrated in various mediums (King 2013, 11).

Early on in the process of adapting stories from the Soviet Union, Jiang Weipu particularly selected the up and coming artist Hua Sanchuan for this task, commencing with the 1944 Soviet war film *Rainbow* (*Caihong*) (Lu 2005, 33). Jiang actively encouraged Hua to produce more *lianhuanhua* based on Soviet adaptations, arguing it would enhance his career. Talking about their relationship and the publishing drive in an interview in the mid-2000s, Jiang remembered:

---

[90] *My Childhood* was written in 1913/1914, *In the World* was written in 1916, and *My University* was published in 1923.

[91] *Virgin Soil Upturned* (*Podnyataya Tselina*) is a 1935 novel.

> By 1958 I felt he had published well, but the amount was still not enough. He needed to adapt more Soviet classics. We identified Fadeyev's novel *The Young Guard (Qingnian jin wei jun)* (Lu 2005, 34).

They particularly selected Alexander Fadeyev's 1945 novel for two reasons: Firstly, because Fadeyev was the former Soviet Writers Association President; secondly because Mao had made special reference to him in the last paragraph of the Yan'an talks. Hua collected films, magazines and other cultural ephemera from the Soviet Union to inspire his work (Lu 2005, 34).

China and the Soviet Union began to diverge over Marxist policy in the late 1950s and cultural authorities working in the *lianhuanhua* industry began to express concern about adaptations of Soviet stories. *The Rumyantsev Case* (*Lumianchaifu anjian*), based on a 1955 Soviet film directed by Iosif Kheifits, was one of the first comics to come under such scrutiny. The story focussed on corruption within Soviet society and included the depiction of a heartless and suspicious chief of police. In 1959 the SPFAPH warned that in the past they had firmly believed the USSR, but now a new, more selective approach was necessary (SPFAPH 1959g). In terms of *The Rumyantsev Case* the story focussed too much on 'the darkness of the Soviet Union' and China instead needed characters who were 'wise and brave and could positively influence the reader' (SPFAPH 1959g). The *lianhuanhua* was not banned, but neither was it republished.

However, from 1960 onwards, comics adapted from Soviet stories were banned outright. In 1960, despite lauding *One Man's Destiny* (*Yi Ge Ren De Zaoyu*)[92] a year earlier, the SPFAPH banned the comic based on the 1959 Soviet novel for supposedly propagating pacifism. The story recounted one man's hard experiences during the Second World War (SPFAPH 1960b). Later, in 1965, the *Lianhuanhua* Review Group ordered that *General Du Wading* (*Du Wading jiangjun*) be collected as it included 'images of Soviet revisionists' (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). At the same time, *The People Who Call on Wind and Rain* (*Hufenghuanyu de renmin*) was lambasted for propagating the Soviet 'revisionist' line. The Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office (1965) complained:

> It gives the illusion that in 1972 the Soviet Union will use atomic energy to create a dam across the Bering Strait between the USSR and the USA. This is the revisionist line suggested by the Soviets and it broadcasts peace and international cooperation and is against worldwide class struggle.

Andrews (1997, 28) argues that in line with more 'nationalistic cultural polices' following the Sino-Soviet split, *lianhuanhua* from 1958 to 1964 tended to have a more distinctly Chinese subject matter and aesthetic. The SPFAPH (1960b) indeed stated in the 1960s that *lianhuanhua* needed to promote 'classical and national characteristics' (*minzu chuantong tese*). *Monkey Beats the White-boned Demon* by Zhao Hongben and Qian Xiaodai, published in 1962, is evocative of this trend (Andrews 1997, 28).

---

[92] *One Man's Destiny* (*Sudba Cheloveka*) is a 1959 Soviet novel by Mikhail Sholokhov.

Importantly, however, the adaptation of Soviet literature into *lianhuanhua* was different from other political cultural mediums. This was because it did not extend to a wholesale adoption of Soviet artistic techniques or to the organisation of the industry as a whole. *Lianhuanhua* were a distinctly Chinese medium from the beginning, which the USSR had not utilised (Gu 1965). Moreover, even as early as 1953, and as discussed in chapter three, the *Lianlian* Bookstore was urging caution in adapting content wholesale from the Soviet Union. Adaptations of Soviet literature were overtaking Chinese classical stories and those focussing on the Chinese peasant revolution, which was not seen as beneficial at the time, despite the burgeoning dominance of the USSR in influencing other forms of Chinese political culture (Chen and He 1962). Soviet-style oil painting and artistic techniques were also never as prevalent in *lianhuanhua* because the medium was never promoted in the academies, but was the preserve of the publishing houses. All of this suggests that the ‘purging’ or obfuscation of Russian influence following the Sino-Soviet split was far easier accomplished in *lianhuanhua* than it was in other artistic forms.

Child Characters in *Lianhuanhua*

The comics were supposed to act as a form of orthopraxy for children and therefore Party-State agencies debated how child characters should be envisaged in them (SPFAPH 1960b). An article in *The People’s Daily*, penned by Rou Jianshen (1960), highlights the positive impact *lianhuanhua* were supposed to have, particularly on the morals and behaviour of children and youth. He gives the example of Young Pioneers in rural Hunan who were inspired to organise a communication team after reading the famous *lianhuanhua The Letter with the Feather* (*Ji maoxin*) (Rou 1960). The story is about a shepherd boy who works as a messenger for the guerrilla forces fighting the Japanese. Another famous comic which was celebrated at the time was *Heroic Little Eighth Route Army Man* (*Yingxiong xiao balu*) (also a 1961 film), which tells of a group of five children who protect the home front from attacks by the Guomindang in Fujian during the early 1950s and catch enemy spies (SPFAPH 1960b).

Comics such as *Heroic Little Eighth Route Army Man* and *The Letter with the Feather* featured child characters. However, there appears to have been some disagreement in the early 1960s over whether children should take a pioneering role in the comics, or whether adults should act as role models. Rosen et al. (1987, 121) argue that at times, young readers were encouraged to identify with child heroes who broke with the past and its representative elders by critiquing or actively struggling against them. A 1960 report by the SPFAPH house included a sentence to this effect arguing that children should play a dominant role. However, the sentence was crossed out with a note to the effect that this suggestion had been criticised (SPFAPH 1960b).

This concern about the ‘correct’ role of children in revolution was addressed in Zhao Hongben’s and He Youzhi’s (1965) *The Lights of Yan’an*. In the short story the little boy Xiao Hong wishes to ‘go with his mother to the front line to find father and kill the enemy,’ in this case the Japanese. Mother says to Xiao Hong, ‘you are too young to go and you are not allowed. You need to stay in the nursery, study hard and follow Mao’s words. When you grow up you can be like your father and make revolution’ (Zhao and He 1965) (Appendix Figure 6). Xiao Hong ignores her and ventures across the Yan’an River to find Mao and ask his opinion. Mao, who remains visually absent and who the reader only hears about through Xiao Hong’s recollections, criticises Xiao Hong for ‘sneaking out’. He tells him to study hard, exercise and, when he has grown up, participate in the revolution (Zhao and Youzhi 1965). The reader learns Xiao Hong went on to fight in the Korean War.

Lacking a National Strategy

From 1949 to 1966, comics from Shanghai dominated the market, but publishing houses in other cities became famous in their own right for producing certain genres of *lianhuanhua* and utilising specific artistic styles. Moreover, the principal *lianhuanhua* publishing houses nationwide kept a close watch on each other and borrowed artists and ideas from other cities. Despite this, however, and the general trends in *lianhuanhua* production and censorship described earlier in this chapter, the industry lacked an overall national strategy up until 1966. Publishing houses were for the most part acting in isolation from each other and this was counterproductive and more difficult to regulate as far as some Party-State agencies were concerned. In spite of some initial attempts to work collaboratively in the 1960s, on the eve of the Cultural Revolution *lianhuanhua* still lacked national strategy due in part to logistical issues, the dominance of Shanghai and the distrust between Shanghai and Beijing. This lack of a national strategy challenges assumptions about a tightly controlled cultural bureaucracy led by Beijing

In 1959 the SPFAPH estimated that:

> Over the last ten years, there have been 2017 first editions of new comics published in Shanghai and the first and second editions together total 220 million comics. This is half the national publishing total (SPFAPH 1959f).

Du (2014, 120) argues that Beijing replaced Shanghai as the centre of the publishing industry after 1955 and this may have been true for other mediums, but this thesis finds the opposite was the case for *lianhuanhua* production. Due to the fact that Shanghai led in terms of production statistics, comics retailed there were sold all over China. The majority were sent to the north and then central China, while the remainder went to the northeast, northwest and the south. The SPFAPH (1957) proclaimed ‘we need to actively motivate our artists, so we can give Beijing and other cities more *lianhuanhua* drawings, illustrations and paintings’. However, despite Shanghai’s dominance, from 1950 to 1952 four other major publishing houses specialising in Fine Arts and *lianhuanhua* were established in Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei and Liaoning and they contributed to national comic output in terms of content and style (Radomski 2012).

Zhang (2012, 119) argues that each publishing house had its own unique artistic style for producing *lianhuanhua*, as evidenced by their different stylistic adaptations of the classic *Journey to the West*. The SPFAPH was reputed to have ‘beautiful and elegant scenes,’ while the Liaoning Fine Arts Publishing House embraced a more ‘textured’ layout. Zhang (2012, 119) describes the Zhejiang Fine Arts Publishing House as adopting an ‘exquisite’ style. Reflecting current Chinese scholarship on *lianhuanhua* in general, Zhang highlights the aesthetic importance of the medium. She states that variations in the production of the comics across publishing houses nationally heralded independent ways of thinking about art.

As explored in chapter three, agencies in Beijing kept abreast of developments in the Shanghai *lianhuanhua* publishing industry from an early stage, eager to replicate successes and avoid ‘mistakes’. However, publishing houses in Shanghai also looked outwards to examine the kinds of *lianhuanhua* being produced in other cities and how they could act as a source of artistic and textual inspiration (SPFAPH 1962). In 1962 the SPFAPH explicated thus:

> In collecting scripts we will look to other cities, such as Guangzhou and Hangzhou, who turn out high quality *lianhuanhua* and do not just rely on Shanghai. They have designed comics with very colourful characteristics in the past (SPFAPH 1962a).

The publishing house achieved this by employing artists from other cities and collecting examples of ‘good’ comics to replicate (Shanghai People Fine Arts Publishing House1962a). Likewise, the Tianjin Fine Arts Publishing House invited two young and up-and-coming artists to join its team in the late 1950s. Gao Yan from Beijing and Dai Ren from Zhejiang were specifically employed to adapt *lianhuanhua* based on novels by the Socialist Realist author Feng Deying. In the early 1960s, Dai and Gao created *Winter Jasmine* (*Yingchun hua*) and *The Bitter Cauliflower* (*Ku caihua*), which focused on Japanese atrocities in China during the Anti-Japanese War (Lü 2012a, 75).

In 1959 the SPFAPH (1959a) critiqued its own output over the previous decade, stipulating that it had not had a long-term plan for *lianhuanhua*: ‘publishing was not systematic and the content was disordered’. The publishing house also argued that the reasons for this shortfall lay in its inability to appropriately evaluate its own approaches to *lianhuanhua* production and in particular assess why certain titles were being produced. In responding to this, *The People’s Daily* (1959b) praised the publishing house, stating it approved of its mission to gain better control over publishing by introducing a three-year plan. The plan was to focus on ‘revolutionary comics,’ lengthy literary classics and literature in translation. However, with 20 to 30 *lianhuanhua* publishers operating in China as whole, questions over how to best control the industry and direct production also arose at a national level (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). This did not occur, however, until the 1960s, when there were some limited moves towards institutionalising inter-city cooperation.

One of the reasons cooperation was encouraged was that, according to the Shanghai *Lianhuanhua* Review Group, production still lacked an overall national strategy. The Review Group (1965) complained that the same title was being published by multiple publishers nationwide because there was no clear strategy and every publishing house had its own plan. The Office of the Shanghai Municipal People’s Committee of Culture and Education (1965) also reiterated that continually producing material without reference to what other publishing houses were doing or an overall national strategy was counterproductive.

The fact that every publishing house had its own plans explains other characteristics of the *lianhuanhua* industry discussed earlier in this chapter. The content of *lianhuanhua*, although geared towards propaganda purposes, was also quite eclectic. A variety of different stories emerged. In addition, despite the loose guidelines described above comics appear to have been censored on an ad hoc basis by the publishing houses and Party-State agencies, and whole mediums were not entirely banned, denoting both changing attitudes to content and the limits of control over the different stages of the production and dissemination process.

Furthermore, it was thought that the lack of a national strategy contributed to a lack of sufficient output. From 1960 for three years the SPFAPH (1959a) vowed to increase its output by 10%. Consequently, in 1963 and 1964 the SPFAPH published 30 to 40 comics and it was the largest publisher nationally; however, the *Lianhuanhua* Review Group argued this was still not sufficient. In 1965 the publishing house planned to publish 80 to 100 comics, but the Review Group argued this was still not sufficient to satisfy readers' needs (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). Shanghai Municipal People's Committee Culture and Education Office also stipulated that the monthly average of ten new comics was not enough to satisfy readers. In addition, it complained that publishing times were too slow, with it taking two years to publish a two volume set (Office of the Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education 1965).

However, despite this concern over a lack of quantity, for the Review Group it was the intertextual circulation of stories, despite being a common practice across political cultural mediums, which was considered most harmful. Hang (2013, 54) calls these stories, which were adapted for different mediums, 'travelling narratives' and they were able to reach people in every strata of society in their different forms (Hang 2013, 54). By 1965 *Red Rock* (*Hong*

Yan), adapted from a 1963 classic revolutionary novel, had been adapted countless times (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965).[93] The Review Group (1965) however argued that repeat adaptations 'undermines the strength of publishing and is a waste in terms of comic production, time and energy and it does not improve quality'.

Even more popular was the story of *Li Shuangshuang*, which was published in eight or nine comic versions before 1966. He Youzhi himself produced two copies of *Li Shuangshuang* for the SPFAPH, one black and white longer version (described earlier in this chapter) and one shorter version in water colour for younger readers (He 1964a, 1964b). The colour version utilised short sentences and rhyme and rhythm to move the story along and make it more memorable for children. The text also used colloquialisms and several times employed words derived from Shanghai dialect (He 1964b, 5). The use of dialect in the text could suggest that regional publishers of *lianhuanhua* felt it was important to appeal to people, especially children's, regional understandings and potentially their mother tongue. As well as the famous versions produced by Hua and He, a simple sketch version of the story was published as a comic in Tianjin in 1963 (Du 1963).

At the same time as the Review Group was expressing its concerns about the repetition of stories like *Li Shuangshuang*, Jiang Weipu (as head of the *lianhuanhua* press) was also expressing a desire for Shanghai and Beijing to work on producing comics together (Wu 1966). In order to take this endeavour forward, individuals from the Peoples Fine Arts Publishing House in Beijing and the SPFAPH formed an association. Under the direction of Chen Hanbo in the Ministry of Culture, Jiang and his associate Wu Wenhua set about trying to provide themes for 20 to 30 *lianhuanhua* titles focussing on ‘the People’s war,’ including adaptations and new stories, which would be published by both publishing houses in a collaborative effort (Wu 1966).

---

[93] In 1963 the SPFAPH organised a team to adapt the story into two comics. In the same year, the Heilongjiang Fine Arts Publishing House (*Heilongjiang meishu chubanshe)* created a five part comic series based on *Red Rock* (later in 1965 this series expanded to nine comics). In 1964 the Sichuan People's Publishing House *(Sichuan meishu chubanshe)* and the Anhui People's Publishing House *(Anhui meishu chubanshe)* created their own series of comics based on the novel. Not to be outdone, the SPFAPH revised its earlier offering of two comics in 1965 to create a new series of four (Cong 2006).

Wu (1966) went on an explorative trip to Beijing and ‘saw more than 200 war-related *lianhuanhua* coming in from different cities and some movie scripts’. Subsequently, Wu called for the involvement of individuals from Tianjin as well, presumably because Tianjin itself had a reputation for producing popular *lianhuanhua* about the revolutionary wars. For example, the artist Li Tianxin (1924-2008) was famously funded by the Tianjin Publishing House specifically to adapt *The Armed Team Behind Enemy Lines* (*Dihou Wugong Dui)* based on a 1958 Anti-Japanese War novel. Lü (2012a, 75) highlights the importance of this comic, stating that in readers’ minds this particular war comic became ‘a monument to go down in history’. The continuing significance of the comic was noted in 2005, when it was reprinted to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the War.

However, despite this desire to work with artists and publishers in Tianjin and Beijing, in reality, cross-city publishing proved logistically challenging and there was not much enthusiasm for it; Wu complained that he had been left to do most of the work on his own (Wu 1966). This is probably one reason why cooperation between cities seems to have been rather rare before the Cultural Revolution. Another reason is that in the case of Beijing and Shanghai at least, as Lian’s (2012, 96) account and official documents suggest, there was a deep-seated distrust of Shanghai as the basis of old comic book production. Party-State agencies and publishers in different cites invariably kept an eye on each other. However, Shanghai remained the centre of *lianhuanhua* production as it dominated the industry both before and after 1949 and production in other cities could never match the city’s output in terms of scope and scale. That meant that the ‘national strategy’ in *lianhuanhua* production prior to the Cultural Revolution was to all intents and purposes Shanghai’s strategy. The strategy of publishing houses in Shanghai and most notably the SPFAPH towards production and censorship was quite ad hoc as they dealt with changing political requirements and the fact that logistics sometimes had to trump adhering to strict policies.

Conclusion

‘Poisonous comics’ were those which were thought to malign the PLA, cadres and the leadership of the CCP. Although it is possible to draw attention to some general patterns in the kinds of content which provoked censorship, in actuality what was allowed and disallowed varied a lot and comics were dealt with on an individual basis rather than entire genres being banned. Moreover, censorship could occur at different stages of the production process, and in different ways and sometimes only when comics were already in circulation.

Furthermore, *lianhuanhua* production lacked a national strategy prior to 1966. This meant that copies of the same story were published by multiple publishing houses, something Party-State agencies began to see as problematic by the mid-1960s. Publishing houses across China published *lianhuanhua,* but cooperative attempts between publishing houses proved logistically challenging. Moreover, there was a certain level of distrust between Shanghai and Beijing that prohibited joint enterprises.

Chapter 6: Creative Cadres

Introduction

After 1954 and the nationalisation of the publishing houses, the SPFAPH dominated *lianhuanhua* production for the next decade, with the majority of *lianhuanhua* artists and writers working there. This chapter charts the interactions between creative cadres (*lianhuanhua chuangzuo ganbu*), the leaders of the publishing house and Party-State agencies from 1956 to 1966. Despite its leading role, the SPFAPH itself faced internal, as well as logistical 'challenges' in terms of *lianhuanhua* production. Logistically, the publishing house lacked sufficient numbers of professional writers to create *lianhuanhua*, as the medium continued to be primarily viewed as one in which artists could garner recognition and financial reward. In addition, skilled artists were in short supply and this meant the Party-State agencies handled artist discontent relatively carefully.

Aware of their importance as producers of a 'new' form of political culture, *lianhuanhua* artists were not averse to challenging their working conditions, rate of pay and overall treatment during the Hundred Flowers Campaign (Shanghai People Fine Arts Publishing House 1957). However, this occurred for the first time in 1955, when Zhao Hongben challenged Party-State agencies to do their duty towards the marginalised *lianhuanhua* artists who had lost out during the privatisation of the publishing industry. Policies were, unsurprisingly, more restrictive in the aftermath of the anti-Rightist campaign, and during the Great Leap Forward artists were sent to work in the countryside. However, by the early 1960s, the unique features of the medium were again being highlighted and *lianhuanhua* artists were allowed some 'little freedoms,' such as the ability to work at home.

As well as tracking the dominance of the SPFAPH and its institutional framework, this chapter discusses the role of the writer in producing *lianhuanhua* and how this differed from the Republican period. Predominantly, however, I focus on the role of the artist and how they responded to changing Party-State policy between 1954 and 1966. Specifically, the chapter elucidates the impact that policy had on their art work and the way in which they were allowed to work. I conclude that the Party-State and *lianhuanhua* artists never came into direct confrontation over artistic style, as *lianhuanhua* artists were able to amalgamate western style line drawing with ‘national characteristics’ and overcome fundamental contradictions in CCP art policy.

The SPFAPH

The tale of *lianhuanhua* production in Shanghai between 1954 and 1966 is invariably a tale of developments in the SPFAPH, not just in terms of production statistics, but also because this publishing house led in terms of implementing Party-State policy. The SPFAPH itself came under the leadership of the Publishing Bureau and the Propaganda Bureau. It functioned as an instrument of the Party-State, a production company and as the institutional co-ordinator of the majority of *lianhuanhua* artists. Moreover, it played a large role in distribution initiatives, as I shall highlight in this and the next chapter, providing *lianhuanhua* directly to distributers, and stipulating not just what comics should be read, but also *how* they should be read. However, this chapter examines the relationship between artists and writers working in the SPFAPH and their leaders, who worked closely with Party-State agencies.

By 1956, and in keeping with developments across China as whole, the Shanghai publishing houses producing *lianhuanhua* had been nationalised (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1957a). The SPFAPH itself was the result of a 1952 amalgamation of the Fine Arts Department of the East China People’s Publishing House and the East China People’s Fine Arts Publishing House. After 1954 it quickly came to the fore, amalgamating the New Art

Press. In its early stages, and lacking resources, the SPFAPH at times subcontracted work on *lianhuanhua* out to other publishing houses. For example, in 1954 the printing of the cover of each *lianhuanhua* was transferred temporarily to the Shanghai *Xinhua* Press (SPFAPH 1955).

However, in January 1956 and August 1958 respectively the SPFAPH expanded even further with the incorporation of the New Fine Arts Publishing House and the Shanghai Picture Card Publishing House. In terms of *lianhuanhua* production this meant that the SPFAPH from then on dominated the industry. Comic production in Shanghai, no matter the content or artistry came under the jurisdiction of the SPFAPH (SPFAPH 1957). *The People's Daily* (1959b) likewise hailed its achievements. The SPFAPH itself reported to the Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Bureau (*xuanchuanbu*), the Cultural Bureau and the Publishing Bureau (*chubanshe*). The publishing house had a dedicated comic creation room (*lianhuanhua bianji shi*) directed by Zhao Hongben and Gu Bingxin (SPFAPH 1960b). Within this setting, *lianhuanhua* artists, script writers and editors held internal meetings and collected suggestions on how to proceed from those involved (SPFAPH 1962a).

The actions of the SPFAPH heavily influenced other publishers. For instance, it would often conduct a trial run of a *lianhuanhua* production scheme before rolling this out to other publishers. Signifying the SPFAPH's influential role, the Shanghai Municipal Publishing Bureau (1961b) urged caution, stating that if the publishing house made changes to the ways in which it allowed *lianhuanhua* artists to work through the 'Three Guarantees' system, it would invariably influence other publishers in Shanghai, especially the Children's Publisher (*Xiao'er Chubanshe*). As will be elaborated later in this chapter, this was particularly significant in the early 1960s, when the SPFAPH was part of an endeavour to single *lianhuanhua* artists out and treat them differently from the producers of other forms of political culture.

By 1960 the SPFAPH employed what were referred to as ‘creative cadres’. Indeed, this was the term most commonly used to describe the individuals working in the various capacities of the *lianhuanhua* publishing industry, as writers, adaptors (*gaibianzhe*) and artists.[94] These creative cadres were recruited from the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, the magazine editor training programmes, other private publishing houses or colleges and universities (Shanghai People Fine Arts Publishing House 1960a). Due to its dominance in the industry, the rest of this chapter focusses on the development of *lianhuanhua* in the SPFAPH, the role of the creative cadres and the relationship which developed between the artists and writers who worked there and those in positions of authority acting under the Cultural Bureau. This is important because it will show us directly how those at the forefront of producing culture interacted with the Party-State.

The Adaptor and the Writer

During the Republican era the emphasis put on the text in *lianhuanhua* was minimal. Indeed, in 1932 Mao Dun had called the text a mere ‘elucidation’ (*shuoming*) of the images in *lianhuanhua*, whose understanding was not necessary for an appreciation of the comic (Mao 1932). Moreover, in the 1930s and 1940s the images were created first and then a script was generated afterwards, invariably by the artist themselves, to accompany their drawings (SPFAPH 1959a). Sometimes the script only constituted a few simple sentences in the margins (Cheng 2011, 30). Few professional writers were involved in the creation of *lianhuanhua*. These *lianhuanhua* were more similar to comics in western cultures, where the images often carry the momentum of the plot forward.

---

[94] By 1957 the SPFAPH had 74 *lianhuanhua* artists (SPFAPH 1957).

In contrast to this, after 1949 the Party-State affirmed the importance of the text by introducing comprehensive scripts and the role of the script writer. In the PRC, as *lianhuanhua* were co-opted for propaganda purposes control of words became important and they had to carry the message the Party-State wanted. *The People's Daily* commented that 'the completion of a *lianhuanhua* was dependent not just on the artist, but also the writer producing words' (Li 1956). Furthermore, Jiang Weipu's single critique of Lu Xun's 'In Defence of Comics' was the lack of attention Lu had paid to the role of writers in *lianhuanhua* production. Jiang (1956b) expanded on Lu Xun's sentiment that the comic artist could become a Michelangelo, by arguing that a *lianhuanhua* writer could also become a Tolstoy.

The involvement of a professional 'script writer' (*wenzi zuozhe* or *bianxie zuozhe*) in the production process was a significant difference between the *lianhuanhua* produced prior to and post-1949. Nebiolo (1973, xiv) notes that the decision to incorporate text was quite surprising given the largely illiterate population and that *lianhuanhua* would have resembled Western comics more if they had incorporated minimal text and balloon captions. However, as I have already established in chapter four, *lianhuanhua* were used to improve literacy and the medium originated in cities where the population was generally more literate. In any case, the Party-State already had other mediums, such as *nianhua* and propaganda posters, which were predominantly visual. It needed a medium to bridge the gap between these and more sophisticated literary mediums. In addition, with the introduction of script into *lianhuanhua* the Party-State was more able to control content, as the script dictated the basic plot of the comic, with this element coming first in the production process (Li 1956).

After 1949, each *lianhuanhua* either had a writer or an adaptor *(gaibianzhe*). Party-State agencies and publishing houses employed writers to come up with original 'revolutionary' scripts (Li 1956). At the same time, the *gaibianzhe* had the potentially more problematic role of adapting classical stories, folk tales, or Chinese or Soviet revolutionary novels into comics for wider consumption. The *gaibianzhe* was tasked with the thorny job of ‘keeping the spirit of the original,’ while at the same time being selective so that content did not spread ‘a feudalistic view point’ (Li 1956).

In 1960, the SPFAPH (1960a) further put pressure on the adaptors to do a good job, stating that in some cases the subject matter for the proposed comic was worthwhile, ‘but if the adaptation was not good, good ingredients did not guarantee a good dish’. In particular, in this instance, the SPFAPH (1960a) accused adaptors of ignoring the ‘educational’ needs of their target audience of workers, peasants, and soldiers and youth and instead choosing to adapt any content which would have popular appeal. In this case, the SPFAPH leadership was probably reapportioning blame for ‘problems’ they realised characterised the output of their publishing house as a whole. However, chapter four highlighted some of the more general challenges faced in adapting content already in circulation and how this process could result in intense criticism of those involved if they were seen to be making ‘mistakes’ by agencies, particularly the Cultural Bureau.

Andrews (1997, 23) proposed that the new division of labour under the Communists could have been intended to bolster the efficiency of Party-State control and regulation. My archival research backs up this supposition. Early in the 1950s, the Cultural Bureau (1952a) stated that if work were divided among adaptors, writers and artists there would be fewer content issues. Likewise, the SPFAPH (1959a) also stated that dividing the work on the comics between artists and writers would ensure that the content better fulfilled the needs of the Party. Dividing content production in this way created a system by which the comic would be checked at different levels by all the individuals working on it. Furthermore, for the most part artists and writers were not encouraged to work together and therefore they were less likely to have loyalties, ‘complicating’ the censorship and checking process. Of course, as the previous chapter demonstrates, as far as Party-State agencies were concerned this system did not go anywhere near ensuring that erroneous content did not emerge. Additionally, as chapter five's examples suggest, neither the script nor the artistry were failsafe, and 'problems' arose with either or both on a case by case basis either at the point of production or once they were in circulation.

Despite the emphasis put on the role of the writer and the *gaibianzhe* from the outset, those involved in the *lianhuanhua* industry were not always convinced that the *lianhuanhua* script constituted an important part of the comic. This was because for many, *lianhuanhua* still constituted an artistic medium rather than a sophisticated literary art form. Liu Xun (1954), writing in *Meishu,* complained that just as a film could not be envisaged without a script, neither could a *lianhuanhua* be produced without text, but still writers did not take the job seriously. Meanwhile, Lu Li (1956) writing in *The People's Daily* protested that the writing of the comics was not receiving the same amount of attention as the artistry. However, *lianhuanhua* was not the only medium to suffer from a lack of writers. Arkush (1981, xxvii) describes how prior to the Hundred Flowers Campaign writers more generally were highly apprehensive about the ideological restrictions on them and there was a lack of output in the early 1950s. In addition, Du (2014, 102) maintains that freelance writers were in short supply for the New Tabloids, which were permitted to thrive in the early 1950s.

Whatever the reason, writing scripts for *lianhuanhua* was not a particularly popular career, and *The People's Daily* complained writers were in very short supply by the mid-1950s (Jiang 1956a). A year later, during the Hundred Flowers Campaign, the issue of a lack of skilled writers was again emphasised in *Meishu* and as a result content was seen to be too repetitive (Xian 1957). The lack of script writers continued to be a problem throughout the 1950s and by 1959 the SPFAPH (1959a) only had 18 specialised *lianhuanhua* script writers, many of whom were near retirement. Furthermore, the publishing house insinuated that writers looked down on the comics because the medium was not sophisticated enough in terms of the written word (SPFAPH 1960a). Due to a lack of in-house talent (*shenei bianji*), the publishing house looked outwards to find more writers. Indeed, the rest of its literary staff were drawn from a pool of script writers operating on an ad hoc and commission basis. These included professional full time writers who wrote for other literary mediums, as well as non-professional writers who held another job on the side (SPFAPH 1959a). It is significant that by the late 1950s the publishing house had still not successfully institutionalised the role of the script writer and was therefore relying on such freelancers. This demonstrates again that policy often had to give way to practical necessities in cultural production.

The SPFAPH did not readily accept what it saw as the limits of its pool of *lianhuanhua* writing staff, however. The publishing house complained that both kinds of writers, but particularly the non-professional writers, produced ‘poor quality’ scripts at a slow pace, taking anything from three to six months to write a script (SPFAPH 1959a). Notably, this complaint was made during the Great Leap Forward, when as previously established, the emphasis was on speed more generally. It is clear, however, that script writers were caught in a very difficult position, for while they might be chastised for working too slowly they were also critiqued for dashing off scripts too quickly. The writer Li Lu (1921-), chief editor for the New Art Press and subsequently head of the editing section of the Comic Creation Room at the SPFAPH, complained that comic writers would dash off scripts quickly, completing dozens of pages in an hour. Li (1956) complained these scripts lacked political mindedness and that language did not conform to that described in chapter three.

In response to all these concerns, and desiring to augment the quality of the written scripts specifically for a series of *lianhuanhua* based on classical histories, the SPFAPH began a programme in 1959 to educate a new generation of script writers on the special characteristics of the medium and asked some university graduates to join the publishing house. Furthermore, the publishing house published two books on comic creation with chapters on script production (SPFAPH 1959a). However, specialised programmes and books for script writers were a much later addition, suggesting that although Party-State agencies wished to emphasise the written word, they themselves were not aware that creating *lianhuanhua* scripts would require a specialised set of skills. Chapter three discussed the ways in which artists were more immediately amalgamated into the fold through a series of training programmes in the early 1950s. In the wake of the Great Leap Forward and against a backdrop of increased focus on the quality of *lianhuanhua* scripts and greater freedoms for creative cadres, writers and adaptors were invited to take a more active role in the creative process. They were invited to suggest ideas or themes for *lianhuanhua,* subject of course to official approval and in addition were encouraged to work more closely with artists in adapting a particular comic, something which had hitherto not been encouraged (Shanghai Publishing Bureau 1961a).

The Artists

Despite the introduction of the script writer, *lianhuanhua* artists continued to garner the most attention from Party-State agencies after 1949 and were generally perceived to be the most important contributor to the comics. This was because the script outlined major character and plot developments, but it was the artistry which made potentially monotonous themes attractive. In other words, it was the *lianhuanhua* art work which drew in the audience. Famously, although the text and plot of He Youzhi's *Great Changes on the Mountain* was considered stilted, his drawn characters were considered insightful and shown to experience believable emotion in the face of tremendous changes during the Collectivisation campaign (Andrews 1997, 28).

In testament to their importance, but also the length of time it took to illustrate *lianhuanhua*, the SPFAPH employed far more artists than writers. At the height of production in the late 1950s, the publishing house employed 71 specialist *lianhuanhua* artists (*zhuanye chuangzuo*) and this was over half the number of *lianhuanhua* artists operating in Shanghai (SPFAPH 1959a). At the same time, there were 96 amateur (*yeyu chuangzuo*) *lianhuanhua* artists operating in Shanghai, whose skill set was more limited, but upon whom the publishing house periodically drew upon (SPFAPH 1959a). Furthermore, at times, artists were drafted in from other mediums to work on *lianhuanhua*. As will be elaborated, this was the case for the *guohua* artists employed during the Hundred Flowers campaign (Andrews 1994, 130).

Due to their importance, the relationship which developed between *lianhuanhua* artists and the Party-State-directed publishing houses, and by extension the Cultural Bureau, was heavily dominated by these agencies, but nevertheless mutually reliant to some extent. As producers of a highly popular form of mass culture but being relatively few in number, *lianhuanhua* artists played an important role in Party-State propaganda, and they were rewarded for particularly exemplary comics. For example, unlike script writers, individual artists were celebrated in the press. *The People's Daily* frequently commented on the artists themselves and celebrated those at the top of the profession. Likewise, artists were relatively well paid and rewarded for their work. For example, the artist Huang Quanchang earned royalties totalling 300 yuan for a 60-page comic book (in fact he had decided to take up illustrating comics in the mid-1950s because he had heard wages were good) (He 2012, 68). As will be described, wages also rose significantly during the Hundred Flowers Campaign. Furthermore, from 1956 to 1966, there were instances of *lianhuanhua* artists deliberately being given selective treatment in comparison to the artists producing other mediums. The fact that *lianhuanhua* did not have a basis in Yan'an made it particularly important that the Party-State attract, as well as coerce, non-Party member artists into following the 'correct' line.

As a consequence of their elevated status, in periods of relative freedom *lianhuanhua* artists negotiated directly for higher wages and greater artistic freedoms, such as the ability to work from home and choose their own projects (SPFAPH 1957). *Lianhuanhua* artists were not averse to challenging the status quo. However, Party-State agencies also cracked down on artists and restricted their work and pay, particularly during the Anti-Rightist campaign and the Great Leap Forward.

The complicated 'push and pull' relationship which developed between the Party-State and *lianhuanhua* artists can be traced from the privatisation of the publishing houses up until the implementation of 'The Three Guarantees' in the first half of the 1960s. Principally, though, the struggle between Party-State agencies and *lianhuanhua* artists was over practical issues, such as how artists should be entitled to work and how they should be financially rewarded for their efforts. This was because *lianhuanhua* artists were not caught in the battle over artistic technique, such as that between Socialist Realism versus Chinese traditional line drawing. In fact, as will be discussed, in illustrating *lianhuanhua* artists were perhaps best able to marry the contradictions in CCP art policy and this was particularly evident in the early 1960s.

Single-line Drawing

Despite the fact that *lianhuanhua* artists outnumbered script writers, by the mid-1950s the publishing houses still lacked the necessary talent. The SPFAPH (1960a) was perpetually stating that the number of artists was insufficient to meet output demands. This was partly because not all artists necessarily wanted to gravitate towards producing *lianhuanhua*. Jiang Weipu complained that some artists were averse to producing comics because they still considered the art form to be 'low-level'. Consequently, Jiang (1956b) also commented that those training to be artists were apprehensive about admitting they wanted to specialise in comics for fear of being laughed at by other intellectuals. In addition, *lianhuanhua* required a long-term time commitment of three to six months for even a relatively short book (Jiang 1956a). In addition, Xian Zhi (1957) writing in *Meishu* complained that artists trained in the art schools disdained producing *lianhuanhua* because they regarded them as time-consuming and not requiring the same level of artistic skill as producing a single painting. He urged ‘My comrade artists, pick up your pens, write and draw right now!' He Youzhi (1982, 1) also notes that *lianhuanhua* were often looked down upon as inferior stylistically by other artists and were associated with the tawdrier side of popular culture.

A number of artists may have looked down on the medium as a form of popular culture rather than high art (He 1982, 1). However, it was fundamentally wider Party policy itself in the early 1950s which ensured that only a few artists specialised in the medium. The desire to promote western style oil painting in the early 1950s more generally meant that many emerging artists lacked skills in traditional Chinese painting and art (Andrews 1994, 53). Artists recognised that learning oil painting techniques was a sure route for promotion. Furthermore, the newly-established CCP art academies did not focus on *lianhuanhua*, but were instead encouraging students to produce ‘new *nianhua’* (Andrews 1994, 67). This backfired when Party-State agencies and publishing houses lacked the necessary qualified artists in traditional forms, such as single-line drawing (*danxian miao*).

Single-line drawing was the primary artistic medium used for *lianhuanhua*. Highly skilled *lianhuanhua* artists were proficient in drawing the 18 types of line in classical drawing (Gu 1965, 34). Gu (1965, 5) noted that other styles of illustrating *lianhuanhua* emerged after 1949, such as charcoal, colour ink painting, wood cuts, cartooning, paper cuts and animation, but these styles dominated the cover. In practise, in creating a comic *lianhuanhua* artists used pencils and erasers to draft and brushes to go over the sketch with black ink (Gu 1965, 9).

In general artists working on other mediums were dissuaded from learning traditional techniques in the early 1950s. However, the opposite was true for the comics. *Lianhuanhua* used the outline and an unmodulated colour technique, which derived from traditional Chinese painting and this was widely appreciated by audiences (Andrews 1994, 49). The use of single-line drawing also had a practical purpose in that the subtleties of the art work were not lost when they were printed cheaply as would have been the case if pencil and other forms of drawing were used (Andrews 1994, 134). The use of this technique was first advocated by Jiang Feng.

Jiang Feng held positions in the Chinese Artists' Association and the Central Academy of Fine Arts and until 1957 (when he was labelled a Rightist) and played a dominant role in orchestrating the transformation of the cultural sphere. For example, he introduced the Russian art academy system and advocated techniques which came to dominate, such as life drawing, plaster cast sculpture and painting with oils. As a 'popular' art form, he was a great proponent of *lianhuanhua*. However, as a woodcut artist, Jiang regarded traditional Chinese artistic techniques as outmoded and on the verge of dying out. In the early 1950s, he was heavily advocating Western oil painting (Andrews 1994, 49). Conversely, for *lianhuanhua*, he encouraged the Chinese outline and flat-colour technique of single-line drawing. This had ongoing implications for the position of the medium in the art world as a whole.

From the outset, *lianhuanhua* artists were separated from the development of the overall art industry. As described in chapter three, this was initially the case administratively as the industry was part of the civil administration system, rather than the art academy system. Secondly, although *lianhuanhua* artists went through specialised training programmes, artistically they were not forced to develop in the same ways as other artists were with the wholesale adoption of Soviet styles. As will be discussed, *lianhuanhua* artists' familiarity with traditional Chinese techniques benefitted them, especially as artists were later able to successfully marry western figure drawing with Single-line drawing to produce tales based on revolutionary history, as well as classical Chinese folk tales.

Furthermore, artists who had the capacity to produce 'ancient-costume[95] *lianhuanhua'* (*guzhuang lianhuanhua*) remained especially sought after. As previously established, attitudes towards whether or not publishers should be encouraged to produce these stories frequently changed. However, despite the changing official rhetoric they remained popular with their audience and the ability to draw 'ancient-costume *lianhuanhua'* bought greater material benefits (SPFAPH 1957). As specified in chapter three these ancient stories were more marketable and thus were in greater demand from the bookshops. Artists competed to draw them to increase their salary (SPFAPH 1957). It is not surprising that a famous artist, such as Zhao Hongben, was given the important commission of adapting *The Monkey King (Xiyou Ji)*. In addition, even during the Anti-Rightist campaign, the SPFAPH (1957) admitted that 'realistically themed' (*xianshi ticai*) revolutionary *lianhuanhua* had less interesting stories and were therefore less pleasurable to draw.

Moreover, due to their familiarity with a variety of techniques, *lianhuanhua* artists were able to earn a supplementary income by creating images for newspapers and other publishing houses or by drawing book covers. By so doing, their earnings could increase from 400 to 500 yuan per month (SPFAPH 1957). Chinese scholarship reveals artists were versatile and moved into other forms of artistic production if required (Zhong 2011, 44; Zhang, Ying 2012, 112). For example, the classical Chinese painter Tang Yifang (1914-1980) who produced *lianhuanhua* also produced propaganda posters. This chameleon-like ability perhaps differentiated them from some other artists. Altehanger (2013, 79) suggests that *manhua* artists in particular saw themselves as fundamentally different from other artists and cartoonists themselves were keen to distinguish their art from *lianhuanhua* and other forms of political culture.

---

[95] *Guzhuang* can also be translated as 'period drama'. Andrews uses the term 'ancient-costume' however.

Operating under the auspices of the private publishing houses and then the 'quasi-private' New Art Press, *lianhuanhua* artists who worked on an internal and freelance basis were to some extent left to their own devices in the first half of the 1950s. However, they suffered with the privatisation of the publishing houses, as the majority did not have the necessary political sensibilities or artistic skills to be taken on by Party-State-directed publishing houses. In 1955 the Party-State was forced to begin paying attention to the needs of *lianhuanhua* artists following a series of appeals by the artists themselves. This was the first of a series of changes that caused artists to become more vocal about their rights and needs. The charge was led by Zhao Hongben, and if not for his illustrious position as chairman of the Shanghai *Lianhuanhua* Author Association (*Shanghai Lianhuanhua Zuozhe Lianyihui/Lianzuo)* at that point, might have failed entirely. Zhao directly challenged the Cultural Bureau's administration or lack of administration over *lianhuanhua* artists, who were suffering unemployment in the wake of the privatisation of the publishing houses. After this confrontation, *lianhuanhua* artists were brought more under the administration of the Party-State, but also subject to political labelling.

The Freelance Artists and the 'Socialisation' of the Publishing Industry

When the publishing houses were subsumed into the Party-State apparatus in 1954, *lianhuanhua* artists who had previously worked on a freelance basis for the private publishers were subsequently left unemployed (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1957a). Many of these artists had actually taken part in the university courses on *lianhuanhua* production in 1952. However, they argued they had been summarily abandoned by the Party-State apparatus by the mid-

1950s as two-thirds of them lacked jobs after the restructuring of the publishing industry. As a consequence, according to Zhao Hongben (1955) they lacked basic necessities, such as food and clothes for winter.

In an attempt to force Party-State agencies to rectify their desperate situation, the artists appealed to Zhao to act as a spokesperson on their behalf. Describing this situation Zhao (1955) lamented ‘now at least seven to eight people come to my home to tell their sad stories to me every week’. It is clear that in his role as the head of *Lianzuolian* Zhao felt caught between Party-State agencies and the *lianhuanhua* creators. However, ultimately Zhao made an impassioned plea to Party-State agencies concerning the plight of these artists. At the same time, he accused the Cultural Bureau and Publishing Bureau of dragging their feet over the issue during the previous year to the detriment of the artists and blamed the SPFAPH for seldom asking them for work (Zhao 1955). Zhao suggested that the practical solution to the dilemma was to help the artists financially in the short term and provide classes to help them improve. He argued that 200 yuan was sufficient to find a teacher and a small room, to help the artists improve their artistic skills and thus create the conditions for them to be employed (Zhao 1955).

However, with the privatisation of the publishing houses, the Cultural Bureau, which had always had a dominant role in the *lianhuanhua* industry and did not take kindly to interference from Zhao, reasserted itself. The agency accused Zhao of not taking a sufficient leadership role over the artists in making them back down and shirking his political responsibilities. However, at this time, Zhao (1955) clearly felt comfortable challenging the Cultural Bureau and, in turn, accused them of being ‘too bureaucratic’.

Eventually, Zhao went over the heads of those obstructing him and appealed directly to the Shanghai People’s Publishing Management Committee Office (*Shanghai renmin weiyuan chuban shiye guanli*). They in turn involved other departments including the Propaganda

Bureau, the Shanghai Peoples Committee and other members of the publishing industry, the Cultural Bureau and the Fine Arts Association (Zhao 1955). Zhao's hard-hitting approach at least initially appeared successful and Zhao was asked to come up with the name list of those most in need (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1956).

The Cultural Bureau's decision to act was precipitated by the fact that Zhao's internal protests to individuals within the Party-State agencies were supplemented by a more public demonstration of the artists' distress at their living conditions and the lack of opportunities for creative advancement. In December 1956 some people working in the *lianhuanhua* industry sent a letter to *The People's Daily* requesting that the government rectify the artists' situation. The Cultural Bureau (1957a) claimed that they had specifically protested the fact that 'the leaders do not care enough about their creative advancement and living'.

These simultaneous occurrences eventually spurred the Cultural Bureau into action. In December 1956 it initiated the 'artist grant relief program,' signifying that it was finally taking the situation of the artists more seriously. The Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1956) promised to 'impart 8000 yuan to those *lianhuanhua* and *guohua* artists in real need'. It is notable that in this case *lianhuanhua* artists were being dealt with alongside *guohua* artists. This was not always the case as occurred in the early 1950s and early 1960s, when the uniqueness of *lianhuanhua* production ensured the artists were treated as an entirely different category.

Despite the promises, the scheme was not as widespread as Zhao had hoped and only a few artists were helped. The Cultural Bureau (1956) claimed only 26 *lianhuanhua* artists were actually eligible for help. Moreover, unsurprisingly, an artist's right to receive assistance ultimately rested on their ideological stance and therefore financial assistance was being used to get artists to toe the Party line. Representatives from the Cultural Bureau (1957b) used a meeting in January 1957 to ferret out 'People's ideological stance…and criticised those who were dishonest'. Consequently, the attendant artists were labelled 'activists' (*jiji fenzi*), 'middle-of-the-roader's (*zhongjian fenzi*) or 'backwards elements' (*luohuo fenzi*) in terms of ideological stance (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1957b). The Cultural Bureau (1957b) claimed that some were dishonest and inaccurately depicting their living and financial situation. It is very likely[96] that those labelled dishonest also happened to be labelled *luhuo fenzi*. The Shanghai People's Committee Literature and Art Office (*Shanghaishi renmin weiyuanhui wenyi bangongshi*) (1956) warned that financial assistance for the artists was only a temporary solution to the unemployment issue. In this they were correct as unemployment continued to be an issue for some *lianhuanhua* artists. However, *lianhuanhua* artists, who during the first half of the 1950s had often worked outside the publishing houses and on a freelance basis were now on the radar of Party-State agencies, so to speak, and the subsequent years were to prove challenging as artists fought for recognition of the freedoms they had long taken for granted, such as the ability to work from home. However, the struggle continued to be over subsistence issues and personal freedoms, rather than the artistic direction of the medium.

The Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Anti-Rightist Campaign

In April 1956 Mao announced his new policy to 'let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend' ostensibly to allow intellectuals to voice their opinions and eventually reach some form of ideological unity. For a year, from mid-1956 to mid-1957, intellectuals experienced greater latitude in the way they were allowed to work and there was less ideological pressure to produce politicised art (Arkush 1981, xx). Among other things the movement fostered renewed interest in traditional art forms, critiques of prevailing Chinese artistic styles, and shows of foreign and domestic art (Liang 1988, 25). The 1957 New Year issue of *Meishu* for example encouraged less restrictive themes, and encouraged artists to offer opinions and talk more about the creative processes involved in the publication (Galikowski 1998, 61). However, in this new environment intellectuals began to critique the Party itself and there was a backlash. In mid-1957 the Hundred Flowers policy was reversed and the Anti-Rightist movement began.

---

[96] It is impossible to ascertain a direct causal link between the two based on the available sources.

There is no evidence to suggest *lianhuanhua* artists were deeply embroiled in the literature and criticism of the Hundred Flowers, which used art to make critiques of contemporary society.[97] This was almost certainly because *lianhuanhua* artists were out of the academy system and had always been somewhat removed from wider changes in literature and art, such as the wholesale adoption of Soviet techniques from 1953. In addition, illustrating *lianhuanhua* and the production of comics in general was a slow process and the amount of time it took to produce one comic would have prohibited artists from responding quickly to this freer policy in terms of output.

However, the new atmosphere of artistic experimentation and discussion did not leave *lianhuanhua* artists untouched. A number of articles in *Meishu* specifically discussed the creation of *lianhuanhua* in the new context. For example, the artist Bi Qingyu discussed the two year process he had gone through to create the comic *I Want to Go to School* (*Wo yao qu xuexiao*) including doing research in the countryside (discussed later in the chapter) *(Meishu* 1957). He offered tips to other artists, such as to draw people smaller if they were outside a room to convey the expansiveness of nature and to use the surrounding environment to symbolise particular ideas. For example, in *I Want to Go to School* he drew the road the children walked long distances along every day to school in ‘a zigzag, which disappeared for a while, then reappeared in the distance to represent their hope for a better life, which although it is weak, is still there' *(Meishu* 1957). At the same time, in *The People's Daily* Jiang Weipu (1957) specified that the difference between 'poor' and 'high quality' *lianhuanhua* lay in the latter's ability to delineate a rich and complex story, which focussed on a character's inner thoughts and internal development.

---

[97] This again sets them apart from cartoonists, who were much more heavily involved (Galikowski 1998, 71).

In addition, in light of the Party's more relaxed attitude towards publishing apolitical material, the SPFAPH encouraged the adaptation of classical tales into *lianhuanhua* (The previous chapters demonstrate that these adaptations never entirely went out of publication or circulation; the difference was now that they were being actively encouraged). Moreover, large numbers of artists from other mediums joined the *lianhuanhua* creative team, notably *guohua* artists. In the long term this had the effect of legitimising the medium as a sophisticated art form. Crucially for *lianhuanhua* artists they experienced greater freedoms and monetary rewards for their endeavours. *Lianhuanhua* artists took advantage of this and argued for higher rates of pay and thus more recognition for their work.

In 1956, at the outset of the Hundred Flowers Campaign, Jiang Weipu (1956a) writing in *The People's Daily* noted the importance of holding onto national characteristics and inherited forms in producing *lianhuanhua*. As part of this, *guohua* artists with skills in traditional Chinese painting became involved in *lianhuanhua* production. *Guohua* artists were involved in the Hundred Flowers Campaign in a large way. However, they were then targeted during the anti-Rightist campaign, when Party-State agencies cracked down on practitioners and advocates of 'traditional' Chinese painting (Andrews 1990). Artists such as Liu Haisu (discussed in chapter four) were commissioned to do traditional paintings and calligraphy for the front covers of *lianhuanhua*. Previously, the most important page or picture was often picked as the front cover. However, during the Hundred Flowers Campaign this was thought to be not eye-catching or attractive enough and *guohua* artists were especially selected for this task (Shi 2010).

The incorporation of these artists was also seen as significant as it raised the status of the medium in the art world, although many of these artists were attacked during the Anti-Rightist campaign (He 1982, 1).[98] In *Meishu* Jiang (1957) also called on younger artists, who were less likely to have their works exhibited at national fine art exhibitions, to contribute as they were 'the hope for the future of the medium'. He also argued that producing *lianhuanhua* was more satisfying for young artists than single pictures, as drawing for comics supposedly allowed them to better articulate meaning because they could do so over the course of successive pictures.

The biggest project undertaken during the Hundred Flowers Campaign was the multi-volume edition of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, which had been popular in *lianhuanhua* format during the Republican period (Andrews 1994, 130). The project was part of wider policy to produce historical comics on a large scale (Xian 1957). In advance of creating *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, more than 20 artists visited the Shanghai Museum to study dress during the period (Lu 1962). In general costume was considered highly important in giving a sense of time period in *lianhuanhua* (Gu 1965, 25). In fact *The People's Daily* regarded particular attention to detail in dress as the greatest strength of the comic versions of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* begun during the Hundred Flowers Campaign, and a significant change from what had come before. Previously, *lianhuanhua* had tried to replicate the costumes worn on the stage (Lu 1962).

Actively encouraging the adaptation of classical literature was a relatively short-lived policy. *The People's Daily* complained that during the Hundred Flowers Campaign *lianhuanhua* were published which idolised ancient material and there was no attempt to distinguish between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ (Rou 1960). The SPFAPH (1959a) ‘criticised itself for allowing ‘some anti-party and anti-socialist comics to be published, which harmed the reader and this harmed the Party’. The publication of *lianhuanhua* such *The Snail Shell Girl* in the latter half of 1957 during the height of the Anti-Rightist Campaign demonstrates that at least as far as *lianhuanhua* were concerned there was some ambiguity about publishing regulations in the immediate aftermath (SPFAPH 1959a). Nevertheless, *lianhuanhua* artists were criticised for divorcing their work from politics, and were sent to the countryside and instructed to ‘experience real life’ in the late 1950s and during the Great Leap Forward (Rou 1960).

---

[98] *Lianhuanhua* did not gain national recognition within the art world until the inauguration of the national comic book awards (The People's Daily 1963).

Another one of the fundamental ways in which the situation of *lianhuanhua* artists was significantly changed in 1956 was their rate of pay. Indeed it is in the debates over pay that the voices of *lianhuanhua* artists emerge most clearly during the period. Raising the wages of *lianhuanhua* artists coincided with a broader policy instigated by Zhou Enlai in January 1956 to improve the working and living conditions of intellectuals (Liang 1988, 23). This preceded the Hundred Flowers Campaign. Zhou believed the policy would encourage intellectuals to put greater effort into supporting Socialist reconstruction (Arkush 1981, xiv). Before 1956, artists working on a full time basis were paid a fixed salary per script and were termed *shewai bianji* based on their skill level, with the highest salary being 106 yuan and the lowest salary being 60 yuan per month (SPFAPH 1957).

However, in 1956 the SPFAPH introduced a royalties system of payment per comic. This was to motivate artists to produce more *lianhuanhua* for Beijing and other cities outside Shanghai and thus participate in the overall propaganda effort for Socialist reconstruction (SPFAPH 1959a). The SPFAPH (1957) argued that artists were producing below their potential and should be able to produce 400 to 500 *lianhuanhua* pages per year, but were instead were only creating between 150 or 300 frames.

The new system significantly raised the wage level of *lianhuanhua* artists and the majority earned well over the average worker's salary at the time (SPFAPH 1957). Under the new royalties system, the classes of payment were between five and 30 yuan per page. For example, Liu Xiyong (1914-1973) and Wang Yushan (1910-1996) who both worked on *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, earned 13 and 10 yuan per page respectively (SPFAPH 1957). Those earning at the highest level, such Tang Yifang (who had begun producing *lianhuanhua* for the SPFAPH in 1954) earned upwards of 300 yuan per month. He Yulin (2012, 68) argues that this was a very good salary at the time. Nonetheless, the *lianhuanhua* artists themselves were not averse to challenging the new system when they felt their skills had not been recognised in their pay scale grade. Tang protested the level of pay he received for adapting *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, arguing for 13 yuan per page (SPFAPH 1957).

The Cultural Bureau considered the royalties scheme a partial success because artists were supposedly producing more and better quality comics. Against the backdrop of the Anti-Rightist movement, the SPFAPH clamped down on the *lianhuanhua* artists over their requests for higher pay. The SPFAPH (1957) concluded that they were in fact treating *lianhuanhua* artists too well and that 'some leading creators were just chasing numbers' and that 'their treatment is far superior to ordinary creator's (*ganbu shuiping*)'. Furthermore, the publishing house complained that 'everyone always talks about money,' that work was being delayed, and that there was a 'bad atmosphere in the artist's office' (SPFAPH 1957). The SPFAPH (1957) rhetorically questioned: 'Is it that we are not taking good care of the artists? Or is their material treatment not good enough? Absolutely not' (SPFAPH 1957). The leadership of the publishing house accused Tang of 'making a big fuss and thinking he was better than others' (SPFAPH 1957). Artists were furthermore accused of complaining about attending meetings and the lack of financial compensation for this. Moreover, the royalties' payment system was blamed for causing an ‘increase in economic thinking, and a separation from politics’ as artists were accused of not caring enough about political study (Shanghai Publishing Bureau 1958b).

The SPFAPH complained that the system had revealed ‘arrogant individuals’ and that if allowed to continue would ‘expand conflicts among people,’ and create divisions between the ‘culture workers and industrial labourers’ and ‘editors’ (*bianji*) and ‘creators’ (*chuangzuo*) study (Shanghai Publishing Bureau 1958b). Perhaps most seriously, the Shanghai Publishing Bureau (1958b) concluded that ‘a consequence of higher pay according to work done is that it encourages leading creators to adopt a higher status and separate from the average person’. These accusations hit hard and according to a later report by SPFAPH (1959a) ‘most of the *lianhuanhua* creators experienced art rectification and the anti-rightest struggle,’ becoming the objects of the campaign.

In addition, work payments were lowered in line with the ‘common standard of living’ and the royalties system was changed back to a salary system (SPFAPH 1957; SPFAPH 1961). It was decided that the pre-1956 payment salary system and classes of payment should be resumed. Significantly, *lianhuanhua* artists were now to be treated ‘the same as the government workers’ (Shanghai Publishing Bureau 1958b).[99] In addition, 60 artists at the other end of the pay scale who had not been helped in Zhao’s initial bid to raise subsistence levels began to protest their living situation at the outset of the Anti-Rightist Campaign. These artists had been deemed unemployable ‘due to their illiteracy, less-skilled drawing and lack of creative capability’ (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1957c). The Cultural Bureau (1957c) warned that their protest should be dealt with as quickly as possible to avoid ‘civil disturbance’

---

[99] One of the ongoing seriously negative effects for artists of the swiftly changing salary system was that it left some of them owing the Party-State money. Due to the fact that they were paid in advance under the royalties system and what they had produced did not always match up with what they had been prepaid, they owed the Party-State money when the system changed back to a salary system. Due to decreases in payment for some overtime and delays in publication the artists could not earn enough money to pay the Party-State back. By 1961 some *lianhuanhua* artists were financially destitute (Shanghai People Fine Arts Publishing House 1961a).

(naoshi). The Cultural Bureau probably feared this ‘civil disturbance’ would constitute a repeat of Zhao’s protestations and the artists’ verbal discontent. From then on, *lianhuanhua* artist employment became partially the responsibility of the SPFAPH and partially the responsibility of the Civil Administration Bureau. The SPFAPH opened up more comic art rooms and provided equipment which could be used by the artists who had previously operated on a freelance basis (*Shewai zuozhe*) (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1957a).

The Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Anti-Rightest Campaign touched *lianhuanhua* artists in several ways. Firstly, *guohua* artists joined the creative team and artists were encouraged to produce work focussing on classical themes. Consequently, the comics themselves began to be viewed as a legitimate art form, rather than looked down upon by some as just a form of popular culture. Secondly, *lianhuanhua* artists were more vocal about their living situation and requested financial compensation for the value of their work. During the Anti-Rightist Campaign there was a backlash against them and they were accused by both the Cultural Bureau and the SPFAPH of only being concerned with their rate of pay and ignoring politics. As a result of this, artists’ working conditions were restricted and they were sent to the countryside and factories during the Great Leap Forward to aid in the production process and experience the lives of the workers and peasants.

Great Changes on the Mountain

From 1958 to 1961, *lianhuanhua* production went hand in hand with Great Leap policy. In general Great Leap policy encouraged all artists to put in place a plan for their creative output (Galikowski 1998, 84). In 1958 the Shanghai Publishing Bureau (1958b) stipulated that *lianhuanhua* artists should have a strict and comprehensive work plan and they should continually strive to exceed production targets. Indeed, a system of incentives was introduced to encourage artists to exceed production limits. The incentives included certificates, written praise, coupons and financial rewards. To be eligible for a comic production award an artist needed to exceed their own levels of creativity, produce quality work, have ‘a good work attitude,’ be ‘politically sound’ and ‘never have been punished before’ (SPFAPH 1959a). Images were judged on the extent to which they captured the spirit of the work from which they were adapted and their uniqueness of style. In addition, the drawings were expected to delineate individual characters’ personalities and ‘spiritual thinking’. Overall, the drawings were expected to demonstrate an intangible ability ‘to attract and be loved by the reader’ (SPFAPH 1959f). Despite the supposed rewards for artistic achievement, this scheme did not go down well with *lianhuanhua* artists. A 1961 report from the SPFAPH noted that some artists were depressed and felt that if they earned a prize, they would be under suspicion of ‘putting material rewards first’ (*gaofei guashui*)’ and punished, as had occurred during the Anti-Rightist Campaign (SPFAPH Leadership Rectification Team 1961).

Lianhuanhua artists were also under pressure to participate in political activities by going to ‘the Party’s universities to learn new thinking’ (Shanghai Publishing Bureau 1958b). In contrast to what had gone before, *lianhuanhua* artists were also prohibited from working at home and on a freelance basis. The Publishing Bureau stipulated that *lianhuanhua* artists could not take on outside work, and that only the general editing office could assign work. Moreover, any freelance work which was currently being undertaken was reassigned (Shanghai Publishing Bureau 1958b). Comic artists found this environment highly restrictive as they were used to being able to engage in other forms of art such as traditional Chinese painting and oil painting both to improve their artistic skills and also to earn extra pay (SPFAPH Leadership Rectification Team 1961).

Since the early 1950s, *lianhuanhua* artists had been able to earn a supplementary income by creating images for newspapers, other publishing houses or drawing book covers, and these earnings could increase their salary significantly (SPFAPH 1957). Chinese-language scholarship reveals that comic artists were versatile and moved into other forms of artistic production when required (H. Zhong 2011, 44; Zhang, Ying 2012, 112). For example, Tang Yifang also produced propaganda posters. This chameleon-like ability perhaps differentiated them from some other artists. Altehanger suggests that *manhua* artists saw themselves as fundamentally different and concludes that cartoonists themselves were keen to distinguish their art from *lianhuanhua* and other forms of political culture (Altehenger 2013, 79). However, this ability to move into other mediums of art ended during the Great Leap Forward.

As well as having a more regulated work plan and having to participate more in political activities, each *lianhuanhua* artist's time was now split as a matter of course between labouring and illustrating. The Shanghai Publishing Bureau (1958b) believed that participation in production would ultimately improve the quality of their work. As part of this emphasis on participating in industrial production and rural labour, and as punishment for their perceived overstepping during the Hundred Flowers Campaign, many artists were sent to the countryside to 'experience life and engage in labour training' (*Shenru shenghuo laodong duanlian*).

According to Jiang Weipu (1956a), 'experiencing life' was intended to enable *lianhuanhua* artists to not just accurately portray particular environments and working conditions, but also give them a sense of the emotions of the characters. They could then better convey these on paper, and thus *lianhuanhua* would connect better with audiences (Jiang 1956a). However, writing half a century later, Lu Jun (2005, 34) critiques the scheme by pointing out that while *lianhuanhua* artists might have gained a deeper understanding of what they were supposed to be depicting and better knowledge of rural living conditions and landscapes, the period from 1957 to 1961 was exceptionally difficult for them.

The idea that artists and writers creative output could be directly improved by spending time labouring and working in the countryside was not new. Mao (1996, 492) had stated in

1942 that intellectuals needed to spend copious amounts of time among the workers and peasants to remould their own thinking and allow their works to better connect with the population. Therefore, sending artists to the countryside to experience the lives of peasants and to work in factories drew on a tradition dating back to Yan'an (King 2013, 71).[100]

A handful of *lianhuanhua* artists had ventured to the countryside for research purposes up to the mid-1950s. Liu Xun (1954) wrote in *Meishu* that this level of research was much more preferable for the creation of *lianhuanhua* than copying photos of places or people in the workplace. Research in the field supposedly allowed artists to understand the psychology of those whom they were depicting in their work. Most famously, Gu Bingxin, author of the ten-volume war comic *Railway Guerrillas,* claimed to have travelled into the region in which the guerrillas had been active. He said he visited the home of a declared hero, took a ride in a boat across the lake featured in the story, and went to see old guerrilla vehicles themselves. He allegedly told *The People's Daily* that the experience was useful for collecting information on local customs, but more beneficial for understanding people's life experiences (Ma 1964).

In addition, the artist Bi Qingyu lauded the practise of going to the countryside during the Hundred Flowers Campaign: an artist could not draw the necessary details about life in the countryside purely from imagination, but needed to make a detailed study of people's day-to-day existence *(Meishu* 1957). He described in detail one of the illustrations in one of his comics. This showed a morning in early spring, with the snow and the ice on the river melting, wild geese in the sky, a temple in the distance, a field waiting to be ploughed and young children. Bi said he would not been able to achieve the level of detail in the frame without going and living in a village. Additionally, Bi (like Gu) alleged that the experience was formative, not just in helping him to know what and how to draw the landscape, but in giving him an insight into individuals’ emotional experiences, such as a family’s despair at the death of a loved one and the hope of another family in their granddaughter—the only student in the family *(Meishu* 1957).

---

[100] This policy was attacked during the Hundred Flowers Movement in an article in *Meishu* in January 1957. The writer said the Party-State policy risked damaging artist's development because it did not take into consideration the fact that different art forms required different forms of education and skill development and this blanket policy would not work for all (Galikowski 1998, 64).

During the Great Leap, the policy of sending artists to the countryside became much more widespread and forced (Galikowski 1998, 84). In 1959 more than 20 *lianhuanhua* artists from the SPFAPH went to Mudanjiang, Henan, Fujian, Shandong and Hebei to engage in production and ‘experience real life’. They were expected to infuse their creative output with what they had learned from these experiences (SPFAPH 1959f). At the time, Hua Sanchuan went to live with a peasant family in the Taihang Mountains. He claims to have observed the famers at work before starting on his well-known comic *The White Haired Girl* (Ma 1964). However, He Youzhi’s *Great Changes on the Mountain* is the most famous example of work produced as a result of this initiative. The novel on which the comic was based is categorised as a ‘red classic’ (King 2013, 15). In creating the comic, He Youzhi claimed to have written to the author of the original novel Zhou Libo for advice. He also went to live in a commune for two months. Celebrating CCP policy, *The People’s Daily* claimed it was life in the commune which had helped He better detail the environment, but also understand the labourer’s 'inner world' (Lu 1962).

Later in life, He (1982, 22) claimed the experience had been positive for him in gaining an understanding of people’s basic living conditions. In particular, illustrating *lianhuanhua* posed a challenge to artists because they involved filmic sequences. It was this element that he claimed a stay in the countryside allegedly helped with. *Lianhuanhua* artists were supposed to represent not just the aspects of rural life, but the step-by-step processes people went through in their daily lives. He Youzhi attested to the fact that *lianhuanhua* artists needed to learn not just what things looked like, but how they were created.

> If a *lianhuanhua* artist is depicting someone cooking, each image has to show the step by step process; washing the rice, boiling the water, putting the food on plate etc. You can't jump a step, therefore the artists must have an understanding of all the actions that go together to create the end result (He 1982, 26).

He referred to this process as 'learning by heart the actions and the accompanying images' (He 1982, 27). Ultimately, He claimed to have returned to the countryside three times during the Great Leap Forward, and the story went through four modifications before it was published. In the early 1980s, He (1982, 24) recounted how although spending time in the countryside had been beneficial for creating the film-like sequences in *lianhuanhua*, the experience was also extremely challenging as the peasants were often unwilling to talk to an outsider about their experiences, particularly (and unsurprisingly) the hardships they had endured.

During the Great Leap Forward itself the emphasis was generally on producing *lianhuanhua* quickly. Therefore it was in the early to mid-1960s that the detailed studies of rural life compiled during the period began to emerge. Comics such as *Great Changes on the Mountain* and *The White Haired Girl* are commonly viewed to be the height of comic artistry and later sections of this thesis will discuss why such works earned this reputation in greater detail. However, as King (2013) elaborates, these stories with idealised portraits of rural life were particularly unsettling, given the devastation and famine only a few years before (King 2013).

In addition to requiring artists to go the countryside and experience rural life, the Party-State also invited famers and workers to contribute scripts for *lianhuanhua* during the Great

Leap Forward. This was part of a wider policy to drive up cultural production by involving amateur artists (Galikowski 1998, 84).[101] *The People's Daily* lauded one farmer who it said inspired Hua Sanchuan while he was staying in his village. The farmer created his own pictures and posted them throughout the village so they almost became a comic (Ma 1965). Most famously, however, the newspaper glorified a commune in Guizhou which had produced a *lianhuanhua* entitled *Great Changes in Changshi* (*Changshi de jubian*) and at the various stages of the creative process there had been group discussions and censorship (Rou 1960). The paper typically claimed that the artists involved in the process had benefitted from having the 'masses input'. In turn the people of the commune gained multiple copies of a comic history of their commune since its inception, which they could leave to their children and grandchildren (Shen 1960).

How to Draw *Lianhuanhua*

This move towards the involvement of amateur artists during the Great Leap Forward also inspired the SPFAPH to take a more proactive role in disseminating *lianhuanhua* educational materials. A typical example of this was the textbook *How to Draw lianhuanhua*.[102] *How to Draw Lianhuanhua* (*Zenme Hua Lianhuanhua*) penned by the acclaimied artist and director of the comic creation room, Gu Bingxin was published in 1958 and provided advice for amateurs wishing to create comics. Gu instructed that although *lianhuanhua* usually appeared in newspapers and in book format, amateurs in the countryside should post them in their cultural museums or on street blackboards. In this way, they would publically support political campaigns (beneficial for the Party-State), while at the same time receiving reader feedback on their work (Gu 1965, 8). Despite encouraging ‘amateur’ involvement, the SPFAPH was more circumspect about the benefits of encouraging farmers and workers to participate in *lianhuanhua* production, noting that the quality of the scripts produced by ‘common people’ was not usually good (SPFAPH 1959f). Ultimately, amateurs did not really contribute to publishing during the Great Leap Forward, but in demonstrating their enthusiasm for the medium and willingness to participate they did help to propagate the medium and Party-State ideals.

---

[101] Tang (2015, 24) argues this was one of the most significant experiments in 'Socialist visual culture'.

[102] Other textbooks were also being produced in other mediums. There was also a *How to Draw Manhua* book for example.

In the 1965 edition of his treatise on how to draw *lianhuanhua*, Gu Bingxin (1965, 4) stated that alongside artistic techniques two other aspects were important in learning to create a comic. Firstly, the artists needed to familiarise themselves with Marxist Leninism, Maoist thought and the general principles of the CCP; secondly, they needed to be familiar with the ‘struggles of the workers, farmers and soldiers’. This focus on how artists could better serve the Socialist cause was nothing new, and as discussed in chapters two and three, had been voiced by Mao at the Yan’an Forum in 1942. The emphasis on *lianhuanhua* artists appreciating Socialist doctrine and learning about class struggle is hardly surprising. However, what is unexpected is that the 1965 edition was a reprint of the original 1958 edition, which did not incorporate a chapter on the ‘correct’ ideological basis for illustrating the comics. Gu (1965, 84) had apparently received criticism for leaving this out of the first edition. Gu’s book was the first generally published work on how to draw *lianhuanhua*, suggesting that even by the late 1950s, there was some ambiguity among those with an in-depth knowledge about *lianhuanhua’s* prescribed propaganda role. However, after the publication of the first edition, there was a general resurgence on behalf of Party-State agencies and the publishing houses on ‘educating’ *lianhuanhua* artists.

Chapter three discussed the initial training programmes into which *lianhuanhua* artists ‘old’ and ‘new’ were inculcated in the early 1950s. Party-State agencies wanted a team of creators who were ‘educated’ in Party principals for art and who could further guarantee the development of the industry in the future (Gu 1965). In light of the anti-Rightist campaign, there was a resurgence of interest in indoctrinating *lianhuanhua* artists. Artists were educated on how and what *lianhuanhua* to produce through exhibitions, internal periodicals, specialised classes and penned treatises.

Publications produced and circulated by the publishing houses propagated theories on how to produce *lianhuanhua*. After 1959, publications on *lianhuanhua* theory, such as *Lianhuanhua Research* (*Lianhuanhua Yanjiu*), an irregular internal journal targeted at artists, were published. Writers and artists were asked to write about and reflect on their long-term personal experiences for inclusion in the journal. Furthermore, in 1960 the publishing house issued two books on the theory of comic drawing and a history of *lianhuanhua* in three volumes (SPFAPH 1959f). As previously discussed in chapter two, this writing of the history of *lianhuanhua* was particularly significant because it has framed the ways in which the comics have been viewed up to the present day.

In addition, artists increasingly began to receive feedback on their work through exhibiting it at exhibitions. The purpose of exhibitions for audiences more generally is discussed in the next chapter on dissemination, but exhibitions had a particular function for artists also, and in the early 1960s they were increasingly encouraged to exhibit and receive criticism. In 1962, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Yan’an Forum on Literature and Art, a general art exhibition was held at which *lianhuanhua* featured, including titles such as *Great Changes on the Mountain* and Zhao Hongben’s *Monkey Thrice Beats the White Boned Demon* (Huai 1962). One of the key aspects of this exhibition was that *lianhuanhua* artists displayed work in the process of being produced for widespread critique. The addition and deletion of images and themes was supposed to improve the ideological and artistic content of the comic (Lü 2012b, 74).

Most famously, at this exhibition Hua Sanchuan received feedback from peers on his seminal comic *The White Haired Girl*, and this affected some of the key scenes in the comic (Ma 1965). In one frame at the beginning of the story the heroine Xi'er sits in front of the mirror happily contemplating her upcoming marriage, combing her hair and singing 'Birds fly in pairs, Xi'er is in a pair, although we only have half a hut it is a wedding room' (Hua 1965, 30) (Appendix Figure 7). This scene was amended several times to make the picture express her joyful emotions.

Xi'er is later raped by the landlord and flees to the mountains, where her hair turns white with grief. Finally, she is rescued by her CCP fiancée. After criticism at the exhibition, however, Hua deleted some of the themes which were considered too prejudicial and detrimental concerning her time in exile. This included removing an image of Xi'er's dead and partially buried baby (Appendix Figure 8). At the time, *The People's Daily* praised the changes Hua made to the comic, claiming that they would allow readers to better connect with Xi'er and better appreciate the contrast between her happy feelings at the beginning of the story and her misery after being oppressed by the landlord. However, it would also 'not dwell on painful topics,' such as the death of an infant (Ma 1965). In Hua's version of the story Xi'er suffers for a very long time before finally being rescued. The model opera, which first appeared on stage in the mid to late 1960s and on film in 1971, differs significantly from Hua Sanchuan's comic offering, which was only published a year before the Cultural Revolution. Most notably, Xi'er is a less passive character and she physically fights off her oppressors.

The Three Guarantees

By the early 1960s, comics produced during the Great Leap Forward were being labelled 'low quality' (SPFAPH 1960b). This was firstly due to the fact that many were rushed to completion to meet production targets and thus had sketchy drawings and secondly, as previously discussed, many of the comics which had been published now supported outmoded policies.

The Party-State in general began to adopt a less restrictive policy in 1961, under a policy of letting ‘a hundred flowers bloom’ again (*baihuaqifang tuichenchuxin*) (Huai 1962). Zhou Yang called for a primacy of professionalism and aesthetics over political fervour, and in 1961 and 1962 Zhou Enlai called for literature and art to better express emotions. The rough and unsophisticated artistic styles of the Great Leap were negated (Shi 2010). Furthermore, ‘national characteristics’ were revived (although these had never really left *lianhuanhua*), and actively promoted due to the Sino-Soviet split. For example, traditional Chinese-style landscapes were encouraged. Liang (1988, 37) describes the period from 1960 to 1964 as a ‘golden era’ for artists as there was unprecedented opportunity for them to travel, have their art reproduced and discuss aesthetics.

For comic production this also meant more variety in terms of artistic style and content. In line with the less restrictive climate, the SPFAPH was rethinking its earlier repressive policies towards *lianhuanhua* during the Anti-Rightist Campaign and stipulated that in ‘criticising capitalist ideology, we did not fully understand the policy of hundred flowers blossoming’ (SPFAPH 1960b). The SPFAPH stated that as a result of the repressive policies not enough comics of sufficient diversity had been published and this did not satisfy the ‘multi-dimensional needs of the reader’ (SPFAPH 1960b).

In turn, some *lianhuanhua* artists protested the lack of freedom in the work system as a result of the changes made during the Great Leap Forward (SPFAPH 1958a). Large group meetings were held in which artists, *gaibianzhe* and writers aired their grievances to the leadership about the way they had been managed and the administration of the industry (SPFAPH Leadership Rectification Team 1961). In consequence, from May to June 1961, there were discussions about the introduction of a new system which would encourage the 'creators to develop loyalty to the Party and be professionally skilled' (Shanghai Publishing Bureau 1961a).

On this occasion, the SPFAPH looked outwards to other political culture industries for inspiration on how to run their *lianhuanhua* department. The SPFAPH sent out researchers to the Fine Arts Film Studio and the Shanghai Painting Academy to analyse how they regulated their staff, while at the same time motivating them. However, it also conducted a series of internal investigations into what made the comics distinctive from *nianhua* and propaganda posters. The publishing house investigated whether any new stipulations for *lianhuanhua* artists should be applicable to artists of the other two mediums and whether there would be conflict between the different groups of artists if *lianhuanhua* creators were given 'special' treatment (SPFAPH 1961).

Ultimately, the publishing house's Leadership Rectification Team concluded that *lianhuanhua* artists needed a different work system for a number of reasons and this would not result in conflicts with other artists (SPFAPH Rectification Leadership Group 1961). *Nianhua* and *xuanchuanhua* were single paintings on a topic and after creating one painting there was a pause before creating the next. Artists working on these two mediums could use these time breaks to improve their skills and decide what to do next. Furthermore, they could quickly respond to any changes in policy.

Lianhuanhua took much longer to create and artists did not have regular pauses in their work load (SPFAPH Rectification Leadership Group 1961). Furthermore, at the outset work was laborious as artists did the necessary research and preparatory sketches, but sped up towards the end when they were much more familiar with the material (SPFAPH 1961). For example, in advance of starting comic artists had to fully realise all the characters so that there would be consistency throughout the script. This meant deciding on the age, figure, temperament and characteristics of their clothes and then drawing sketches of the character from a variety of different angles and close ups (Gu 1965, 14). For example, *Great Changes on the Mountain* consists of three books and 400 pictures, in which all the characters needed to be consistent and delineated in advance. Consequently, producing *lianhuanhua* was again regarded as having its own characteristics and therefore needing its own special plan (Shanghai Publishing Bureau 1961a). Thus *lianhuanhua* artists were labelled as ‘set apart from the ordinary cadres,’ and attention needed to be paid to their ‘special characteristics,’ and this was not framed in a negative sense (SPFAPH 1961).

Overall, the new programme rolled out in September 1961 and termed ‘The Three Guarantees’ was supposed to enable *lianhuanhua* artists to complete their work in a realistic time frame, while keeping in mind the other two guarantees of quality and quantity. Each office had a four-year comic book production plan and artists and editors created their own two to three-year plans based on this. Artists created a one-year plan which included how to maintain quality, where they would work and time management. When they were ‘experiencing life’ artists were expected to collect material for their next comic and when working on one comic they were expected to plan for the next (SPFAPH 1961). This was the first attempt to regulate what comics were being produced in the long term. However, the programme also had another purpose to motivate comic artists by allowing them some limited freedoms, such as the ability to work at home, as long as they took part in the bureau’s collective political activities (Shanghai Publishing Bureau 1961a).

A policy of rewards and punishments (*Jiangcheng tiaoli*) was put in place to incentivise ‘The Three Guarantees’ policy (Shanghai Publishing Bureau 1961a). As early as 1959, Director Luo at the SPFAPH had advocated a policy of ‘Big Group, Little Freedoms’ (*da jiti xiao ziyou*) (SPFAPH 1959f). The policy came to fruition in 1961 (SPFAPH 1961). The ‘little freedoms’ manifested themselves in more freedom for comic artists to manage their own creative activities after they had accepted assignments. In addition, work and leisure time was interchangeable and artists were free to organise their own self-study (SPFAPH Rectification Leadership Group 1961). The new system also allowed artists more freedom to work at home, ostensibly because as it was quieter and, especially during summer, allowed them to work earlier and later and more efficiently (SPFAPH Leadership Rectification Team 1961). Allowing *lianhuanhua* artists these freedoms also supposedly relieved pressure on office space and put 'artists in a better mood and improved efficiency' (SPFAPH Rectification Leadership Group 1961).

In discussion with the publishing house, *lianhuanhua* artists also had more freedom to choose the projects which best suited them or in which they were more interested (Shanghai Publishing Bureau 1961a). Of course, these 'little freedoms' could be taken away if the artist's work was perceived to be lacking artistically or politically. He Youzhi (1982, 11) affirmed the importance of this by saying that it had been essential for him to experiment with drawing a variety of subjects first before fixing on a certain subject. It was at this time that he developed his own style of drawing Chinese rural life while producing *Great Changes on the Mountain* and *Li Shuangshuang* (discussed in the next section) (He 1982, 14). The ability to develop an original style was one of the highest forms of praise given to comic artists from 1960 to 1964 (Liang 1988, 44). He later stated that he preferred focussing on these rural subjects because the subject matter lent itself to a more humorous approach, rather than being forced to pen bloody images of revolutionary warfare as he had in the early 1950s (He 1982, 14). For stories about warfare he used thicker lines and stark contrasts between black and white, whereas for the countryside he could use classical Chinese single-line drawing (He 1982, 42).

The Contradictions in Communist Art Policy

Prior to a vast array of archival resources being available in recent years, Andrews (1994, 134) proposed that the two major contradictions in Communist art policy were most successfully resolved through the medium of *lianhuanhua*. My archival research supports this supposition. Firstly, *lianhuanhua* retained a popular appeal, while still maintaining high artistic standards. Secondly, there was never a collision between Socialist Realism and traditional techniques.

Jiang Feng called for the promotion of *lianhuanhua* because he argued they were a ‘popular’ art form, which could popularise Party-State rhetoric (Andrews 1994, 49). Comics were expected to function as a ‘young person’s textbook’ and provide appropriate lessons in Communist morality outside the classroom environment (Lian 2012, 98). However, they had to avoid becoming monotonous and formulaic and ultimately less appealing to audiences especially as they were in competition with the ever popular folk tales and ‘traditional’ stories and it was the artistry which achieved this. Nostalgic accounts of *lianhuanhua* suggest they were considered more than just an educational tool. Liang (2012) reminisces about the comic *The Train that Flew* (*Lieche feiben*) and the powerful memories he had of buying the comic during Spring Festival. Meanwhile, *lianhuanhua* produced from 1949 to 1966 garnered acclaim both at the time and since for developing an innovative way of illustrating.

This novel method of illustrating was partly because, in terms of artistic style, from 1949 to the Sino-Soviet split, and in contrast to other Communist art forms such as *guohua* and film, *lianhuanhua* did not have to adhere to the rules of Socialist Realism. No Soviet advisors were involved in formulating the direction and artistic style of the comics in the early 1950s. As highlighted in the last chapter, while many comics adapted literature from the Soviet Union, reflecting the wider tendency to copy USSR propaganda, they were not emulating a Soviet medium per se. In contrast to China, comics had in fact been marginalised and vilified in the Soviet Union because of their supposed links to the old society (Alaniz 2010, 4). Prior to the Sino-soviet split then, some artists incorporated western style elements in terms of figure drawing, but they were not tied to this. Most famously, Gu Bingxin’s

Railroad Guerrillas combined Soviet style figure drawing with the landscape conventions reminiscent of the Ming dynasty (Andrews 1994, 133).

By the early 1960s, when this policy began to be widely propagated, *lianhuanhua* artists were well positioned to incorporate traditional elements into modern stories, having by that point successfully amalgamated the two. Zhao Hongben modernised the ‘traditional’ story of *Monkey Thrice Beats the White Boned Demon* by individualising the characters, adding naturalistic gestures and incorporating Western figural arrangements. This added a three-dimensional quality rarely seen classical illustrations (Andrews 1994, 250) (Appendix Figure 9 and 10).

Equally successfully, He Youzhi produced *Great Changes on the Mountain*. As well as spending copious amounts of time observing and participating in rural life as part of Great Leap policy, He referred to the work of classical Chinese artists. He consulted texts such as *The Paintings of the Shanghai Museum* (*Shanghai bowuguan de cang hua*), *Song Painting*s (*Song hua*) and *The Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival* (*Qingming Shang he tu*) to develop skills to draw the landscape of Hunan for *Great Changes on the Mountain* (He 1982, 33). During the Great Leap Forward, he also spent time leaning from the famous traditional Chinese painters Ying Yeping and Xie Zhilu in Shanghai. He Youzhi’s technique of incorporating traditional techniques proved highly successful, and in 1963 the Party-State recognised both it and *Monkey* as the crowning achievements in *lianhuanhua* production since the advent of the PRC (Andrews 1994, 249).

Of course, this did not mean the comic did not go through several changes during the creative process and He did receive some criticism. For example, critics questioned some of the minutiae of the work, such as the way in which he had drawn the cuff of the characters' sleeves.[103] He defended this saying this was the way in which the famous Ming Dynasty painter Chen Liaolian had drawn them (He 1982, 34). More seriously, he was forced to change the stylised trees he had drawn in favour of ones more routinely found in the countryside as critics complained his trees did not look like they could bear fruit (He, 1982, 34). In light of the catastrophes of the Great Leap Forward and the desecration of the countryside, this was a highly political and contentious issue—though also a highly ironic detail to be picked up on.[104] However, He was caught between a rock and hard place: he was later accused of making the countryside look too beautiful and thereby negating the devastation of the Great Leap in the 1980s (He 1982, 43). At the time, however, he created an environment reminiscent of traditional prints, with the result that this comic was one of the most famous ever produced.

Great Changes on the Mountain was 'successful' in combining western and 'national characteristics' for a number of reasons. Western style figure drawing allowed He to individualise the characters and use their facial expressions and actions to give the reader information about them. However, he also avoided stereotyping. Writing in *Meishu* Liu Xun (1954) stated that drawing *lianhuanhua* characters as stereotypes was ultimately counterproductive as readers found them boring and unrealistic and were thus less prone to absorb ideological rhetoric.

He also adopted a more subtle style than would normally be associated with Socialist Realism. For example, in one scene (He Youzhi's personal favourite) a susceptible character, Mianhu, is encouraged to drink by the 'bad' character Gong Ziyuan. Gong is dressed as a peasant because he professes to be in favour of land reform, but He used Gong's gestures to denote he was actually of the landlord class. Wine in the countryside is expensive and so Gong invites Mianhu to drink, but is reluctant to let him take too much. Gong treats Mianhu like an animal and uses food to lure him. In addition, to delineate their ‘real’ class affiliation, Gong’s wife heats up the wine (this was a practice apparently only followed in rich families). Furthermore, when Gong’s wife climbs up the mountain, she is shown holding up her trousers and this ‘small action’ (*xiao dongzuo*) is used to show that her background is that of landlord simply because it indicates she used to wear a *qipao*.

---

[103] He does not specify what exactly they said was wrong with his cuffs.

[104] There is no indication of who in particular critiqued He Youzhi for drawing tree in this way.

He (1982, 71) stated these ‘small actions’ could indicate the inner feelings of the characters. He also paid special reference to incorporating small children, tools and animals into his scenes to give layers of texture and detail. Alongside incorporating actions, he referred to this technique as paying attention to the ‘four smalls’ (*si xiao*) (He 1982, 70). Children were intended to add liveliness and humour to the scene. For example, for one key scene in the comic *Chaoyang Valley* (*Chaoyanggou),* in which the heroine Yin Huan tries to find her estranged husband, He described how he incorporated images of children for two purposes:

> The picture needed to show her struggling to get back to him. I wanted to create an impediment. Firstly, I thought of crowds. However, this would have been hard to express because in the mix of cars, people and expressions, her image would be less obvious. So instead I used a line of children going to suburbs to provide an impediment. Additionally, the children are off to do labour and this is in stark contrast to Yin Huan, who hates countryside work and so this image could also be an education on appropriate behaviour (He 1982, 76).

At the same time, He used animals because they could signify specific things, such as a magpie signifying good luck and a turtle signifying longevity (He 1982, 77).[105] Furthermore, he used the reactions of the animals to show changes in the scene. For example, in *Li Shuangshuang* the birds are eating peacefully and then she giggles loudly and they fly away (Appendix Figure 11). In this way the sparrows denoted a sound effect (He 1964, 129). Ultimately, in combining a western style figure drawing with a study of Ming dynasty illustrated books, wood cuts and paintings from the Song dynasty, He was said to have developed his own unique style which transcended the division between Socialist Realism and classical Chinese line drawing.

Conclusion

The SPFAPH dominated the industry from the mid-1950s onwards, producing nearly half the national total of *lianhuanhua* (SPFAPH 1960b). This publishing house also often led in terms of implementing policy and influenced the work of other publishers after 1954. In addition, the majority of ‘creative cadres’ working in the *lianhuanhua* industry in Shanghai worked for the SPFAPH in the capacity of artists, writers and *gaibianzhe*. Akin to other producers of political culture, *lianhuanhua* creative cadres worked under the maxim that ‘art should serve the masses’ and exhibitions, internal periodicals, specialised classes and penned treatises on *lianhuanhua* reinforced this doctrine. This ‘education’ on the function of *lianhuanhua* was particularly important given the medium itself and its creators had little or no experience of Yan’an rhetoric.

---

[105] In the same vein, Liang stipulates that peasant style revolutionary art work utilised traditional familiar symbols and decorative patterns, such as fish, a sign of plenty, but at the same time stressed technological advancement (Liang 1988, 32).

However, an examination of developments between 1956 and 1966 proves that while *lianhuanhua* artists might have been accepting the Party-State's mission for the *lianhuanhua* industry, they were not averse to challenging their position within that industry. This began with Zhao Hongben's call for better treatment for the artists who had been disenfranchised with the nationalisation of the publishing houses. Subsequently, artists argued for higher pay and more freedom to choose how and when they worked. Of course, these 'little freedoms' could be taken away during periods of political repression. However, by the early 1960s *lianhuanhua* artists were again seen to be set apart from other producers of political culture, with their own set of rules and regulations due to the particular demands of the medium, and it is clear that Party-State agencies and the leadership of the publishing houses wanted to keep them loyal.

Chapter 7: ‘Seizing the Front’ in the Dissemination of *Lianhuanhua*

Introduction

This chapter, in conjunction with chapter eight, discusses the avenues through which *lianhuanhua* were disseminated and the ways in which Party-State agencies sought to regulate the distribution process. We need to understand this because the dissemination process mediated the kinds of cultural products which reached audiences. In 1951 Hua Junwu (1951) commented that

> Comics can be bought at any time, in the city or the town. There are many loyal readers of comics. Comics are sold in bookstores and on alley stalls. There are traces of comics everywhere.

The Cultural Bureau sought to regulate the networks through which *lianhuanhua* were distributed to readers from 1949 to 1966 because they viewed *lianhuanhua* as an important propaganda tool. However, as established in chapter five, many *lianhuanhua* were still being published which were ‘problematic’ for the Party-State, if not outright ‘anti-Party’. Therefore, agencies sought to instil tightly controlled distribution networks, which could act as a second stratum in regulating the comics readers could access. Controlling comic distribution networks was not only considered important in terms of regulating what content was disseminated downwards, but also to ensure that any *lianhuanhua* which had been banned at the level of the publishing houses could be easily withdrawn from circulation. Finally, control of these networks enabled Party-State agencies to direct not just which comics individuals could access, but also what they chose to read and *how* they read.

After 1949 *lianhuanhua* were distributed through street stalls, which had originated in the Republican era, and through libraries, schools, factories and bookstores. However, the extent to which Party-State agencies were able to control these different distribution networks was highly variable. This chapter discusses the more tightly controlled avenues through which Party-State institutions disseminated *lianhuanhua*. I also analyse the programs which agencies put in place to guide individuals' reading practices.

Firstly, I analyse the formal channels through which Party-State agencies sought to regulate the distribution of *lianhuanhua*. In this context, I examine the Party-State's socialisation of the *lianhuanhua* bookstore industry, and crucially the establishment of the organisation *Lianlian,* which played a fundamental role in orchestrating distribution in the early post-'Liberation' years. I also discuss the setting up of libraries in schools and factories in the early 1950s, and the schemes run by bookstores to provide them with 'appropriate' texts. As I shall demonstrate, in the 1960s these schemes, which had originally been urban-based, were rolled out to the countryside. Next, I examine Party-State agencies' role in instigating 'reading tutorship' (*yuedu fudao*), which instructed individuals on how to make the 'right' choices when choosing reading material. As I have already established, exhibitions were used to celebrate artists and as a channel through which they could receive criticism on their work; they also functioned as a way of highlighting propaganda comics for the public. In addition, I demonstrate that 'reading tutorship' went beyond providing 'correct' material; it also directed how comics should be interpreted. In particular, because tutoring youth and children to read comics 'correctly' was deemed a social issue, specific schemes run by the SPFAPH through schools sought to reach children and guide their reading (SPFAPH 1960b). Furthermore, I argue that the publication of *Lianhuanhuabao* was particularly important in directing the readership of the comics for adults and children as it highlighted 'correct' reading material, supported campaigns and recounted revolutionary stories. Overall, this chapter provides a point of contrast to chapter seven, where I analyse Party-State agencies' interactions with the *lianhuanhua* street vendors and the arenas in which these agencies had much less control over dissemination.

Party-State Socialisation of the *Lianhuanhua* Bookstore Industry

Unsurprisingly, one of the key Party-State endorsed avenues for disseminating the new comics was through bookstores, from which *lianhuanhua* were sold and rented. This was a significant change from the Republican era when, as Shen (2001, 103) shows, *lianhuanhua* retail for the most part bypassed the bookstores because the medium was considered vulgar and low taste by the intellectuals who frequented such stores. However, in the early 1950s, bookstores did a roaring trade in *lianhuanhua*. In Beijing on August 2nd 1951, for example, 95 people were reported to have visited one bookstore renting 138 comics. In the same month, the Friendship bookstore lent out 215 comics in a single day (Beijing News Publisher 1951e).

In order to assert control over this booming market in *lianhuanhua* Party-State agencies adopted a series of measures. One of the first initiatives in regard to bookstores retailing *lianhuanhua* was to clamp down on those with what they perceived as links to foreign publishing houses. For example, in September 1951 the Guangzhou People's Government News Publisher banned the Taixian Book Bureau and the Lianxin Bookstore from retailing *lianhuanhua* and confiscated their stock, amounting to 227 titles, because they had allegedly imported comics from Hong Kong (News Publishing House Guangzhou 1951). The News Publisher claimed that two agents from the companies had confessed to peeling off the comic book cover and sticking on their own covers to conceal such 'contraband' material (News Publishing House Guangzhou 1951).

At the same time, as agencies were cracking down on certain avenues for comic distribution, the Party-State was attempting to grow the comic bookstore industry, while concurrently regulating it. Particularly important in retailing *lianhuanhua* were the speciality bookstores involved in *Lianlian*, which received and then promulgated new comics in order to ‘seize the battlefield’ and combat old comics (Beijing News Publisher 1951d). *Lianlian* was a group of bookstores and publishers which joined together in July 1950 to form a Party-State-endorsed organisation to jointly distribute *lianhuanhua* (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). By September 1951, the organisation consisted of 51 bookstores in Shanghai (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951d).[106] One of the ways bookstores in *Lianlian* were initially supported by the Party-State was with prolonged re-payment dates in order to increase turnover (Beijing News Publisher 1951d). *Lianlian* was ostensibly established to encourage publishers to pool resources, specifically by all publishing the same story. For example, *The White Haired Girl* had already been published in more than 20 comic versions by September 1952 (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). In August 1951, using the example of the comic *A Little Correspondent* (*Yi ge xiao tongxunyuan*) which had been published in five different versions, the Comics Committee also complained this replication of stories was a serious issue (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951f).

Initially, however, the establishment of *Lianlian* did not go entirely according to the Cultural Bureau’s plans. The establishment of the organisation not only spurred on the retail of revolutionary *lianhuanhua*, but also the retail of the speedily produced *paomashu*. *Lianlian* was made up of private businesses, and their individual successes fuelled competition within the publishing industry. In July, the first month after the founding of the organisation, the turnover from the bookstores was 630 million yuan; a month later turnover had increased to

---

[106] Whether the bookshops exclusively sold *lianhuanhua* is unclear. However, the establishment of *Lianlian* was a fundamental part of *lianhuanhua* dissemination (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952a).

1.2 billion yuan (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952).[107] By September 1951, the bookstores under *Lianlian* were able to retail two new comics daily, with each new comic reaching at least 5000 copies and in some cases as many as 30,000 copies (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951d). As the Cultural Bureau saw it, however, even 'not very good comics were selling 1000-1500 copies in as little as ten days and in one month 5000 could be sold' (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951f).

The Cultural Bureau accused publishers of taking advantage of this boom in comic sales and profaning interest in the Comic Association, while at the same time producing poor quality *paomashu* for profit. Indeed, the Cultural Bureau termed the period from the establishment of the *Lianlian* to the banning of the *paomashu* to one of 'mad speculation' (*touji kuang*) (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951a).[108] They also accused the publishers of continuing to distribute *lianhuanhua* through their old dissemination networks on the street (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951a). Subsequently, against a backdrop of the 'Three Antis and Five Antis' campaign and an attempt to improve the political thinking of publishers and artists, publishing declined and thus so did the turnover of the *Lianlian* bookstores.

Despite these issues, *Lianlian* went on to play a greater role in regulating the *lianhuanhua* industry. This was another important layer in the censorship process, as the organisation acted as a check on 'inappropriate' content which had not been detected at the publishing stage. In August 1951, at their second meeting, the Comics Committee stated it would assist *Lianlian* in building a reviewing system (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951f). Later, during the 'Three Antis and Five Antis' Campaign, *Lianlian* organised a checking group, stopped the selling of 200 comics and prohibited the republishing of 500 comics (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). In general, after a *lianhuanhua* title had been categorised as ‘bad,’ it could be retrieved from bookstores, sealed up and ultimately destroyed (Beijing News Publisher 1951d). Comics that were considered ‘moderate’ were sold out and not replenished (Beijing News Publisher 1954).

---

[107] As chapter four demonstrated, the repetition of stories actually continued to be a problem, with agencies again turning to this issue in the mid-1960s as an impetus for creating a national strategy in production.

[108] *Touji* was a hate word for the CCP as 'speculation' was considered a major sin and associated with pre-1949 capitalism.

In 1954 *Lianlian* further asserted its supervisory and advisory role by stipulating that it would organise conferences and seminars every season to assess the progress of *lianhuanhua* production and thus provide a reference for artists, publishers and other comic workers (Chen and He 1962). However, *Lianlian* itself came under criticism both during the conference and from the Shanghai Bookstore Industry Alliance (*Shanghaishi shudian ye lianhehui*), which complained it needed to be more tightly managed by the Party-State. The Shanghai Bookstore Alliance complained that their ‘stockholders are weak’ and therefore ‘they cannot undertake important political work and do important jobs in the People’s publishing industry’ (*Lianlian* Bookstore 1954). The conference concluded *Lianlian* needed to be more centralised with a professional director and the ability to liaise with the publishing houses as well as freelance artists and editors, and inform them of the current publishing plan and political requirements (Chen and He, 1962).

At the same time, as *Lianlian* was being critiqued and the publishing industry was facing complete nationalisation, a countrywide bookstore chain came under fire. *Xinhua* Bookstore (*Xinhua Shudian*) was accused of not doing enough to buy up ‘higher quality’ (*zhiliang hao*) comics, instead acquiring ‘carelessly drawn Soviet stories, Chinese classical stories and folk tales’ (*Lianlian* Bookstore 1954). Nevertheless, such bookstores continued to play a dominant role in *lianhuanhua* dissemination, acting as an avenue for Party-State control over more grass roots distribution. This took place both through their own stores, through interactions with the vendors and (as we shall see below) through campaigns in libraries, schools and factories (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951d).

Libraries in Schools and Factories

Lianhuanhua were disseminated through libraries set up in schools, factories and on the street (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). The comics were disseminated in this way to propagate Party-State propaganda. In Beijing, the Number Four Cultural Centre (*Beijing di si wenhuaguan)* encouraged specific street libraries to be set up. The street libraries collected rent money from the population, and school children were encouraged to visit them outside of class time (Lian 2012, 96). Lin (1998, 89) comments that generally these 'popular libraries' received little or no financial support from the government, being established and then run by grass roots volunteers. However, in order to popularise the 'healthy content' (*jiankang de lianhuanhua*) of the new *lianhuanhua*, their price was subsidised by the Party-State-backed bookstores, and they were loaned out to factories and schools (Lian 2012, 96).

The SPFAPH proclaimed that 'nearly 100% of the children love to read comics' (SPFAPH 1960b). However, children and youth were believed to be at particular risk from 'harmful' content and in need of direction. To combat 'harmful' content, special programmes were initiated to promote 'educational' *lianhuanhua* and to build school libraries as a more regulated space in which children could read and borrow *lianhuanhua*. From May to August 1951, 160 primary schools in Beijing obtained comics (Lian 2012, 95). The *Xinhua* bookstore ran the scheme to provide *lianhuanhua* (Beijing News Publisher and Xinhua Bookstore 1951). This work was considered highly important to dissuade children from visiting and renting from *lianhuanhua* vendors, where they might come into contact with 'harmful' content (Beijing News Publisher and Xinhua Bookstore 1951).

Small reading rooms (*xiao yuelanshi*) were built in schools for children to read in and borrow books from (Beijing News Publisher and Xinhua Bookstore 1951). Generally each school received 100 comics from the *Xinhua* bookstore. These propaganda comics were loaned to the students at the lowest possible price or offered for free if the school opened up rental to outsiders to subsidise costs (Beijing News Publisher 1951a). According to *The People's Daily* students were charged less than half the price it cost to rent a comic from a vendor at the time (Yang 1951). These *lianhuanhua* were undoubtedly retailed at a cheaper price to encourage students to select 'revolutionary' comics, rather than the more 'diverse' selections available from the vendors. [109] The comics were managed by two children in each class and children and youth were encouraged to participate in propagating the scheme (Xinhua Bookstore Shanghai Branch 1955). When sufficient book fees had been collected they were turned over to the *Xinhua* bookstore and the schools could keep the comics (Beijing News Publisher 1951a). *The People's Daily* celebrated the initiative by noting that at a school in Taiyuan the 1200 pupils had read, on average, three to four comics each a month as a result of this program (Yang, Qiushi 1951).

At the same time as comics were being distributed to schools others were being recalled. Certain genres of comics which were not banned outright were still not permitted in school libraries. For example, in Beijing comics based on regional folk tales were held in Christian churches, families' private collections and on stalls. The Culture and Education Bureau (*Wen Jiao Ju*) however, took active charge of removing them from the schools as it did not want to encourage or condone their consumption (Beijing News Publisher 1954).

---

[109] As will be explicated in the next chapter however, this scheme along with a myriad of others did not dent the popularity of the vendors.

Schemes to introduce *lianhuanhua* into factories began as early as 1951, when the *Xinhua* bookstore, in collaboration with the Press and Publishing Department (*Xinwen Chuban Chu*), subsidised the loan of *lianhuanhua* to 25 factories, predictably a series about industrial work (Beijing News Publisher and Xinhua Bookstore 1951). Likewise, in 1954, parallel to the scheme to supply comics to schools, *Xinhua* worked with the New Public Publishing House (*Xin Dazhong Chubanshe*), a semi-private enterprise in Beijing, to supply comics to several large factories (Beijing News Publisher 1951a). Every factory in the program was supplied with new comics (Beijing News Publisher and Xinhua Bookstore 1951). Yang Qiushi (1951), writing in *The People's Daily*, celebrated the scheme as a glorious success, claiming that in one factory 70%-80% of the workers had borrowed *lianhuanhua*, while one worker had read 18 comics in three days. In order to further popularise revolutionary *lianhuanhua* in public places, *Xinhua* also extended the scheme to providing comics to libraries in public bath houses (Yang 1951). In disseminating *lianhuanhua* to factories and schools and other public meeting places in this way, the content with which children and adults came into contact could be more strictly regulated. These programmes demonstrate one instance of the active role that *Xinhua* took in disseminating the comics beyond its stores.

While *lianhuanhua* featured in urban literacy and propaganda campaigns from the early 1950s, in the early 1960s Party-State agencies and publishing houses began to take an active role in ensuring the comics were disseminated to rural areas as well. This went alongside a general push to produce *lianhuanhua* which were considered relevant for rural audiences. Comics were said to be more suitable for rural audiences specifically because they could 'fight longer than a single narrative painting,' such as *nianhua* or a poster and through characters' development audiences could get a sense of personal struggles and changes in thinking (Shen, Peng 1963). In addition, *lianhuanhua* could be enjoyed at the individual reader's own speed and also re-read, which was not possible with real-time media, such as plays and films. In

1963 the SPFAPH and the China Film Press (*Zhongguo dianying chubanshe*) sent editors to Zhejiang, Hebei and Shandong to investigate the kinds of *lianhuanhua* rural audiences supposedly wanted to read (*The People's Daily* 1963a). These new *lianhuahua* featuring propaganda specially targeted at these audiences were intended to balance a focus on man's domination of nature with class struggle. In particular, *The People's Daily* held up *The Poorest Class Can Reverse Heaven and Earth* (*Qiong Bangzi Niu Zhuan Qiankun)*, edited by Jiang Weipu, as exemplary of this trend because it focused on the positive attitude of the poorest class (*qiong bangzi*) and their efforts to become successful led by the Party representative Wang Guofan (Shen 1963). Moreover, Wang Guofan's depiction was highlighted as especially positive as the artist Liu Jiyou (1918-1983) had focussed on the character's positive mental qualities, such as hard work and bravery, while at that same time presenting him as having an idealised physical appearance (Shen 1963).

In 1965 the Cultural Bureau and the Central Committee issued an order concerning the promulgation of specific comics for the countryside primary school extracurricular reading programme. The *Xinhua* Bookstore suggested ten comics for inclusion in the programme. However, the SPFAPH argued that revolutionary struggle needed to be further emphasised and suggested the inclusion of *Chairman Mao's Good Child* (*Mao Zhuxi de hao haizi*), *Heroic Little Eighth Route Army Man* and *Son of the Grassland* (*Caoyuan de erzi*). The SPFAPH also suggested that *The Small Hunter in the Forest* (*Lin zhong xiao lieren*) with its focus on natural science should not be included, resulting in a total of twelve comics in the programme (SPFAPH 1965b).[110]

---

[110] The SPFAPH did not give a particular reason why the comic focussing on natural science was to be excluded from the curriculum. It it likely that the comic did not focus enough on the theme of revolutionary struggle however.

The positive impact these comics were argued to have had was demonstrated in an anecdote about *Chairman Mao's Good Child*. Jiang Luyu from Haining District Number 2 Primary School read the comic and as a result purportedly refused to eat products that her mother had bought on the black market (SPFAPH 1960b). The fact that *lianhuanhua* were disseminated for these purposes is hardly surprising given one of the initial impulses for promulgating them in the early 1950s was improving literacy, alongside propaganda initiatives, among urban workers and children.

In the early 1960s enrolment in schools was reduced for all ages to enable the policy of 'Readjust, Consolidate, Strengthen and Raise Standards' (*Tiaozheng Gonggu Chongshi Tigao*), initiated to help rebuild the economy after the excesses of the Great Leap Forward (Chen and He 1962). In July 1962, He Gongchao, a leading member of the Shanghai Literature and Arts Association, expressed concern to the Shanghai Municipal Third Plenary Conference that youth and children were falling through the gaps as a result of this policy. He argued there was an urgent need for 'extracurricular education' (*xiao wai jiaoyu*) to 'make up for a lack of schooling and family education' (Chen, Baichui and He 1962). This endeavour was tied into a discussion of *lianhuanhua's* capacity to instruct, and debates over leaving this important medium for 'ideological and scientific education' purely in the hands of the street vendors. He proposed ideas such as building street libraries, youth bookstores and youth clubs (*shaoniangong*) to strengthen children's 'ideological education and knowledge,' which would include comics (Chen and He 1962). In 1965, however, the Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office complained there were still not enough Party-State run libraries to replace the street vendors as a market for *lianhuanhua*, and encouraged the building of more (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965).

The dissemination of ‘correct’ *lianhuanhua* was orchestrated through rental programmes in schools, reading campaigns and the setting up of various public institutions to encourage reading in a more controlled setting. This was seen as particularly important in the early 1960s to provide a form of Party-State education and propaganda when school enrolment was curtailed. Alongside this, and in the face of the prevailing popularity of the vendors, Party-State agencies introduced ‘reading tutorship’ to guide individuals on what to read and how.

Reading Tutorship

In Shanghai in 1951, the Cultural Bureau estimated that overall there were 200,000 *lianhuanhua* readers per day and that on sunny days that number could increase to 400,000 because on those days it was more pleasant to read at the numerous outside bookstalls (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951a). However, an early issue of the Cultural Bureau’s endorsed magazine *Lianhuanhuabao* stated that educating these readers on *which* comics to read was highly important (*Lianhuanhuabao* 1951a). The Cultural Bureau wanted to ensure that not only were *lianhuanhua* reaching these readers through the ‘appropriate’ channels detailed above, but also that individuals were reading the ‘good’ stories in the ‘correct’ way. This was known as ‘reading tutorship’. The Party-State paid attention to the ways in which *lianhuanhua* were read because even if reading revolutionary comics, as Mittler (2008) argues of propaganda more generally, messages could be read, debated and ‘mis-read’ with unexpected consequences.

Lianhuanhua Exhibitions

One of the initial ways in which the Cultural Bureau sought to inform the population about the benefits of reading ‘revolutionary’ *lianhuanhua*, as opposed to the dangers of consuming 'old' *lianhuanhua*, was through regional exhibitions. Exhibitions were also a key part of the CCP's wider cultural strategy to disseminate its message about the role of art and literature. They harked back to the Yan'an era, when exemplary woodcuts, *manhua* and *nianhua* were displayed in exhibitions (Galikowski 1998, 5). After 1949 artists were unable to display their work unless it was officially approved by the Cultural Bureau or Art Associations (Galikowski 1998, 16).

From April 1950 the Cultural Bureau launched a comic exhibition in Shanghai to 'educate' the population on the characteristics of 'good' and 'bad' comics (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). The exhibition attracted over 33,000 visitors (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951g). The Department of Cultural Affairs declared 'the comic exhibition has already opened near the Confucius Temple (*wenmiao*) and has attracted a large audience and it should be held more frequently to further influence people' (Shanghai Press and Publication Department of Cultural Affairs 1951). The exhibition also included a comic reading room and in a nod towards soliciting reader feedback, more than 10,000 people's suggestions on *lianhuanhua* were also collected. Later, an exhibition to 'further influence people' was similarly organised in the East Shanghai Labour Park (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952).

In 1954 in Beijing the Chinese Artists Association and the People's Fine Arts Publishing House similarly jointly organised the 'Original *lianhuanhua* exhibition' in Beihai Park, which *The People's Daily* (1954) proclaimed was 'generally well received,' attracting 30,000 visitors. The works on display hailed from Shenyang, Beijing and Shanghai and comprised 43 comics regarded as classics of early PRC comic production, including Zhao Hongben's *The Tale of the White Snake* (*Baishe zhuan*) and Hua Sanchuan's *Heroes Village* (*Yingxiong cun*). In the exhibition the audience came face to face with the original art work for the comics and it was this, alongside introducing audiences to classical Chinese literature and folklore, which *The People's Daily* argued was the strength of the exhibition. Notably, this was during the period of laxer attitudes towards 'traditional' *lianhuanhua* in 1954 discussed in chapter three**.** However at this time, the paper complained there were still not enough comics being exhibited which celebrated Mao's works, industrial progress and military successes in Korea.

Lianhuanhuabao

The editor's note for the first issue of *Lianhuanhuabao* praised the comics' usefulness in propaganda and literacy campaigns due to their innate ease of understanding, clear structure and broad appeal (*Lianhuanhuabao* 1951a) (Appendix Figure 12). Despite this, however, as elaborated the regulation of the production and distribution of the medium was not without its problems for Party-State agencies and *lianhuanhua* continued to be published which at best were not propaganda comics, and at worst labelled 'anti party'. Therefore, the Central Government specified the need for a trade publication endorsing 'good'[111] *lianhuanhua* to be issued regularly (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951a). In July 1951, the Shanghai People's Government gave the Cultural Bureau permission to set up the *Lianhuanhuabao* office and to recruit staff. Stipulating the need for the magazine, the Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1951h) hailed the many great achievements which had been made in *lianhuanhua* production, but complained that the numbers were still too few to adequately compete with the older texts. The trade magazine criticised 'old' *lianhuanhua*, introduced new comics and participated in propaganda and educational initiatives (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951a).

The magazine was published bi-monthly and consisted of twelve double spread pages, thus resembling the *manhua* monthly trade magazine (Altehenger 2013). In order to entice readers and ensure loyalty and repeat readership, stories were sometimes split across more than one issue, as in the case of, *The Edge of Life and Death* (*Shengsi yuan*) (*Lianhuanhuabao* 1951a). *Lianhuanhuabao* was published by the People's Fine Art Publishing House and sold in the *Xinhua* bookstore (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951a). *The People's Daily* reported that the number of copies sold increased from 200,000 for the first issue to 400,000 by the fourth (Hua 1951).

---

[111] As discussed in chapter four 'good' *lianhuanhua* were those which combined a focus on building literacy, propaganda campaigns, revolutionary stories and classical and foreign literature 'serviceable for today's society'.

The periodical's content was controlled by the Cultural Bureau Management Committee. The Cultural Bureau (1951i) recruited professional and amateur artists to produce content for *Lianhuanhuabao* on a freelance basis, providing payment as soon as work was completed. Unsurprisingly, the Cultural Bureau conserved the right to change the form and content of these artists' work if the agency deemed that it needed censoring. As had been the case with the recurrence of 'travelling narratives' more generally, the magazine also reprinted items from publications on the market of good political repute (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951i).

Famous comic artists, such as He Youzhi and Hua Sanchuan, also contributed original content to *Lianhuanhuabao*. He Youzhi wrote about the challenges of illustrating a story for the magazine versus producing a comic because of the limited space. He (1982, 46) recalled that for weeks he had pondered how to adapt a story about the Northern Song writer and calligrapher Su Shi, but eventually took only a couple of hours to draw it. He chose to focus on a humorous encounter between Su Shi and a man in a temple who, when he finds out who Su Shi is, tries to flatter him. According to He (1982, 47), the adaptation was considered of high artistic quality because of the way he had used subtle changes in the characters' expressions to represent what was happening.

The Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1951a) specified that the words and drawings should be as vernacular (*tongsu*) as possible to reach the wider population and so that the publication could be read by anyone with an educational level below the first grade of high school. In particular, simple and short words were used for the sections on critiquing 'bad *lianhuanhua* and introducing new propaganda comics' (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951i). In this respect, it was similar to the magazine *Manhua*, which also appealed to readers of varying ages (Altehenger 2013, 70). Every edition had 100 pictures approximately, with two to four long stories and four to eight short stories. There were usually six or four frames per page. Typically the front cover adopted a bold four-colour scheme. It was intended that the inside content should be all one colour, but to make the publication more attractive and eye-catching select stories were illustrated in colour (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951i).

In terms of content, many issues of this magazine had a particular propaganda focus. For example, the third issue celebrated the 30th birthday of the CCP (*Lianhuanhuabao* 1951b). More generally, the stories in the magazine included tales about industrial and agricultural production and Guomindang spies. In addition, *Lianhuanhuabao* was also required to support the Party-State narrative on the revolutionary wars. The issue inaugurating the 30th anniversary of the founding of the CCP included a story about the revolutionary base areas and Mao and Zhu De (*Lianhuanhuabao* 1951b). Another example of such a story in the magazine is *Son of the Motherland* (*Zuguo de erzi*) in which the protagonist is injured before the battle, but despite this and other hardships he tries to reach his comrades (*Lianhuanhuabao* 1951b, 8). He is inspired by the story of a Soviet hero, who spent 18 days climbing to escape Nazi encampments. The Chinese hero loses both his legs and fingers from injury and frostbite. In testament to the power of storytelling, however, he goes on to inspire others to learn from his example by reading aloud ‘ten books a month even without thumbs’ (*Lianhuanhuabao* 1951b, 13).

Nonetheless, the content of *Lianhuanhuabao* was geared towards promoting revolutionary *lianhuanhua* that did not necessarily mean recounting rely on 'new' stories.[112] Just as classical literature and folk tales were adapted into *lianhuanhua* so they also appeared in *Lianhuanhuabao*. Although more often with the 'correct' revolutionary angle as content of the magazine was easier to control. The editor stipulated:

> We want to publish *Lianhuanhuabao* because it can propagate new stories and new knowledge. However, no matter whether it is an old or new story, we will tell it from the People's point of view (*Lianhuanhuabao* 1951a).

Lianhuanhuabao also incorporated short strips which resembled *manhua*. For example, a six small-frame strip showed a mouse running away from a cat and getting help from a chicken, whose egg it then steals (*Lianhuanhuabao* 1951, 16). The mouse is then caught when the chicken and the cat form an alliance. The strip is reminiscent of the famous Ming Dynasty story of *The Wolf of Zhongshan* and Mr Dongguo's mistaken desire to help the wolf who intends to eat him, even after he has been forewarned of the danger by a passing woman (Farquhar 1999, 220). This is an example of *Lianhuanhuabao* drawing on a classical story with which people would undoubtedly have already been familiar. The moral of the story for 1950s audiences was the importance of discriminating between class enemies and friends (Farquhar 1999, 220). The previously mentioned famous artist Liu Jiyou, known as the 'Eastern Rembrandt,' also told the story of 'Mr Dongguo' in comic form and the *lianhuanhua* was celebrated at the 1954 exhibition in Beijing (*The People's Daily* 1954).

---

[112] Furthermore, *lianhuanhuabao* advocated so called 'scientific knowledge' (*kexure changshi*) with stories focussing on disease control and crop and animal protection, such as *Terrible Flies* (*Kepa De Canying*) and *Wipe out Bovine Bloat* (*Zhi Ni Gu Zhang Bing*).

However, *Lianhuanhuabao* drew not just on prevailing propaganda discourses and 'travelling narratives,' but also on other popular cultural mediums, including song, poems and games to reinforce its message. For example, one song tells of a red cockerel, who wakes up a family's father to do farm work, the mother to spin, the elder brother to go to the frontline to care for the injured and the children to go to school and feed the chickens (*Lianhuanhuabao* 1951a, 32). Meanwhile, a poem in the third issue of *Lianhuanhuabao* published in 1951 to inaugurate the founding of the CCP was entitled *China's Communist Party Emerges* (*Zhongguo Chule Gongchangdang*) and was set against a backdrop of Mao carrying the flag and troops marching across Tiananmen Square (*Lianhuanhuabao* 1951b, 5).[113]

In general *Lianhuanhuabao* was more didactic in its approach to promoting CCP rhetoric than the comics themselves. The shorter stories had to get their message across far more quickly and therefore lacked the (sometimes) more subtle approach of the comics, in which artists and writers had time and space to *show*, rather than *tell* through a character's actions how the audience should feel about him/her. In his article on how to draw *lianhuanhua* for *Meishu,* Liu Xun (1954) stated that a key element in judging whether a comic was good or not was its ability to subtly show differences between characters without resorting to stereotypical language or caricatures.

However, the content of *lianhuanhua* was also often less overtly propagandistic in tone, because institutionally it was simply easier to regulate the content of the regularly published, shorter and Cultural Bureau-endorsed *Lianhuanhuabao.* As discussed in chapter four there was scope within the publication and censoring of *lianhuanhua* for a variety of content to reach circulation. In consuming a *lianhuanhua*, depending on the subject matter, the reader could disengage from Party rhetoric and enjoy divergent themes. In response to this, *Lianhuanhuabao* was specifically created to reinforce the link between the Party-State-endorsed political culture and the comics. One of the key ways in which the magazine did this was by further reiterating the link between the comics and campaigns.

---

[113] The poem reads: 'China now has a Communist Party, A thousand years of darkness are over, China has Mao Zedong, The Sun Rises in the East' (*Lianhuanhuabao* 3 1951, 5).

As discussed in chapter four, *lianhuanhua* took a considerable amount of time to produce, and production was not always able to keep up with rapidly changing policies. *Lianhuanhuabao* was expected to fill in the gap in terms of keeping the public up to date with current struggles and guiding people's view through the medium of much shorter stories (Hua 1951). For example, the early attempts to produce *Lianhuanhuabao* were couched in rhetoric concerning the 'Resist America, Support Korea' campaign.

> We advocate patriotism, the 'Resist America, Support Korea' initiative and every aspect of our new society's development and the enhancement of scientific knowledge, which is closely related to People's lives (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951h).

This narrative was further reinforced in the story *Primary School Students* (*Xiaoxuesheng*) in one of the early issues. This short comic focusses on one family's imagining of how they could help with the Korean War effort. For example, the little boy thinks he will unite with all the children in Beijing and work together to ultimately donate a tank (*Lianhuanhuabao* 1951b). Rawnsley (2009, 299) argues that promoting individual and family donations to the Korean War effort was a key element of the overall propaganda campaign. For example, and giving a similar message to *Lianhuanhuabao,* one particular propaganda poster from 1952 claimed that 'contributions from the public are enough to purchase over 3,710 aeroplanes' (Rawnsley 2009, 302). *Lianhuanhuabao* did not diverge from reinforcing prevailing Party sentiment.

The magazine was artistically diverse, however. It included line drawing, paper cuts and cartooning. The Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1951h) had stated that '...we will try to make our publication become a garden of experimentation and promotion'. Inevitably this 'experimentation' was strictly managed. Yet there is no doubt that *Lianhuanhuabao* constituted an eclectic mix of artistic style and form. The magazine also used elaborate borders and framing to further emphasise its messages. The first issue of *Lianhuanhuabao* included various decorative borders comprising ornamentation as diverse as guns, doves, and traditional paper cuts and elaborate flowers and stars. This embellishment was less possible in the case of *lianhuanhua* in which text and image were more clearly demarcated, and in which there was less variation in the layout of the page.

An important feature of *Lianhuanhuabao* were the articles celebrating and critiquing specific comics. Writing in *The People's Daily,* Hua Junwu (1951) stipulated that *Lianhuanhuabao* was an 'instructional text' engaged in a kind of 'combat mission' to demonstrate 'good' ideology and artistry for readers and educate them on how to choose a 'good' comic book. *Lianhuanhua* were praised if they were deemed to have 'good content and creative techniques' in line with the 'educative' functions prescribed for the medium and discussed in chapter four (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951h). At the same time, the Cultural Bureau affirmed 'we will criticise the bad publications, which do not have good ideas and we thus hope *lianhuanhua* can gradually improve and develop' (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951h).

In particular, Hua Junwu (1951) hailed the achievements of *Lianhuanhuabao* in supporting the campaign against the Qing educational reformer Wu Xun, one of the first denunciation campaigns of the early PRC. Galikowski (1998, 43) counts the campaign against Wu Xun as one of the three major campaigns to affect intellectuals from 1949 to 1956. The campaign went on to criticise independent thinking among Chinese intellectuals (Galikowski

1998, 43). A 1951 article in *Lianhuanhuabao* itself critiqued two *lianhuanhua* focussing on Wu Xun.

> They depict Wu Xun as the number one educational enthusiast in China and a great man who strived for the happiness of the poor and they ask us to learn from him. This is definitely wrong. He taught children to learn from Confucian texts and worked with the feudal government. He depressed the poor by collecting high rents to build schools. He is a counter-revolutionary character and we should not respect or learn from him (*Lianhuanhuabao* 1951b, 17).

Significantly, a few pages of one of these two *lianhuanhua* can still be found on the internet, denoting the impossibility of ever completely eradicating *lianhuanhua* once they were in circulation. The images in the two *lianhuanhua* were specifically condemned for showing Wu Xun with 'no courage to rebel and on bended knee before the landlords' (*Lianhuanhuabao* 1951b, 17). The article stipulated in no uncertain terms that 'the comics about him are nonsense and should not be bought or read' (*Lianhuanhuabao* 1951b, 17).

Zhao Hongben illustrated one of these two *lianhuanhua*. It seems then that even the publication of a second 'politically dubious' comic (alongside *The Well* described in chapter three) did not result in his being excluded from the industry. His innumerable artistic talents, capacity to produce high-quality revolutionary *lianhuanhua* and knowledge of the medium protected him at that point, when Party-State organisations were in the process of familiarising themselves with the medium. It must be noted, however, that during the Wu Xun campaign more generally, attacks were mostly directed at institutions, such as the Central Academy of Fine art, with few individual artists being directly implicated (Galikowski 1998, 43).

Lianhuanhuabao played a major role in drawing together Party-State discourses on comics and their function, disseminating these to the public and providing ‘reading tutorship’. Beyond the Cultural Bureau-endorsed *Lianhuanhuabao,* however, the benefits of the comics were also disseminated through other publications. In 1959 the SPFAPH (1959f) chastised itself for not doing enough to recommend ‘good works’ to readers through media channels.

> We hope we can collaborate with *The Labour Daily* (*Laodong Bao*), *The Youth Daily* (*Qingnan bao*), *The New Youth Newspaper* (*Xin shaonian bao*) and *The Xinmin Evening News* (*Xinmin wanbao*) to publish articles recommending and criticising certain *lianhuanhua* in order to direct the readers (SPFAPH 1959f).

The publishing house also requested the help of the Shanghai based *Wenhuibao* and *The Liberation Daily* (*Jiefang Ribao*) in producing a theoretical article to arouse people’s interest in *lianhuanhua* (SPFAPH 1959f).

As explored throughout this thesis, *The People’s Daily* also played a significant role in critiquing some *lianhuanhua*, propagating others and commenting on the industry as a whole (Beijing News Publisher 1954). For example, in 1949 it advocated one particular comic about a heroine named Li Xiuzhen. The comic showed Li disseminating propaganda materials behind Japanese lines during the War, ‘sewing clothes for the PLA soldiers as if they were her own children’ and mobilising women for participation in the land reform movement in the villages (Tian 1949). Later on, the paper celebrated a *lianhuanhua* telling the tale of the Chinese reaching the top of Everest (*The People’s Daily* 1961). At the same time, the paper also incorporated some short *lianhuanhua*. For instance, *The People’s Daily* included a comic issued over several consecutive issues about Dong Quanrong, a heroine of the Great Leap Forward (Xiao 1960).

Reading Tutorship for Children and Youth

Gu (1965, 3) stated that comics needed to be 'studied' (rather than read, emphasising their 'educative' function) with the 'correct motivation, aims and ideological basis'. This was considered particularly important in the case of children and youth. Mao stated of youth that 'the world is ours and also yours, but ultimately it is yours…You are like the morning sun our hopes are placed in you' (Zhong 1999, 150). Youth were an important social group because of their intrinsic role in China's future. However, although they were regarded as a source of hope, youth were also considered potentially dangerous and in need of strong guidance. Therefore, political cultural mediums sought to address them directly (Zhong 1999, 155).

Lianhuanhua were supposed to act as young people's moral textbooks, extending the effectiveness of education received in school and within the family (Lian 2012, 98). However, the SPFAPH (1960b) stated that comics needed to be read with the 'right' Party-State guidance or children could get the 'wrong' message even when consuming supposedly revolutionary and 'new' culture material. The majority of comics read by children were not bought from bookstores, but borrowed from school libraries (*xuexiao tushuguan*) and rented from vendors and bookstalls (*zushutan)* and street libraries (SPFAPH 1960b). Therefore, 'reading tutorship' was propagated through these avenues on what to read and how. A survey compiled by the Beijing News Publisher in 1951 found that:

> The majority of the pupils like to read comics concerning the knight errant. However, at the same time, they read comics about the Wars of Liberation. The pupils can't distinguish between them, they just like the fighting, and therefore we have to help them to choose the correct one (Beijing News Publisher 1951a).

In the early 1950s, it was believed that eventually replacing the old knight errant comics with the ‘new’ *lianhuanhua* would rectify the issue (Beijing News Publisher 1951a). However, as stories based on folk literature and classical tales continued to proliferate, initiatives to control not just *what* children read, but *how*, strengthened in the 1960s.

The SPFAPH in particular had a role in dissemination and programmes to influence how the comics were read by children and youth. In December 1960, in their second general comic work report, the publishing house expressed its concern to the Cultural Bureau that comic reading tutorship for youth and children had not been institutionalised (SPFAPH 1960b). They argued ‘we should make the comics an educational tool, so we have to strengthen reading tutorship’ (SPFAPH 1960b). The Jingan District Youth Club and Hongkou District Victory Bookstall were to impart reading tutorship.[114] The report also stipulated that some schools, particularly primary schools in Hongkou district, had put considerable emphasis on ‘reading tutorship’ and combined extracurricular comic reading with schooling to great effect.[115] At the same time, some schools and libraries had not paid sufficient attention to reading tutorship. The SPFAPH complained that teachers were not taking the comics’ role as a form of propaganda seriously:

> Some teachers think reading comics does not have a good or a bad side. They are only concerned that children reading comics does not impact on a child’s homework and class participation. A few teachers think the comics are an entertainment activity so they don’t care about them. Some teachers even think comic reading will impact learning so

---

[114] In this case, the specific form reading tutorship took is not referenced.

[115] There is no documentary evidence to suggest that comics were ever used as a standard format for text books in schools. They were an extracurricular accompaniment to a school based Party-State curriculum, but not the text books themselves.

> they do not encourage children to read them and the school libraries do not even lend books (SPFAPH 1960b).

They argued the result was that children were staying up late and ignoring their homework to read and this impacted their study and physical health (SPFAPH 1960b).

Children also supposedly needed special ‘reading tutorship’ programmes as they lacked the necessary critical judgement to read in the ‘correct’ way. The publishing house expressed concern that without guidance some pupils were learning from the villainous characters.

> Some children swing their coat over their shoulder and swear (*ta ma de*). When a child from Changning district read an anti-spy comic he found out that spies can earn money and he felt it was good to learn to be a spy. This phenomenon indicates that strengthening reading tutorship is necessary (SPFAPH 1960b).

Lian (2012, 94) argues more generally that Party-State agencies feared youth would abandon their studies and even take up crime if they read the ‘wrong’ comics or read the ‘right’ comics in the ‘wrong’ way and thus feared there would be dire consequences for the social order.

In response to these concerns, the SPFAPH and the *Xinhua* bookstore printed a list of ‘good’ books and handed it out to schools and street libraries which could act as a form of ‘reading tutorship’ (SPFAPH 1960b). The youth league, educational departments, trade unions, the women’s federation and the newspaper publisher were also all expected to participate in work to improve reading tutorship over the comics and provide advice for individuals on what to read. However, tellingly, at the same time the SPFAPH (1960b) called on other Party-State organisations, such as the Cultural Bureau, the district Cultural departments and the Street Party committees to strengthen their leadership over the street vendors. The publishing house argued that lax control of the stalls and comic circulation was one of the key issues which was necessitating ‘reading tutorship’ (SPFAPH 1960b).

Conclusion

In order to ‘seize the front,’ *lianhuanhua* were disseminated through regulated channels in a number of ways. In the early 1950s, the Party-State attempted to regulate the sale of *lianhuanhua* through bookstores by setting up *Lianlian*. The establishment of the organisation initially resulted in a boom in the sale of *lianhuanhua,* but the Cultural Bureau asserted greater control over the organisation, when even ‘inappropriate’ *lianhuanhua* were also selling out fast during the ‘*paomashu* crisis’. By 1954 *Lianlian* was also playing a strong supervisory and censorship role by flagging content which needed to be censored.

Lianhuanhua were also distributed to libraries, schools and factories to encourage readers to engage with them and make ‘revolutionary’ *lianhuanhua* more accessible. In the 1960s, these access schemes were rolled out to the countryside. Party-State agencies also sought to influence how the comics were read and out of the myriad of titles which continued to be published, the ones readers selected. In the case of the comics, this ‘reading tutorship’ was considered particularly important due to the limits of Party-State agencies’ control over the mechanics of production. ‘Reading tutorship’ was carried out through a number of initiatives including exhibitions, the creation of *Lianhuanhuabao* and programmes in schools. These programmes sought to inform both teachers, who did not take the medium seriously and viewed it as a form of pure entertainment, and students, who were liable to ‘mis-read’ or ignore the political doctrine in the comics. Meanwhile, *Lianhuanhuabao* reinforced the link between the medium and political campaigns and propagated ‘good’ titles, while damming others. It is clear that despite different ‘reading tutorship’ programmes, Party-State agencies felt they had not been entirely successful in controlling the reading of the comics by 1966.

This was because ultimately the schemes did nothing to negate the popularity of the vending stalls, where ‘problematic,’ but potentially more entertaining content continued to circulate.

The dissemination of *lianhuanhua* through regulated channels was an important part of the Party-State’s vision for the medium. However, as chapter seven will elaborate, it was much more difficult for Party-State agencies to control the grass roots dissemination of *lianhuanhua* and to recall comics from the vendors once they were in circulation and this in turn in part necessitated ‘reading tutorship’ programmes for them.

Chapter 8: *Lianhuanhua* in Circulation: 'Guerrilla Vending' on the 'Cultural Front Line of Socialism'

Introduction

In 1951 a story in the magazine *New Children's World* (*Xinwen ertong shijie*) moralised that renting *lianhuanhua* was preferable to ownership (Dan 1951). In the story a boy called Lin Lin receives three comics as a gift from his neighbour Uncle Wang. He is very excited and takes them to school, but the teacher encourages the students to donate their comics to the volunteer army (*zhiyuan jun*). Lin Lin struggles with this but then donates them, avowing 'I will go to the libraries and bookstalls to rent and then read; the volunteer soldiers need these comics more than me' (Dan 1951). In the early PRC the rental of *lianhuanhua* was a key part of the dissemination of the medium and, as this story suggests, was actively encouraged. In fact, the SPFAPH described the ability to rent *lianhuanhua* during the 1950s as one of the most important parts of Shanghai's local culture (Shi 2010).

Lianhuanhua were one of the only forms of mass culture which could be rented. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, the Party-State sought to co-opt this rental industry through the setting up of street libraries and school libraries. However, the market was dominated by the street vendors (*lianhuanhua tan*). These were a remnant of the Republican years, when a culture of *lianhuanhua* rental had developed (as discussed in chapter two) (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951d). For the Party-State, *lianhuanhua* vendors therefore provided a crucial service in marketing the comics at a grass roots level. On the one hand, a single text held by a vendor could be rented by many and reach a widespread audience, thus benefiting Party-State propaganda initiatives. However, at the same time, this ability to circulate texts so widely was also highly 'problematic,' as poisonous comics could also reach a wide audience and were difficult to take out of circulation. In order for this system to work, as far as Party-State agencies were concerned, agencies needed to regulate the vendors and their stocks.

However, regulating the vendors proved far more challenging than controlling the distribution of *lianhuanhua* through bookshops, libraries, schools and factories – indeed, it was ultimately impossible. The Comic Renters Association was established to try to force vendors to register and thus regulate this important avenue for dissemination. Additionally, the Culture Bureau and associated Party-State institutions sought to control not only the comic stocks held by vendors, but also to regulate where the stalls were located and how they operated. Despite this, regulating *lianhuanhua* renting stalls continued to be a challenge for Party-State agencies because many of the stalls remained privately owned, even into the 1960s. Crucially, however, the Party-State continued to rely on these so-called 'guerrilla vendors' (*youji tan*) to disseminate the medium so never banned them. Contrasting with chapter seven's analysis of avenues where the Party-State maintained tighter control, this chapter focusses on the grass roots rental networks which distributed *lianhuanhua*, and which government agencies found virtually impossible to completely regulate.

Regulating the 'Guerrilla Vendors' (1949-1956)

The Vendors, the Readers and the Party-State Agencies

In 1932 Mao Dun had described the *lianhuanhua* street stalls as 'popular mobile libraries for the masses of Shanghai' (Mao 1932). In the 1950s visiting the stalls was an equally, if not more popular pastime. In Beijing, in August 1951, on average 31,000 comic books were rented per day. For the municipal population as a whole this amounted to one in 70 people visiting the stalls daily (Beijing News Publisher 1951d). Readers could buy or rent comics from the stalls or read them in situ. The ratio of those visiting *lianhuanhua* stalls in

Shanghai was estimated to be 50% children, 20% women, 20% office workers and 10% ‘others’ (Shanghai Literature and Art Department of Cultural Affairs 1950).

The ranks of vendors themselves included unemployed young people and small private business owners (Shanghai Municipal People’s Government, the Municipal Public Security Bureau, the Cultural Bureau 1950). Many had started a career in marketing *lianhuanhua* because doing so required minimal start-up costs, or much knowledge of the industry (Beijing News Publisher 1951e). Notably, *lianhuanhua* vending was also popular with those who found it hard to earn a living in the industrial sphere, such as older women (Lian 2012, 98).

Beginning in 1950, the establishment of control over these disparate vendors of varying size and location became a key goal of the Cultural Bureau and its associated departments. In conjunction with the Propaganda Bureau, the Cultural Bureau and Education Bureau were involved in managing the vendors, while the Cultural Bureau set the regulations (Xinhua Bookstore Shanghai Branch 1955). In addition, district and library administrations and the People’s Committee of Trade and Industry Branch (*Renmin weiyuanhui gongshang ke*) helped with administration (Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department, Jing’an District 1956). Forcing these different agencies to work together and to do so effectively, however, was regarded as particularly challenging in the early 1950s due to a lack of personnel, and poor communication between units.

In 1951, Chen Tongheng, a department director in the Cultural Bureau, complained that the Newspaper Publication Bureau (*Xiwen chuban ju*) was pushing forward with attempts to regulate vendors without reference to the Cultural Bureau or the Shanghai Fine Arts Association (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). He explained that although their goal of censoring ‘old’ comics in circulation was the same, the procedures by different arms of the Party-state simply did not match. He called for the establishment of a committee under the Cultural Bureau to facilitate liaison between organisations and consequently *lianhuanhua* dissemination (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). According to *The People's Daily* the Beijing Number Four Cultural Centre was also supposed to make contact with the vendors and 're-educate them and teach them not to pursue profits and transform their view towards serving the people' (Yang 1951). The Beijing Number Four Cultural Centre also assisted in purchasing 'appropriate' texts for the comic bookstalls and ensured they phased out the 'old' books (Lian 2012, 96). Most importantly, however, in order to institutionalise the *lianhuanhua* vendors and create an avenue for contact with them, the Comic Renters Association was created in Shanghai and Beijing.

The Comic Renters Association

In September 1950, Shanghai was estimated to have 3000 *lianhuanhua* vendors. Under the auspices of the *Lianhuanhua* Renters Preparatory Fellowship Group (*Lianhuanhua Chuzu Zhe Lianyi Choubei Hui*), 62 individuals made the first move towards bringing these vendors directly under the leadership of the Party-State. Affirming *lianhuanhua's* capacity and power to 'influence social culture and communicate ways of thinking,' an official statement encouraging participation in the preparatory endeavour declared:

> We need to unite together quickly. We need to start to prepare the *Lianhuanhua* Vendors Association and also to strengthen our organisation and enforce our power. We also need to encourage *lianhuanhua* vendors to re-manage (Shanghai Municipal People's Government, the Municipal Public Security Bureau, the Cultural Bureau 1950).

These attempts came to fruition in Shanghai on 8th October 1950 when the *Lianhuanhua* Renters Fellowship Association (*Lianhuanhua Chuzu Zhe Lianyihui*) was established, referred to as *Lianzu* for short.[116] In conjunction with propagandistic rhetoric glorying *lianhuanhua'*s new social and political role, early attempts to encourage the vendors to join *Lianzu* were also couched in the more practical terms of improving business (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1951h). These vendors had to apply for membership and receive a certificate in return. Some 3081 individuals joined initially and the organisation spread across 20 districts. One of the effects of the establishment of *Lianzu* was that the number of vendors decreased yearly in Shanghai in the 1950s (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965).[117]

Similarly to Shanghai, in July 1951, a Comic Renters Association (*Lianhuanhua zulin zhe lianyihui*) was established in Beijing. Only 28% of the vendors registered initially (Beijing News Publisher 1951e). But registration later became mandatory when it became apparent that, as in Shanghai, many stalls had simply not registered of their own volition. The Association aimed to develop general guidelines for comic acquisition and rental, to create member organisations, to hold conferences, to obtain dues and to promote Socialist education through the medium of *lianhuanhua* (Lian 2012, 96).

Comic Renters Associations were formed in both cities to enable Party-State agencies to have direct contact with the vendors and instruct them on CCP principals. From the outset, 'thought education' was propagated through the district branches of the respective organisations. In the early 1950s, the ideological education of the vendors was combined with instructions on the 'Resist America, Support Korea' campaign, and vendors were encouraged to adopt a patriotic attitude by retailing *lianhuanhua* celebrating Chinese victories (Beijing

---

[116] This was also referred to as the Shanghai Comic Bookstall Association (*Shanghai Lianhuanhua Shu Tan Lianyi Hui*).

[117] In contrast to Shanghai, the number of vendors increased sharply by 90% in Beijing (Beijing News Publisher 1951e). This denotes the less established nature of the medium in the capital during the Republican era, with vendors increasing in number to meet new demands after 1949, when the Party-State expanded the industry.

People's Government 1951). Additionally, Beijing vendors were also encouraged to sign the 'patriotic convention' (*aiguo gongyue*) (Beijing News Publisher 1954).

The Comic Renters Association was also established to regulate renting costs. Starting by district, but spreading out to all parts of the city, the vendors had to use the same renting rate (Beijing News Publisher 1951e). This would ensure that vendors could not retail potentially 'problematic' content at a cheaper price than 'revolutionary' *lianhuanhua.* Additionally, vendors had to also report their selling and renting figures monthly (Beijing News Publisher 1951d). However, vendor retail and rental figures proved equally challenging for the Party-State to keep track of many vendors did not register with the Comic Renters Association. [118]

Lianzu was moreover established to enable Party-State agencies to gain a better understanding of the genres of *lianhuanhua* in circulation and hence remove from circulation any content that was designated as poisonous (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952). In the early 1950s, *Lianzu* promoted 'new' *lianhuanhua*, encouraging the vendors to buy up stocks of revolutionary history and propaganda comics. Bookstores were called upon to provide 'new comics' to the vendors (discussed in greater depth later in this chapter). In 1951, the Shanghai Cultural Bureau (1951a) estimated that with the publication of 200 new *lianhuanhua*, all the *lianhuanhua* published prior to 1949 which were held by the vendors could be eradicated by the end of the year. *The People's Daily* (1951b) predicted that the setting up of the Comic

---

[118] It is worth noting that the Cultural Bureau did not just establish *Lianzu* as a means to regulate the vendors and their stocks, but also to act as a force against publishers. As discussed in chapter three, in the early 1950s, the Cultural Bureau distrusted the *lianhuanhua* publishing houses, accusing them of not following Party-State principals because of lingering sympathies for the Guomindang government and the belief that revolutionary comics were not marketable. It was thought that *Lianzu* could keep the publishing houses in check (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1952a). This was to be accomplished in the same way that the *Lianlian* acted as a monitor for comics which were distributed downwards and targeted some to be censored. However, *Lianzu* never fulfilled this prescribed role because the organisation faced too many of its own internal challenges.

Renters Association solved the problem of replacing ‘old’ comics with the ‘new’. These both proved to be thorough miscalculations of the situation, as the struggle with the vendors and taking comics out of circulation continued well into the 1960s.

In the early 1950s, agencies in Beijing experienced similar problems to those in Shanghai in removing ‘old’ comics from circulation. Of the 203,000 volumes in circulation in that city at the time, only 20% were ‘new’ *lianhuanhua* (Beijing News Publisher 1951e). The plan was to first focus on collecting those comics which had been unequivocally banned and included those considered ‘anti-Communist,’ ‘pro-Guomindang,’ ‘anti-Soviet’ or ‘pornographic’ (*huangse*). The Beijing People’s Government (1951) was also concerned about the spread of *paomashu* among the vendors. Vendors were thus encouraged to self-criticise and were informed of the illegality of holding *paomashu* (Beijing People’s Government 1951). However, collecting the highly popular ‘knight errant’ comics, the ‘capitalist love stories’ or adaptations of popular Republican films was not within the scope of Party-State initiatives in the early 1950s. These genres were considered ‘bearable’ and resources were directed instead towards the banning of more ‘harmful’ content (Beijing News Publisher 1954).

Identifying and recalling these ‘harmful’ comics already in circulation was not always straightforward. For a start, in the early 1950s, the size of the stock held by vendors could only be estimated. A survey of the vendors’ comics already in circulation included collecting information on the genres of comic in each district, the forms of ownership, the location of specific titles and the impact and difficulties of banning a certain genre or title (Beijing News Publisher 1951d). This provided a ‘rough understanding’ of the comic market -- but nothing more (Beijing News Publisher 1951e). It was simply too difficult and time-consuming to collect information on all the *lianhuanhua* vendors, who were so disparately located. Instead, sample surveys based on small groups were used to estimate the overall situation (Beijing

News Publisher 1951e). Furthermore, there were challenges in collecting banned *lianhuanhua* which were currently on loan (Chen and He 1962) and having sufficient copies of the banned books to distribute as examples (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1955b).

In 1954 two conferences took place in Beijing attended by vendors who had registered with *Lianzu*. The vendors promised to dispose of all the ‘old’ comics in three months (Beijing News Publisher 1954). However, by this point enough was known about *lianhuanhua* vending to make it clear that this would be an unrealistic goal. In Beijing the Police Office was called upon to assist the Culture and Education Bureau in collecting the comics from the vendors, subsequently collecting 17 comics, including some published before and some after 1949. However, the Culture and Education Bureau also recognised that even if the vendors accepted Party-State administrative provisions, ‘new comics are not good and they are not readily accepted by the readers’ (Beijing News Publisher 1954). Therefore, it was acknowledged that vendors would still be swayed by market forces to sell ‘old’ *lianhuanhua,* as the sale of the medium was part of a grass roots market economy.

A Market Economy in the Comics

The vendors preferred to sell and rent the ‘old’ comics.[119] This was not necessarily because they were purposefully making a statement against ideological uniformity. Rather, the vendors continued to market ‘old’ *lianhuanhua* because the ‘new’ *lianhuanhua* were shorter and less entertaining for readers in terms of plot and style. In Beijing, the News Publisher postulated that the vendors would eventually sell out of the ‘old’ comics and that readers would be forced to accept ‘new’ *lianhuanhua* (Beijing News Publisher 1951e). This again turned out to be a miscalculation and while all the pre-1949 comics were eventually removed from circulation by the 1960s, non-revolutionary *lianhuanhua* published after 1949 continued to appeal to many readers.

---

[119] Initially Party-State agencies did not even wholly blame the vendors for their desire to retail ‘old’ *lianhuanhua*, recognising that there were insufficient ‘new’ comics to replace them. A September 1950 report estimated that of the 360 new titles published since the establishment of the PRC, only 50 were actually suitable for the vendors to sell and rent (Shanghai Literature and Art Department of Cultural Affairs 1950).

Tang (2015, 23) argues that mass culture was promoted by the new Socialist Party-State instead of being determined by the market. This may well have been the case in many other instances. But my archival research on *lianhuanhua* reveals this was certainly not the case for this medium. A market economy in *lianhuanhua* persisted in socialist China, precisely because the medium was a popular form of culture and individuals chose what to consume of their own volition from the stalls. Moreover, as I will explore later in this chapter, this market economy in *lianhuanhua* continued into the 1960s.

The Bookstores and the Vendors

In conjunction with *Lianzu*, the bookstores also played a role in disseminating *lianhuanhua* beyond their actual shops to the vendors (Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department, Jing’an District 1956). *Lianlian* was given the responsibility of gradually taking away some ‘old’ *lianhuanhua* that had been labelled ‘anti-party’ and then supplying the same amount of ‘new’ comics by the Cultural Bureau (Shanghai Literature and Art Department of Cultural Affairs 1950). The Cultural Bureau (1951d) was of the opinion that ‘old’ comics would be gradually collected and that this would be readily accepted by the vendors. As an incentive, *Lianlian* offered a 25% discount to those purchasing new books for their stalls (Shanghai Literature and Art Department of Cultural Affairs 1950). However, the scheme was short-lived due to the fact that many of the vendors were in dire financial straits and unable to buy new books despite the discount. In any case, *Lianlian* itself was a privately owned enterprise with limited resources to support the provision of a larger discount.

As a partial remedy, the Cultural Bureau requested financial assistance from the municipal government to support a scheme in which the vendors would select 50 of their most ‘problematic’ *lianhuanhua* for exchange. They estimated that the work could be completed in two months (Shanghai Literature and Art Department of Cultural Affairs 1950). However, in reality the process of disposing of the old (*jiu*) *lianhuanhua* lasted much longer, as they continued to be popular with their audience and thus their retailers, and vendors simply refused to give them up.

In the early 1950s, *Xinhua* began introducing incentives to encourage the vendors to purchase ‘revolutionary comics’ and give up their ‘old’ stocks. In 1951 the bookstore *Xinhua* began working with the Cultural Centres to reach out to the vendors and provide them with ‘revolutionary comics’ at a reduced price and advanced the credit (Yang 1951). However, this scheme was ultimately unsuccessful and by the mid-1950s *Xinhua* was stepping in with a much more regulated and comprehensive approach. In 1954 the bookstore chain was called upon to strengthen its links with the vendors (Beijing News Publisher 1954). However, it was not until 1955 that *Xinhua* set up a comprehensive scheme to reach the vendors and force them to operate more collectively and ultimately control comic distribution more thoroughly. This scheme was carried out through the auspices of a contact person (*lianxiren*). The contact person’s function was to control which books got distributed down to the vendors. They collected books from *Xinhua* and then vendors borrowed comics from them to lend out to readers (Xinhua Bookstore Shanghai Branch 1955). The bookstores had a key role in disseminating *lianhuanhua* to the vendors. However, asserting administrative control over the vendors continued to be an ongoing process throughout the 1950s and first half of the 1960s.

‘Guerrilla Vending’

Party-State departments attempted to regulate vendor size and location from 1949 to 1966 for the express purpose of controlling the circulation of *lianhuanhua*. Vendors were categorised in terms of the number of *lianhuanhua* they held. For example, a report from Jing’an district in Shanghai in 1956 claimed:

> Our district has 66 *lianhuanhua* vendors, but there are only 26 big vendors with over 1500 *lianhuanhua*, and there are 40 small vendors who possess less than 1500 *lianhuanhua* (Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department, Jing’an District 1956).

The Press and Publication Agency (*Xinwen Chubanju*) under the Beijing Municipal Government specified that the bookstores were those with more than 1000 comics, whereas the stalls usually had at least 100 comics (Lian 2012, 95).[120]

However, *lianhuanhua* vending was also connected to the selling and renting of other kinds of books (Xinhua Bookstore Shanghai Branch 1955)**.** A survey conducted in Beijing in August 1951 estimated that there were 592 bookstalls and bookstores renting comics and among them, 420 exclusively renting out *lianhuanhua*. In conjunction with the vendors who sold and rented only *lianhuanhua* and those who combined the sale of the comics with other books, there were also vendors who dabbled in comic retail alongside the sale of other products, such as newspapers, stationary, cigarettes and liquor (Beijing News Publisher

---

[120] In terms of revenue, big vendors could accrue 25 to 40 yuan per month, whereas small vendors earned around 15 yuan per month, and in some cases only earned three to five yuan per month (Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department, Jing’an District 1956).

1951e). Furthermore, hotels, restaurants, salons, and train stations all held comics for borrowing purposes (SPFAPH 1960b).

A 1954 report from Beijing stipulated that it was easier, although still challenging, to get the full-time *lianhuanhua* vendors to register with the Industrial and Commercial Department and join the Renters Association. However, forcing what were referred to as ‘grocery stall’ (*zahuo tan*) vendors, who sold comics in ‘hotels, public bath houses and almost every *hutong*’ to register was almost impossible (Beijing News Publisher 1954). In Beijing some *lianhuanhua* stalls were even labelled ‘guerrilla stalls’ (Beijing News Publisher 1954). Such vendors were often located in the north of the city and were considered the most difficult to regulate. The News Publisher (1954) expressed concerns about the ‘guerrilla vendors’ stating ‘their numbers are hard to estimate and probably higher than we think’.

Small and mobile vendors working irregular hours were also termed ‘no lease vendors’ (*ling zu tanfan*). Many of these mobile bookstalls constituted a vendor carrying around a selection of comics on a bike (Hua 1951). An early 1951 investigation into comic vendors in Beijing complained that such bike vendors were difficult to gather comprehensive information on, as they moved around so much (Beijing News Publisher 1951d). Due to the difficulties in regulating these types of vendors, a later 1954 report advocated that energy and resources be directed towards such vendors who exclusively dealt in *lianhuanhua* (Beijing News Publisher 1954). *Lianhuanhua* vending was combined with the sale of other products and it was these vendors in particular who proved elusive and difficult for the Party-State to monitor in the 1950s. Ultimately however, the vending of the comics alongside other products was stamped out by the 1960s. By 1960 the SPFAPH estimated 95% of the books on the stalls were comics (SPFAPH 1960b).

In addition to being concerned about the types of vending, Party-State departments were concerned with the location of the stalls for three principal reasons. Firstly, acquiring an understanding of how the vendors were distributing comics would make it easier to collect comics already in circulation. Secondly, Party-State agencies encouraged vendors to migrate to areas such as markets and schools to increase revenue and the sale of ‘revolutionary’ *lianhuanhua* (Beijing News Publisher 1951e). The propaganda department in Jing’an district specified that it was best for vendors to be located at vegetable markets, such as that on North Xianxi road or nearby schools and theatres to increase the flow of individuals visiting the stalls and thus revenue. A vendor near the Meichi Grand Theatre was celebrated for having a revenue of 250 yuan per month (Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department, Jing’an District 1956). In Beijing the Party-State specifically encouraged vendors to relocate to areas with low stall density to increase turnover and ensure that propaganda comics reached as widespread an audience as possible (Beijing News Publisher 1951e).

Thirdly, Party-State agencies expressed concern over the location of the stalls as they purportedly affected surrounding foot traffic and transportation links. The Police Bureau expressed its concern about comic stalls located at the entrance and exits of lanes, in the corners of compounds and in other populated areas, for example. This was because patrons always consumed *lianhuanhua* by sitting down and reading, and this allegedly halted pedestrian traffic and transportation (Shanghai Municipal People’s Government, the Municipal Public Security Bureau, the Cultural Bureau 1950). Hua Junwu (1951) also complained in *The People’s Daily* that comic book vending had the capacity to cause traffic congestion. Such excuses about the vendor’s location were used for the purposes of attacking the medium more generally.

In 1955 the Ministry of Culture stipulated that vending affecting traffic was grounds for a licence being revoked (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1955a). In contrast, the propensity for the vendors to set up bookshops in their own houses was seen as beneficial because they were no longer subject to the weather and it would ‘encourage good feeling among citizens for the *lianhuanhua* renting industry’. This was presumably as it would promote a sense of community, but also because it would make it easier to shut such stalls down as they had an exact address (Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department, Jing’an District 1956). Through the Party-State’s effort to ‘appropriately’ locate the vendors, the dissemination of *lianhuanhua* became tied up with attempts to regulate the urban landscape.[121]

In their efforts to justify regulating the vendor’s location, and in a general manifestation of apprehension about vendor autonomy, Party-State departments continued to warn that unregulated stalls were a serious hazard to the reading public. A report from a comic meeting in Beijing argued that ‘there are spies operating in the vicinity of the stalls who use comics to lure children’ (although the report did stipulate there was no actual evidence of this and did not specify who these spies were) (Beijing News Publisher 1954). As will be elaborated, this kind of exaggerated rhetoric continued to be used, in conjunction with demands, to better regulate the vendors in the 1960s.

As well as the location of the vendors’ stalls, the Party-State found the unregulated operating hours of the vendors problematic and sought through various checks and balances to ensure that readers had a steady supply of comics (Chinese Communist Party Shanghai

---

[121] Lu (2011) discusses the Party-State’s attempts to build regulated urban spaces in the 1950s. These new urban spaces were closely based on the Soviet planning model and developed through the Five Year Plans. However, he also discusses the challenges the Party-State faced, firstly in meeting demands for adequate welfare facilities and secondly, in providing adequate leisure facilities and services to the urban work units, which were the central focus of these new urban spaces. Propaganda posters from the 1950s suggest a wealth of facilities and welfare activities were available to the working population and that every aspect of life was taken care of by the Party-State. However, this was a far cry from the reality (Lu 2011, 85). Instead, urban residents resorted to illegal construction in order to meet demands for facilities and secondly had to seek sources of entertainment and leisure facilities outside the work unit. In the case of *lianhuanhua*, the stalls developed to fulfil the need for sources of entertainment, where the street and factory libraries could not meet demands. However, as Lu (2011, 96) argues a tension continued to exist between urban planners idealised notions of the urban space and the reality. He concludes that the Party-State was sufficiently pragmatic and recognised the need for these ‘illegal’ services and facilities even of it continued to condemn them in rhetoric (Lu 2011, 97).

Municipal Propaganda Department, Jing'an District 1956). Discourse on the location of the stalls focussed on the vendors earning capacity, mobility and fluid working hours and the stalls' physical impact on the urban environment. However, attempts to regulate the location and environment of the stalls were often couched in terms of combating 'immorality'.

Licencing and Co-Operation

By 1955 renting *lianhuanhua* was recognised as a popular pastime in urban China, and an estimated 10,000 readers a day frequented the vending stalls in Shanghai alone (Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department, Jing'an District 1956). However, Party-State agencies did not feel they had gone far enough in regulating the comics in circulation. The Cultural Bureau (1955b) estimated that 'old' comics still accounted for 30% of the total in circulation and that, in line with Order 71 sent by the Cultural Ministry, they should begin collecting comics which needed to be censored. In terms of procedure, the Cultural Bureau checked through the already published comics and then sent them to the Shanghai Propaganda Bureau for censorship. If they needed checking again they were sent to the Cultural Ministry.

By 1956 the Cultural Bureau had a better idea of the comics in circulation and the agency compiled three comprehensive lists of the *lianhuanhua* which needed to be collected from the vendors and disposed of: 'anti-revolutionary' *(fandong*), 'absurd' (*huangdan*) and 'obscene' comics. Lists of banned comics were distributed to libraries to direct them on which comics needed to be taken out of circulation and banned from re-sale. These lists comprised the title of the comic, the artist, the editor and publisher. Furthermore, they included the article in which the title had been criticised, the critic and the date (Nanjing Library 1954). Despite these more comprehensive lists however, the Cultural Bureau still faced challenges in regulating the vendors, and therefore these banned comics could not always be collected.

In a 1955 secret file the Ministry of Culture directed the Cultural Bureau to set out specific regulations for allowing individuals to rent and sell *lianhuanhua* (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1955a). Licence permits were granted to vendors who relied on *lianhuanhua* sales for their livelihoods. Meanwhile, temporary permits were distributed to vendors who were in dire financial straits, or to those who had other skills but were prohibited from using them at the time. In addition, if a vendor was known to have violated government policy and sold ‘obscene’ (*yinhui*) comics their licence was revoked (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1955a). Vendors who were forced to move back to the countryside due to *hukou* restrictions had their comics confiscated by the Banned Pornography Office (*Qudi huangse shukan bangongshi*) (Shanghai Cultural Bureau 1955a). By the mid-1950s, the Party-State was making further attempts to regulate the *lianhuanhua* vendors, but some continued to refuse to register and took a ‘guerrilla’ approach, operating outside Party-State parameters.

Alongside introducing these new parameters for the sale of *lianhuanhua,* Party-State agencies also made further efforts to instruct the vendors in the Party-State’s goals for the comics and their important role in political cultural dissemination. A report from Jing’an District complained of the vendors that ‘In this wave of Socialist Construction, their thinking is still relatively confused (*luan*)’ (Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department, Jing’an District 1956). The report suggested that their ‘ideological education’ (*sixiang jiaoyu*) needed to be enforced.

However, as late as 1956, even ensuring that vendors did the minimum in registering continued to be problematic for Party-State agencies. The Jing’an Propaganda Department described how vendors would ‘play little tricks’ to get away with vending ‘old’ comics or to operate without proper registration (Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department, Jing’an 1956). These included individuals registering in place of others (e.g., children registering in place of their parents). *Lianhuanhua* vendors were often unwilling to register because if they were not, they could earn income from other forms of employment (Xinhua Bookstore Shanghai Branch 1955). Party-State agencies in Shanghai endeavoured to keep track of the number of vendors serving each district and their distribution across the lanes and residential communities; however, the Jing’an Propaganda Department complained there was still insufficient information (Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department, Jing’an 1956).

Alongside collectivisation and co-operation in other industries, in 1956 the Party-State encouraged vendors to cooperate in order to regulate the dissemination of *lianhuanhua*. Another reason why co-operation was seen as beneficial for *lianhuanhua* dissemination was that it would allow readers time out from minding their own stalls to visit others and this would increase circulation of the comics (Xinhua Bookstore Shanghai Branch 1955). However, the vendors were not necessarily enamoured of the new scheme. Larger vendors in particular were concerned that co-operation would lead to a decrease in revenue from *lianhuanhua* and that people would cheat the system (Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department, Jing’an 1956). To combat this lack of confidence in the scheme, the Propaganda Department advised advertising and marketing the scheme within the population to support the vendors.

The first stage of the co-operation scheme involved moving the sites of the vendors to ‘appropriate’ locations and putting them into small groups, with each group setting up a management committee. This was a specific attempt to regulate the vendors and curb their mobility. Again, we can take the Shanghai district of Jing'an as an example. Here, cooperation was based on twelve teams, and vendors were distributed so that they were situated near particular vegetable markets, theatres, schools, hospitals and factories (Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department, Jing’an 1956). Each team distributed their revenues themselves and gave a percentage of their revenues to Party-State agencies operating at a district level. A person was assigned to manage the cooperation stall and give instructions to each team. In turn these teams were managed overall by a district community director and two or three advisors (Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department, Jing'an 1956).

Also in 1956 the Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education (*Shanghaishi renmin weiyuanhui wenjiao bangong*), acting in accordance with the Party-State indications, again sought to dispose of the comics held by the bookstalls and which had been labelled as 'anti-revolutionary'. This was done through censoring and collecting material, especially the comics published before 1949 (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965). Despite these attempts at cooperation and eradicating censored comics, many vendors privately owned their stalls in the 1960s and thus content on the stalls varied. In 1960 the SPFAPH complained to the Cultural Bureau, to whom it reported that although the 'numbers of harmful titles in circulation had lessened, the number of copies in circulation is still significant and so is their impact' (SPFAPH 1960b). It was managing and supervising the rental and sale of these *lianhuanhua* through the vendors which continued to be a challenge for the Culture Bureau and other Party-State agencies.

Censoring *Lianhuanhua* on the 'Cultural Frontline of Socialism' in the 1960s

The management of the vendors was a recurring -- if at times virtually impossible -- issue for the Party-State, especially because the stalls had been identified as an important location for children to read in an extra-curricular context. By December 1960 the SPFAPH (1960b) estimated there were some 400 stalls in Shanghai, which mainly lent out comics and they served up to two million people, furthermore 80% of these were children. Agencies argued that the stalls could still constitute an unhealthy environment, which would adversely affect readers and particularly children's health physically and morally. In 1960 the SPFAPH expressed concern that ‘some of the comic-lending stalls have unsanitary conditions and a poor environment, which impacts children physically’ (SPFAPH 1960b). Indeed, as one participant in the Third Shanghai Municipal Plenary Conference expressed it: ‘... stalls have a bad environment, as their air, light and seating hampers the readers health’ (Chen and He 1962). This rhetoric was a manifestation of a continued concern over vendor autonomy and went alongside calls to better regulate the stalls.

Some comic stalls were still privately owned in the 1960s and even those collectively owned were accused of soliciting profits at the cost of the Socialist cause by the SPFAPH. The Committee of Culture and Education complained that ‘private vending at the forefront of socialist culture does not encourage development’ (Shanghai Municipal People’s Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965). Likewise, in September 1965 the *Lianhuanhua* Review Group protested that vendors were in many cases still private owners (*siren zu shu tan*), and ‘they are not yet well enough adapted for their role on the cultural front line of socialism’ (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965).

A particular concern articulated about the vendors and their stock was that many of the comics still circulating had ‘harmful’ content (SPFAPH 1960b). By December 1960 certain comics such as *One Man’s Destiny* based on a Soviet novel, and *The Son who Made Trouble on the Wedding Night* (both discussed in chapter five) continued to circulate among the stalls although they had recently been banned from the bookshops and had stopped being published. The SPFAPH (1960b) complained that the continuing circulation of poisonous comics was due to lack of leadership and management over the stalls. The SPFAPH (1960b) stated it would print 500,000 comics ‘high in ideology and artistry’ to exchange with the book lending stalls’ ‘inappropriate comics’.

Between 1960 and 1965 there were further attempts to strengthen leadership over the stalls and censor the comics they held in order to guarantee the ‘psychological health of youth and children' (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). By 1965 the number of vendors in Shanghai still far outnumbered the number of street libraries. Additionally, the vendors held the vast majority of the two million comics in circulation and therefore far more readers frequented the stalls[122] (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965). Therefore, in 1965 vendors were still completely dominating the *lianhuanhua* rental network.

Against a backdrop of growing Party-State intolerance towards folk tales and classical and foreign literature, these trends in *lianhuanhua* dissemination were clearly being recognised amongst more ideologically minded sections of the urban population. In 1965 a letter to the editor of the *Beijing Worker's Daily* allegedly claimed that still not enough had been done to regulate children's comic reading. The writer ostensibly protested that his children were drawing pictures of 'emperors, generals, prime ministers, scholars, beauties and the like,' which they were copying from *lianhuanhua* read at the stalls (Hwang 1978, 55). Furthermore, the writer complained that even *lianhuanhua* such as *Living Buddha* (a comic, which -- as I demonstrated in chapter three -- had been marked for recall in 1950) was still available for hire from the book stalls.

By this stage, comics published before 1949 were believed to have all been eliminated (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965). Nonetheless, the Committee of Culture and Education still believed that other comics with 'unhealthy' (*jiankang)* and 'stale' (*chenfu*) content continued to circulate. Indeed, it criticised private publishers in the early 1950s on precisely this point, accusing them of having ignored socialist education (*shehui zhuyi jiaoyu*) in printing comics (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965). In addition, the Committee also recognised that there were not sufficient numbers of 'good' comics being published and therefore reluctantly recognised why some vendors could not purchase revolutionary comics. In other words, by 1965, calls to censor comics held by the vendors coincided with calls to augment the quality *and* quantity of the revolutionary comics being published. In terms of quality this included not simply the content of such comics, but also the physical durability of the comics themselves. One specific example was the binding of the comics, many of which were said to be prone to fall apart when being rented -- thus impacting upon circulation (Office of the Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education 1965).

---

[122] Shanghai had 1123 private vendors and a further 1301 people working in the industry in a part-time role, either as an employee or a relative of a vendor. In contrast, there were 389 street neighbourhood private libraries (*Jiedao Lilong Minban Tushuguan*). Of the two million comics in circulation the vendors held the vast majority (1,700,000). In addition, of the 130,000 comic readers/day in Shanghai, 100,000 of them were visiting the stalls (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965).

In an important directive in June 1965, the Shanghai Municipal Committee of the CCP urged the scheme to censor and collect the comics from the stall vendors to move forward. However, they also advised caution as '...the boundary between good and bad in comics is hard to demarcate...' and shifted with the ebb and flow of political campaigns (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965). Even in the mid-1960s there were still debates within the Party apparatus about what constituted 'good' and 'bad' *lianhuanhua* both artistically and content-wise.

The scheme to censor those *lianhuanhua* held by the vendors was orchestrated by the *Lianhuanhua* Review Group under the auspices of the Culture and Education Committee and with ten participants from the Shanghai Publishing Bureau, the Cultural Bureau and the Welfare Bureau. Despite the number of departments involved, the Review Group acknowledged the challenges of providing a clear list of the comics available due to the vast number of copies and titles and the difficulties in collecting them (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). The Review group collected comic samples from the Shanghai Children's

Library and private and collective bookstores, although interestingly not from any of the vendors (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965).

Ultimately, the Review Group ended up with a long list of 1800 titles, which they estimated to be 20% of the comic titles in circulation. Of these, the *Lianhuanhua* Review Group made a list of comics to be disposed of and the reasons behind this decision for each of them. *Lianhuanhua* which could not be easily demarcated as 'good' or 'bad' were discussed in more detail. Censorship was intended to increase the number of revolutionary and propaganda comics circulating from 60% to 70% and reduce the number of comics with ancient or foreign subjects from 40% to 30% (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). However, the Review Group admitted that its initial figure of 40% requiring collection was too ambitious. In line with a report by the Culture and Education Office, it lowered the number of titles which needed to be collected to 20% of the titles available.[123]

The comics which the Culture and Education Office and the Review group identified as necessary to collect from vendors included those with political 'mistakes,' anti-Communist rhetoric and anti-socialist sentiment, as well as those which were deemed revisionist or propagated anti-party individuals. The Office of Shanghai Municipal People's Committee Culture and Education (1965) complained of many of the comics in the sample that the art work did not demarcate classes 'correctly'. It protested that workers and farmers were still being shown with beards and wrinkles and instead of looking admirable, they looked comical. In terms of examples of the specific comics targeted *Neighbours* (*Linren*) was lambasted for apparently using 'insulting names for minority peoples' (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). Ironically at the same time, *Lhasa: the Road to Happiness* (*Tong xiang lasa de xingfu daolu*), was accused of 'rendering the Dalai Lama in a positive light' and was also subsequently marked for collection. Significantly, *Factory Director Lin* (*Lin changzhang*), which included images of disgraced party leader Gao Gang, was also targeted for removal from circulation (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965). The fact that this particular comic was *still* in circulation in 1965 was remarkable given that Gao was condemned personally by Mao for allegedly forming an anti-Party alliance in 1953 and was purged.[124] Moreover, the Gao Gang Affair was still a live issue in the early 1960s and had again infiltrated the political cultural arena in 1962 when Kang Sheng, a close associate of Mao, alleged that a character in the novel *Liu Zhidan* represented Gao and had denounced the author (MacFarquhar 1997, 296). Nevertheless, it was not until three years after this that Party-State agencies working on *lianhuanhua* were catching up and attempting to remove the comic from circulation. [125]

---

[123] Ultimately, this amounted to 595 ancient titles, 161 foreign titles and 392 modern titles, alongside other titles which had previously been censored (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965).

In 1965 the Committee of Culture and Education was also concerned about comic adaptations of Chinese folk tales, opera (*chuantong xiqu*) and myths and legends (*shenhua chuanshuo*), as well as those propagating humanist doctrine (as discussed in chapter five). These genres accounted for 50% of the total volume of all comics and were believed to circulate more quickly. Such comics were to be collected because 'they impact youth and children significantly and in a bad way' (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965).

---

[124] He committed suicide a year later in 1954.

[125] Significantly, it is clear that attempts to ban these comics altogether even in 1965 were not entirely successful. A record from the 1954 comic forum in Beijing indicates that Party-State departments feared that 'bad' comics could easily go 'underground' (Beijing News Publisher 1954). The survival of these formally banned *lianhuanhua* up until today is testament to the fact that some inevitably did. Currently, it is possible to buy a *lianhuanhua* entitled *Village Cadre Tong Yulan* (*Cun Ganbu Tong Yulan*), which is priced at 510 yuan online. It is marketable precisely because it includes rare images of Gao Gang, who was a victim of the first major Party purge after 1949 and the line 'Premier Gao says we should improve agricultural production' (Huang 1953, 34). These texts probably survived in the hands of private collectors. However, the fact that some endure was partly to do with the fact that the Party-State never entirely assumed control over the vendors and comic circulation.

After a comic censorship list had been complied by the Review Group and agreed upon by the Culture and Education Office, the Culture Bureau and the Publishing Bureau planned the methods of collection to be carried out by district and administration departments (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965). However, before this collecting process could begin, Party-State agencies asserted the importance of getting vendors 'on board'. The service the vendors provided in disseminating *lianhuanhua* to such a widespread audience was highly important to the Party-State's propagation of its culture and therefore they could not be banned outright. The Review Group advised the Shanghai City People's Committee Culture and Education Office to 'ideologically educate the vendors,' before collecting any censored comics so that they were inclined to hand over the comics voluntarily, albeit under supervision (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965).

The vendors to some extent remained outside the remit of Party-State control, which meant content deemed harmful by the Party-State continued to reach readers. In addition, the plan was to gradually replace the *lianhuanhua* lending stalls with street libraries (SPFAPH 1960b). This was to be done alongside the ideological education of the vendors to bring them more under the effective control of Party-State agencies.

Significantly, the Party-State was still offering incentives, although small, for vendors to acquire 'new' comics, rather than instating harsher punishments for holding them. For example, under the same scheme vendors were given coupons to spend at *Xinhua* when they handed over their 'unhealthy' comics (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). In addition, the district and county departments had to collect comics from the street libraries and offer them financial support to buy new comics. The Shanghai second hand bookstores also had their stocks checked. The Culture and Education Committee estimated that 100,000 yuan would be needed to finance the scheme (Shanghai Municipal People's Committee of Culture and Education Office 1965).

However, ultimately, the Review Group warned that the scheme to censor and collect the comics from the vendors might not be meticulous enough due to the large number of comics. More problematically, the sheer scale of the task meant that some 'good' comics were being mistakenly collected by overzealous officials, while some 'bad' comics were simply overlooked. They argued that more attention needed to be paid to the issue by the cultural administration (*Lianhuanhua* Review Group 1965). The comics were simply published in too large a quantity to withdraw before 1966. In addition, once they had reached the vendors, who were for the most part private owners interested in profiting from *lianhuanhua* and giving people what they most wanted to read, they became even harder to recall. Likewise, the difficulties in getting the vendors to register and regulate where they were actually located only compounded the issue. Furthermore, the Party-State simply did not have the necessary channels to disseminate *lianhuanhua* widely, so despite these issues, vending was never banned outright.

Conclusion

This chapter has focussed on the Party-State's interactions with the *lianhuanhua* street vendors. In general, Party-State agencies adopted a gradual and less didactic approach, and vendors were encouraged to register, dispose of 'old' comics and retail 'revolutionary *lianhuanhua*'. Throughout the 1950s however, vendors persistently resisted attempts to make them register and locate to fixed and 'appropriate' areas. Furthermore, in continuing to market *lianhuanhua* based on classical themes or folk tales, they were responding to the preferences of readers by simply marketing what was most popular. In consequence, although lists of banned *lianhuanhua* were drawn up, with those published before 1949 ultimately all being removed by the 1960s, many texts perceived as ‘harmful’ continued to circulate right through until the mid-1960s.

In the early 1950s, Party-State agencies attempted to manage the circulation of a medium with which they were utterly unfamiliar. This explains why their struggles with the vendors were complex and often ended in failure. However, what is particularly surprising is that even on the eve of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and despite the various campaigns that had had such a lasting effect in many fields of the arts and cultural production, the Party-State was simply unable to completely control ‘the cultural frontline of Socialism’.

Conclusion

This doctoral thesis has focused on the development of the comic book industry from 1949 to 1966. The interaction between Chinese politics and culture in the 1950s and 1960s is currently inspiring an extensive range of scholarship, and this study contributes significantly to this trend, whilst also questioning some of the assumptions that have been made in such scholarship. Scholars have previously analysed broad themes in political cultural discourses, audience responses and the institutional framework in which different cultural mediums were produced. However, in this thesis and through an analysis of the production and distribution of *lianhuanhua,* I have examined the mechanics of how cultural production actually worked. This has provided unique insights into the interactions between the cultural bureaucracy, the producers and the disseminators of culture, censorship, the functions of political culture and the limits of Party-State control.

Lianhuanhua originated in the 1920s and the industry had expanded to become a key form of urban popular culture by 1949. Although not the main focus of this thesis, I have nonetheless demonstrated that an understanding of the development of the medium during the Republican era is crucial to understanding Party-State interactions with the *lianhuanhua* industry after 1949 for three reasons. Firstly, the unique traits of the production and distribution of the medium, such as the sale of the comics through the street stalls and speedy publishing, emerged during the Republican era. CCP Party-State agencies faced particular challenges in regulating these. Secondly, despite CCP historians' attempts to write *lianhuanhua* into revolutionary discourses after 1949, the Party had little experience of using this urban-based cultural phenomenon for propaganda purposes in the 1930s and 1940s. This is significant because it forced Party-State agencies to 'experiment' with the mechanics of the production in the 1950s, while at the same time learning about the functioning of the industry and the particulars of the medium itself. Thirdly, it is imperative to understand the discourses on *lianhuanhua* which developed during the Republican period because there were distinct similarities between the ways in which the press and Guomindang-State agencies talked about *lianhuanhua* prior to 1949, and the ways in which the CCP did so after 1949. This was especially the case in regard to the harm that the comics supposedly posed to children. Moreover, the genres that were targeted for censorship in the PRC were often the very same ones which had faced censorship (albeit on a smaller scale) in the 1930s and 1940s. Additionally, despite the fact that neither the CCP nor the Guomindang used the comics for propaganda purposes, *lianhuanhua* were not outside the crucial debate over the function of art and literature in politics in the 1930s. In this debate, it was ultimately Lu Xun's argument that comics should play an 'educational' role, which prevailed into the 1950s and 1960s.

As I have shown, however, by making *lianhuanhua* a 'weapon for education and propaganda' the CCP fundamentally changed the official function of a medium which had hitherto been a form of popular culture for entertainment purposes. In the early years of the PRC, *lianhuanhua* were used to broadcast political campaigns, for literacy purposes and to propagate heroic tales of CCP actions during the Anti-Japanese War. In bringing about this change in function, the Party-State completely reinvented the *lianhuanhua* industry. However, transforming the production and distribution of *lianhuanhua* was neither a straightforward nor a complete process, meaning that well into the1960s comics continued to circulate which did not comply with official (although fluctuating) rhetoric.

From 1949 to 1956, Party-State agencies took the first steps towards bringing *lianhuanhua* publishing in line; in particular, and in light of the *paomashu* crisis, agencies targeted rapid publishing, which did not leave ample time for censorship. However, the Cultural Bureau faced a series of challenges in regulating the industry in the early 1950s. Firstly, as the CCP had not previously utilised the medium, agencies had to 'experiment' with ways of administrating *lianhuanhua* and this was a trial and error process. Secondly, there was no Soviet counterpart on which to base the development of the *lianhuanhua* industry and stylistically and institutionally the medium set its own course. Thirdly, artists and writers, who could produce the comics, were unversed in CCP rhetoric and many continued to operate on a freelance basis and under the master-apprentice system up until 1955.

These three difficulties in regulating the *lianhuanhua* industry were compounded by the fact that the medium was administered by the less tightly controlled civil administration and was not the focus of the art academies. Lastly, and linked to this, the administration of *lianhuanhua* suffered from a lack of experienced personnel and a lack of funding compared to other cultural mediums, such as film. The outcome of these challenges in regulating the *lianhuanhua* industry was that even revolutionary comics which emerged in the early post-1949 years were considered ‘poor quality’ and there was little perceived difference between them and those published prior to 1949. Ultimately, Party-State agencies were forced to redefine what *lianhuanhua* as a medium *was* and how it was set apart from other mediums in the 1950s. As a consequence, these agencies changed their policies in terms of production and checks and balances.

However, certain characteristics of the publishing and distribution of *lianhuanhua* persisted, acting to circumvent Party-State agency efforts to regulate them. *Lianhuanhua* were used in political and social campaigns throughout the 1950s and 1960s, notably during the Korean War. The fluctuating political climate, however, was a serious issue for the *lianhuanhua* industry because the mechanics of production could not keep up with the changing rhetoric. Moreover, *lianhuanhua* were released in such large numbers during these campaigns and circulated among the tenuously controlled stalls, that recalling all out-of-date content was an impossibility.

Another significant and surprising point which arises out of an analysis of both the operation of the *lianhuanhua* industry and the content of the comics themselves, is the absence of Mao Zedong. Many studies of political culture (Hung 2011, Mittler 2013) put Mao at the centre of 1950s PRC cultural production. However, Mao, and representations of him, rarely featured in discourses about the function or production of *lianhuanhua*. This suggests that Mao's rhetoric may have played a more limited role in the day-to-day running of the cultural bureaucracy than has hitherto been assumed.

Furthermore, although *lianhuanhua* were supposed to fulfil prescribed propagandistic functions, in reality, the comics published right up until the Cultural Revolution were more varied in subject matter. To suggest, however, that *lianhuanhua* production was a 'combat zone' between new revolutionary discourses and classical stories and folk tales is to over-simplify the matter. Instead, *lianhuanhua* operated in an environment in which there was uncertainty about what could be published both in terms of original stories and for content adapted from other political cultural mediums. As I showed in chapter five, censorship was anything but a simple matter. It could be argued that ad hoc approaches to censorship allowed Party-State agencies to censor whatever they wanted. However, what we see instead is constantly shifting boundaries, comics being dealt with on a case-by-case basis and the allowance of some material which in hindsight might appear surprising. Party-State agencies themselves recognised that boundaries between *lianhuanhua* genres were blurred and acknowledged that the hypothetical banning of entire genres would therefore have been very difficult. The ad hoc approaches to censorship also undermine scholarly notions of a strictly controlled and delineated cultural sphere that have been central to many depictions of China under Mao. In this regard, it is my hope that the findings of this thesis might contribute to the development of a far more nuanced and complex interpretation of cultural production in early socialist China.

In addition, ‘quality’ did not always equate with political message; attention was also paid to art work and the language of a particular comic in terms of its accessibility and perceived entertainment value. A comic could be censored, even if it supported Party policy but was deemed to be a lacklustre effort in terms of artistry or plot. This was because *lianhuanhua*’s ideological function and their role as purveyors of entertainment were not mutually exclusive and the medium had to function as both, particularly as the comics were a commodity that individuals purchased or rented. Though an art history approach, which involves a close reading of the visual elements of *lianhuanhua*, is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is acknowledged that further work in this field might prove highly significant in shedding more light on the unusual relationship between Party-state doctrine and the visual arts in 1950s China.

This somewhat fluid approach to *lianhuanhua* production and censorship can be partly explained by the fact that the Party-State lacked an overall national strategy for the industry and publishing houses did not liaise with each other on matters of censorship or production. On the eve of the Cultural Revolution, the Cultural Ministry was beginning to challenge this approach as it regarded the replication of content a vast waste of resources and thought that publishing houses should instead work together to produce series of comics. Nevertheless, much of the scholarship on the ‘seventeen years’ so far has assumed a national cultural production strategy led by Beijing. This study directly counters this assumption, and suggests that far more work needs to be done on understanding the relationship between the central and municipal levels in terms of cultural production in this crucial period.

Prior to 1954, *lianhuanhua* artists were set apart from the bureaucratic structure which regulated artists working on other mediums. This meant that while artists in the academies were being asked to eschew traditional Chinese artistic techniques such as line drawing, *lianhuanhua* artists were instead being encouraged to adopt them. Furthermore, while Party-

State agencies objected to *lianhuanhua* artists working at home or on a freelance basis in the first half of the 1950s they did nothing to change the situation. Between 1956 and 1966, a (what I have termed) ‘push and pull’ relationship developed between them and the Party-State. However, it is noteworthy that the struggle continued to be over subsistence issues and personal freedoms, rather than the artistic direction of the medium. This once more fundamentally distinguishes comics from other forms of political culture circulating at the time.

The ways in which political cultural literary and artistic mediums were disseminated has been largely unexplored. As this study proves, dissemination was a crucial link in the production and spread of political culture and offers an essential understanding both of the ways in which the cultural bureaucracy interacted with those at the vanguard of marketing the new culture, and of the kinds of content which persisted in circulating. During the ‘seventeen years,’ Party-State agencies sought to regulate the dissemination of *lianhuanhua*. This regulation operated on two levels. Firstly, Party-State agencies sought to ensure the ‘right’ texts were disseminated through selected bookstores, factories and schools and sought to create regulated spaces in which children in particular could read. However, despite these efforts, Party-State institutions were still concerned that individuals would choose to read the more enjoyable, but, as they saw it, politically questionable ‘old’ *lianhuanhua* readily available from the vendors. Therefore, secondly, agencies sought to regulate not just the channels of distribution, but also to instruct readers on what to read and how comics should be read; this was known as ‘reading tutorship’. The somewhat heavy-handed approach to directing the readership of *lianhuanhua* contrasted with the Party-State’s more partial control over the street vendors, who marketed what readers wanted to read. As a result, content perceived as, at best, not propaganda and, at worst, ‘harmful’ continued to circulate prior to the Cultural Revolution.

My findings indicate that there are several potential avenues for future research. Firstly, studies could look further at the role of the consumer, how they interacted with the vendors and how their tastes affected the content on the stalls from 1949 to 1966. Secondly, it would be useful to examine how the publishing industry was fundamentally restructured during the Cultural Revolution. In 1966 the comic publishing industry which had been ever expanding since 1949 broke down. This was against a backdrop of widespread national political and social upheaval, in which ‘old culture’ was destroyed and the reigning bureaucrats were persecuted as class enemies. After a three-year hiatus comics began to be republished in Shanghai under the new directorship of Zhang Chunqiao, chairman of the city’s Revolutionary Committee and subsequently a member of the Gang of Four. A study of Cultural Revolution *lianhuanhua* could examine how content changed as a result of the restructuring of the industry and in relation to new cultural discourses and the fate of the vendors who had thus far circumvented full Party-State control.

As I stated at the start of this thesis, the concept of political culture has preoccupied many recent studies of the early years of the PRC. Broadly speaking, this concept is defined as the Party-State’s conquest of the cultural sphere and its dissemination of a set of shared values, attitudes and rituals through literature and art (Hung 2011). Too much of the literature on the interaction between politics and culture, however, has focused on analysing the content and dominant discourses in a few key texts, rather than the ways in which the mechanics of production and dissemination actually worked on a day to day basis and the profound implications of this. A number of recent studies (e.g. Tang 2015, Du 2014) have drawn attention to this lack. While the very concept of political culture remains a useful one for appreciating broader initiatives and the Party-State’s vision for the cultural sphere, a much fuller understanding of the way in which the cultural sphere as a whole operated at a city based and grass roots level – as I have provided with this particular study on *lianhuanhua* – should help us to refine the concept.

The comics are unique in many ways, and an institutional analysis of the development of the medium contributes to - but in some ways challenges - current scholarship, ultimately offering a more nuanced view of how cultural production operated from 1949 to 1966. Fundamentally, I have revealed that although Party-State agencies developed a politicised vision for the cultural sphere, the day to day mechanics of production, censorship and distribution at a grass roots level could circumvent these goals. Moreover, a complicated process of negotiation evolved between Party-state agencies, publishing houses, artists and disseminators. This meant that in key areas, Party-State agencies maintained incomplete control. In turn, this had profound consequences for the kinds of content which persisted in circulating right up until the Cultural Revolution

Ultimately, we need to appreciate the far more nuanced ways in which the cultural sphere operated in China during the ‘seventeen years’ and that it was the product of negotiation, compromise and often entirely ad hoc decisions. In other words, ‘guerrilla vendors’ selling comic books in the back alleys of Shanghai and Beijing can tell us just as much – if not more – about the interaction between politics and culture under Mao than textual analyses of propaganda posters, socialist anthems or parades.

Glossary

amateur creator/create comics in their spare time	*yeyu chuangzuo*	业余创作
ancient-costume *lianhuanhua*	*guzhuang lianhuanhua*	古装连环画
Anhui People’s Publishing House	*Anhui meishu chubanshe*	安徽美术出版社
artist	*huazhe*	画者
Art Watch	*Meishu guancha*	美术观察
backward class	*luohou fenzi*	落后分子
Banned Pornography Office	*Qudi huangse shukan bangongshi*	取缔黄色书刊办公室
Beijing Number Four Cultural Centre	*Beijing di si wenhuaguan*	北京弟四文化馆
cartoon	*manhua*	漫画
Cao Yu	*Cao Yu*	曹禺
CCP Shanghai People’s Publishing Management Committee Office	*Shanghai renmin weiyuan chuban shiye guanli*	中共上海人民委员出版事业管理
Chen Guangyi	*Chen Guangyi*	陈光镒
Children’s Book	*yaya shu*	呀呀书
Children’s Publisher	*Xiao’er Chubanshe*	小儿出版社
China Film Press	*Zhongguo dianying chubanshe*	中国电影出版社
Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department, Jing’an District	*Zhonggong Shanghai shi jing'an qu wei xuanchuanbu*	中共上海市静安区委宣传部
Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department of Public Utilities	*Zhonggong Shanghai shi gongyong shiye weiyuanhui xuanchuanbu*	中共上海市公用事业委员会宣传部
City People’s Committee Culture Culture and Education Office	*Shi ren wei wenjiao bangongshi*	市人委文教办公室
City Secretary for Education and Public Security (Republican Shanghai)	*Shi jiaoyu gong’an liang juzhang*	市教育公安·兩局

comic		*xiaorenshu*	小人书
Comic Renters Association	*Lianzu*	*Lianhuanhua zulin zhe lianyi hui*	连环画租赁者联谊会
contact person		*lianxiren*	联系人
creative cadres		*chuangzuo ganbu*	创作干部
Cultural Army		*Wenhua jundui*	文化军队
Cultural Bureau		*Wenhua ju*	文化局
Deng Ke		*Deng Ke*	邓柯
devil for children		*xiaorenshu dique shi ertong de moguai*	小人书的确是儿童的魔怪
doll book		*Gongzishu*	公仔书
Du Heng		*Du Heng*	杜衡
eliminate illiteracy		*saomang gongzuo*	扫盲工作
enthusiast/activist		*jiji fenzi*	积极分子
experience life and labour training		*shenru shenghuo laodong duanlian*	深入生活劳动锻炼
Family Weekly		*Jiating zhoukan*	家庭周刊
feudalistic superstitious belief		*fengjian mixin*	封建迷信
first-rate reading material		*youliang duwu*	优良读物
folk tales		*minjian gushi*	民间故事
Four Most Famous		*Sida ming dan*	四大名旦
general editor/can also refer to script adaptor		*bianji ganbu*	编辑干部
grocery stalls		*zahuo tan*	杂货摊
Gu Bingxin		*Gu Bingxin*	顾柄鑫
guerrilla stalls		*youji tan*	游击摊
healthy *lianhuanhua*		*jiankang de lianhuanhua*	健康的连环画
He Youzhi		*He Youzhi*	贺友直
Heilongjiang Fine Arts Publishing House		*Heilongjiang meishu chubanshe*	黑龙江美术出版社
horse racing books		*Paomashu*	跑马书
Huaqiao Affairs Committee General Office		*Huaqiao shiwu weiyuanhui bangong ting*	华侨事务委员会办公厅
Hua Sanchuan		*Hua Sanchuan*	华三川
ideological education		*sixiang jiaoyu*	思想教育
in-house creators		*shenei bianji*	社内编辑
International Bookstore		*Guoji shudian zongdian*	国际书店总店
Jiang Weipu		*Jiang Weipu*	姜维朴

Jiao Bingzhen		*Jiao Bingzhen*	焦秉贞
knight-errant		*wuxia*	武侠
lantern slides		*huandeng*	幻灯
lianhuanhua artists		*lianhuanhua huazhe*	连环画画者
Lianhuanhua Authors Association	*Lianzuo*	*Zuozhe lianyihui*	作者联谊会
Lianhuanhuabao		*Lianhuanhuabao*	连环画报
Lianhuanhua Review Group		*Lianhuanhua shendu gongzuo zu*	连环画审读工作组
Lianhuanhua Comic Forum		*Lianhuanhua zuotanhui jilu zhai*	连环画座谈会记录摘
Lianhuanhua Editing Office		*Lianbianshi*	连编室
Lianhuanhua Renters Fellowship Association	*Lianzu*	*Lianhuanhua Chuzu Zhe Lianyihui*	连环画出组者联谊会
Lianhuanhua Renters Preparatory Fellowship Association		*Lianhuanhua chuzu zhe lianyihui choubei hui*	连环画出租者联谊会筹备会
lianhuanhua renting stalls		*lianhuanhua zu tan*	连环画租摊
lianhuanhua research class		*lianyanban*	连研班
Lianhuanhua Review Group		*Lianhuanhua shendu zu*	连环画审读组
lianhuanhua vendors		*lianhuanhua tan*	连环画摊
Lianlian Bookstore	*Lianlian*	*Lianlian shudian*	连联书店
Literary Front		*Wenyi Zhendi*	文艺阵地
Lu Xun		*Lu Xun*	鲁迅
Mao Dun		*Mao Dun*	茅盾
mass reading		*dazhong duwu*	大众读物
middle-of-the-roaders		*zhongjian fenzi*	中间分子
mimeograph		*youyin*	油印
Ministry of Culture		*Wenhua bu*	文化部
myths and legends		*shenhua chuanshuo*	神话传说
New Children’s World		*Xinwen ertong shijie*	新儿童世界
New Democracy Ideology		*Xin minzhu zhuyi*	新民主主义
new year *lianhuantuhua*		*nianhua lianhuantuhua*	年画连环图画
News Press Publication Bureau		*Xiwen chuban ju*	新闻出版局
News Publishing House		*Xinwen chubanshe*	新闻出版社
no lease vendors		*ling zu tanfan*	零租摊贩
obscene		*yinhui*	淫秽
old books		*jiu shu*	旧书
Palace of Art		*Da yazhi tang*	大雅之堂

Patriotic Convention	*Aiguo gongyue*	爱国公约
People’s Committee of Trade and Industry Branch	*Renmin weiyuanhui gongshang Ke*	人民委员会工商科
People’s Fine Arts Publishing House	*Renmin meishu chubanshe*	人民美术出版社
period of mad speculation (according to cultural bureau) july 1st 1950 to 28th july 1951	*touji kuang*	投机狂
poisonous	*dusu*	毒素
private libraries	*minban tushuguan*	民办图书馆
production *lianhuanhua*	*shengchan lianhuantuhua*	生产连环图画
Professional/Specialised Creator	*Zhuanye chuangzuo*	专业创作
Publishing Bureau	*Chubanju*	出版局
Qian Xiaodai	*Qian Xiaodai*	钱笑呆
reading tutorship	*yuedu fudao*	阅读辅导
readjust, consolidate, strengthen, and raise standards	*tiaozheng gonggu chongshi tigao*	调整 巩固 充实 提高
realistically themed	*xianshi ticai*	现实题材
repeat publication list	*baoliu shumu*	保留书目
republican term for *lianhuanhua*	*lianhuantuhua*	连环图画
Rewards and Punishments	*Jiangcheng tiaoli*	奖惩条例
salaried creator	*shewai bianji*	社外编辑
script writer	*bianxie zuozhe*	编写作者
script writer	*wenzi zuozhe*	文字作者
series	*huaku*	画库
series	*congshu*	丛书
servicable for today’s society	*gu wei jin yong*	古为今用
Shanghai Bookstore Industry Alliance	*Shanghaishi shudian ye lianhehui*	上海市书店业联合会
Shanghai Comic Bookstall Association	*Shanghai Lianhuanhua Shu Tan Lianyihui*	上海连环画书摊联谊会
Shanghai *Lianhuanhua* *Lianchu* Publishing Industry Association	*Shanghaishi lianhuanhua chuban ye lianyihui lianhuanhua chuban ye lianyihui*	上海市连环画出版业联谊会
Shanghai Literature and Art Department of Cultural Affairs	*Shanghai wenhua ju wenyi chu*	上海文化局文艺处

Shanghai Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China		*Zhongguo gongchandang Shanghaishi weiyuanhui*	中国共产党上海市委员会
Shanghai Municipal People’s Committee of Culture and Education Office		*Shanghaishi renmin weiyuanhui wenjiao bangong*	上海市人民委员会文教办公
Shanghai Municipal People’s Government Department of Cultural Affairs		*Shanghaishi renmin zhengfu wenhua ju*	上海市人民政府文化局
Shanghai Municipal People’s Information Services Department		*Shanghaishi renmin zhengfuxinwenchubanchu*	上海市人民政府新闻处
Shanghai Municipal People’s Government Press and Publication Department		*Shanghaishi renmin zhengfuxinwenchubanchu*	上海市人民政府新闻出版处
Shanghai Municipal People's Government, the Municipal Public Security Bureau		*Shanghaishi renmin zhengfu, shi gong’an ju*	上海市人民政府，市公安局
Shanghai People’s Committee Literature and Art Office		*Shanghaishi renmin weiyuanhui wenyi bangongshi*	上海市人民委员会文艺办公室
Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House	SPFAPH	*Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe*	上海人民美术出版社
Shanghai Propaganda Department		*Shanghaishi xuanchuan bu*	上海市宣传部
Shanghai Publishing Bureau		*Shanghaishi chuban ju*	上海市出版局
Shanghai Speciality Comic Bookstore Trade Association		*Shanghai tebie Lianhuanhua shudian ye tongyegonghui*	上海特别连环画书店业同业公会
Shanghai Xinhua Press		*Shanghai xinhua chubanshe*	上海新华出版社
Shenbao		*Shenbao*	申報
Shen Manyuan		*Shen Manyuan*	沈满愿
Sichuan Fine Arts Publishing House		*Sichuan meishu chubanshe*	四川美术出版社
single-line drawing		*danxian miao*	单线描
skeleton without flesh		*kong gujia*	控骨架

socialist education	*shehui zhuyi jiaoyu*	社会主义教育
song paintings	*song hua*	宋画
sprits and devils	*shenguai*	神怪
stale content	*chenfu neirong*	陈腐内容
street level vendor (1930s)	*xiao tan xiaofan*	小摊小贩
street neighbourhood private library	*jiedao lilong minban tushuguan*	街道里弄民办图书馆
suzhou opera	*suzhou kunqu*	苏州昆曲
The Labour Daily	*Qingnan bao*	青年报
The New Youth Newspaper	*Xin shaonian bao*	新少年报
The Paintings of the Shanghai Museum	*Shanghai bowuguan de cang hua*	上海博物馆的藏画
The People's Daily	*Renmin ribao*	人民日报
The Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival	*Qingming shang he tu*	清明上河图
The Xinmin Evening News	*Xinmin wanbao*	新民晚报
Three Antis, Five Antis Campaign	*San fan wu fan*	三反五反
Traditional Opera	*Chuantong xiqu*	传统戏曲
volunteer army	*zhiyuan jun*	志愿军
woodcut	*muke*	木刻
Writers Publishing House	*Zuojia chubanshe*	作家出版社
wugeng style	*wugeng diao*	五更调
Yang Qinghua	*Yang Qinghua*	杨青华
Zhang Leping	*Zhang Leping*	张乐平
Zhao Hongben	*Zhao Hongben*	赵宏本
Zhu Guangyu	*Zhu Guangyu*	朱光宇

List of Lianhuanhua

English	Pinyin	Chinese
A Fighter in His Hometown	*Zhanshi zai guxiang*	战士在故乡
A Happy Couple	*Yi dui meiman fufu*	一对美满夫妇
A Leap Factory	*Yige yuejin de gongchang*	一个跃进的工厂
A Little Correspondent	*Yi ge xiao tongxunyuan*	一个小通讯员
A North Korean Auntie's Devotion	*Chaoxian laodaniang de re'ai*	朝鲜老大娘的热爱
A Tortuous Struggle	*Yi chang wuxing de douzheng*	一场无形的斗争
An Essay on the 359th Brigade's Movement South	*Sanwujiu lü nanxia sanji*	三五九旅南下散记
An Immortal Life	*Buxiu de shengming*	不朽的生命
Bao Tonghua	*Bao tonghua*	暴同花
Big Red Horse	*Da hong ma*	大红马
Blind Scouts	*Xiazi zhencha bing*	瞎子侦察兵
Chairman Mao's Good Child	*Mao Zhuxi de hao haizi*	毛主席的好孩子
Chaoyang Valley	*Chaoyanggou*	朝阳沟
Civil and Military God of Wealth	*Wenwu caishen*	文武财神
Coal	*Mei*	煤
Dove of Peace	*Heping ge*	和平鸽
Dragon's Demise Ridge	*Juelong ling*	绝龙岭
Factory Director Lin	*Lin changzhang*	林厂长
Following Chairman Mao's Long March	*Gensui Mao Zhuxi changzheng*	跟随毛主席长征
General Du Wading	*Du Wading jiangjun*	杜瓦丁将军
Great Changes in Changshi	*Changshi de jubian*	长石的巨变
Great Changes on the Mountain	*Shan xiang jubian*	山乡巨变
Havoc in the Heavenly Palace	*Da nao tian gong*	大闹天宫
Heroes Village	*Yingxiong cun*	英雄村
Heroic Little Eighth Route Army Man	*Yingxiong xiao balu*	英雄小八路
How the Steel was Tempered	*Gangtie shi zenyang lian cheng de*	钢铁是怎样炼成的
I Want to Go to School	*Wo yao qu xuexiao*	我要去学校
In the World	*Renjian*	人间
Iron Buddha Temple	*Tie fosi*	铁佛寺
Jade River	*Yutang chun*	玉堂春
Lake Tai	*Taihu*	太湖
Land	*Tudi*	土地

Lao Sun Returns to the Commune	*Lao sun gui she*	老孙归社
Li Shuangshuang	*Li Shuangshuang*	李双双
Liu Hulan	*Liu Hulan*	刘胡兰
Living Buddha	*Huo pusa*	活菩萨
Love Reading, Read Good Books, Reading is Good	*Hao dushu, du hao shu, dushu hao*	好读书，读好书，读书好
Marriage Registration	*Jiehun dengji*	结婚登记
Monkey Thrice Beats the White Boned Demon	*Sun Wukong san da bai gujing*	孙悟空三打白骨精
My Childhood	*Wo de tongnian*	我的童年
My University	*Wo de daxue*	我的大学
Neighbours	*Linren*	邻人
One Man’s Destiny	*Yi Ge Ren De Zaoyu*	一个人的遭遇
Ou Ou Meets President Mao	*Ou Ou jian daole Mao Zhuxi*	藕藕见到了毛主席
Our Vietnamese Brothers Are Really Great	*Yuenan gege zhenshi bang*	越南哥哥真是棒
Treading Shuangfeng Mountain	*Taping shuangfeng shan*	踏平双峰山
Primary School Students	*Xiaoxuesheng*	小学生
Railway Guerrillas	*Tiedao youji dui*	铁道游击队
Rainbow	Caihong	**彩虹**
Red Rock	*Hong yan*	红岩
Reunion	*Tuanyuan*	团圆
Revenge the Children Who Died at the Bloody Hands of the Imperialists	*Wei cansi zai diguo zhuyi xie shou xia de ertong fuchou*	为惨死在帝国主义血手下的儿童复仇
Revolutionary Memoirs	*Geming huiyilu*	革命回忆录
Shanghai Waves	*Shanghai de langhua*	上海的浪花
Six, Seven, Eight	*Liu qi ba*	六七八
Son of the Grassland	*Caoyuan de erzi*	草原的儿子
Son of the Motherland	*Zuguo de erzi*	祖国的儿子
Southern Anger	*Nanfang nuhuo*	南方怒火
Starling	*Bage*	八哥
Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio	*Liaozhai zhi yi*	聊斋志异
Study Culture Series	*Xue wenhua congshu*	学文化丛书
Study Culture Using Simple Words Series	*Xue wenhua xiao hua ku*	学文化小话库
Taking Huashan by Strategy	*Zhiqu huashan*	智取华山

Taking Tiger Mountain Using Strategy	*Zhiqu wei hu shan*	智取威虎山
Tang Bohu Pursues Qiuxiang	*Tang Bohu dian qiuxiang*	唐伯虎点秋香
The Anger Behind the Campaign to Resist U.S. Aggression and Support Korea	*Kangmeiyuanchao de nuhuo*	抗美援朝的怒火
The Bitter Cauliflower	*Ku caihua*	苦菜花
The Burning of the Red Lotus Temple	*Huoshao hongliansi*	火烧红莲寺
The Crimes of the Hu Feng Counter-Revolutionary Group	*Hu feng fangeming jituan de zuixing*	胡风反革命集团的罪行
The Edge of Life and Death	*Shengsi yuan*	生死缘
The First Battle for Pingxing Pass	*Shou zhan pingxingguan*	首战平型关
The Flaming Warrior 1: Shi Gengxin Breaks the Siege with One Shell	*Liehuo jingang (1): Shi Gengxin yi dan tuwei*	烈火金刚 01 史更新一弹突围
The Flaming Warrior 2: Auntie Sun Generously Attempts a Rescue	*Liehuo jingang (2): Sun daniang zhangyi jiu nan*	烈火金刚 02 孙大娘仗义救难
The Flaming Warrior 3: Qi Ying’s Skilful Stratagem	*Liehuo jingang (3): Qi Ying qiao shi mihunzhen*	烈火金刚 03 齐英巧施迷魂阵
The Girl and the Devil	*Guniang yu mogui*	姑娘与魔鬼
The Good Man Tian Mugua	*Hao ren Tian Mugua*	好人田木瓜
The Good News No One Accepted	*Mei ren jieshou de xibao*	没人接受的喜报
The Highest Reward	*Zuigao de jiangshang*	最高的奖赏
The Indomitable Warrior	*Buqu de zhanshi*	不屈的战士
The Injustice of the Nine Murders	*Jiu ming qiu yuan*	九命奇冤
The Iron Oxen Tractor Driver	*Tie niu hao tuolaji shou*	铁牛号拖拉机手
The Letter with the Feather	*Ji maoxin*	鸡毛信
The Lianhuanhua of the Thirty Years of the Communist Party of China	*Zhongguo gongchandang de sanshi nian lianhuanhua*	中国共产党的三十年连环画
The Lights of Yan’an	*Yan’an de denghuo*	延安的灯火
Monopolising the Courtesan	*Duzhan huakui*	独占花魁
The Mastermind Raids the Prison	*Zhiduoxing huxue qiao jieyu*	智多星虎穴巧劫狱
The Merchant of Venice	*Weinisi shangren*	威尼斯商人
The Nation of Women	*Nü’er guo*	女儿国
The Old Persian Man’s Sword	*Bosi laoren de jian*	波斯老人的剑
The Peach Blossom Fan	*Taohua shan*	桃花扇
The Peacock Girl	*Kongque guniang*	孔雀姑娘

The People Who Are Abandoned	*Shui shi bei paoqi de ren*	谁是被抛弃的人
The People Who Call on Wind and Rain	*Hufenghuanyu de renmen*	呼风唤雨的人们
The People's Communes Are Good	*Renmin gongshe hao*	人民公社好
The Phantom Lover	*Yeban gesheng*	夜半歌声
The Pioneers of the Agricultural Frontline	*Nongye zhanxian de jianbing*	农业战线的尖兵
The Red Detachment of Women	*Hongse niangzijun*	红色娘子军
The Road of Happiness to Lhasa	*Tong xiang lasa de xingfu daolu*	通向拉萨的幸福道路
The Rumyantsev Case	*Lumianchaifu anjian*	鲁勉柴夫案件
The Singing Girl Red Peony	*Genü hong mudan*	歌女红牡丹
The Small Hunter in the Forest	*Lin zhong xiao lieren*	林中小猎人
The Snail Shell Girl	*Tianluo guniang*	田螺姑娘
The Son Who Made Trouble on the Wedding Night	*Qinsheng erzi naodongfang*	亲生儿子闹洞房
The Spinning Wheel	*Chelun feizhuan*	车轮飞转
The Story of Chairman Mao	*Mao zhuxi de gushi*	毛主席的故事
The Story of the Leaders	*Lingxiu de gushi*	领袖的故事
The Tale of the White Snake	*Baishe zhuan*	白蛇传
The Train that Flew	*Lie che feiben*	列车飞奔
The Triumphant Expedition to the South	*Nan zheng kai gui*	南征凯归
The You Sisters of the Red Chamber	*Honglou er You*	红楼二尤
The Vietnamese Little Girl	*Yuenan xiao guniang*	越南小姑娘
The Voice of Black America	*Meiguo heiren de husheng*	美国黑人的呼声
The Walking Hungry People	*E ren xing*	饿人行
The Well	*Jing*	井
The White Haired Girl	*Bai mao nü*	白毛女
The Young Guard	*Qingnian jin wei jun*	青年近卫军
Virgin Soil Upturned	*Bei kaiken de chunüdi*	被开垦的处女地
Wang Baolin Gets Married	*Wang Baoling jiehun*	王宝林结婚
Wang Xiaohe	*Wang Xiaohe*	王孝和
Water Margin	*Shui hu zhuan*	水滸傳
Winter Jasmine	*Yingchun hua*	迎春花
Xiao Erhei Gets Married	*Xiao Erhei jiehun*	小二黑结婚
Zhao Baiwan	*Zhao Baiwan*	赵百万
Zhu Fengdi	*Zhu Fengdi*	诸凤娣

Bibliography

Alaniz, Jose. (2013) *Komiks: Comic Art in Russia.* Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Altehenger, Jennifer. (2013) “A Socialist Satire: Manhua Magazine and Political Cartoon Production in the PRC, 1950-1960.” *Frontiers of History in China.* 8 (1). pp. 78–103.

Andrews, Julia F. (1990) “Traditional Painting in New China: Guohua and the Anti-Rightist Campaign.” *The Journal of Asian Studies.* 49 (3). pp. 555–586.

———(1994) *Painters and Politics in the People’s Republic of China, 1949-1979.* Berkeley*:* University of California Press.

———(1997) “Literature in Line: Picture Stories in the People’s Republic of China.” *INKS: Cartoon and Comic Art Studies.* 4 (3). pp. 16–32.

Arkush, David. (1981) “Introduction.” In Hualing, Nieh (ed.) *Literature of the Hundred Flowers: Criticism and Polemics.* Vol 1. New York: Columbia University Press.pp. xiii-xlv.

A Ying (阿英). (1957) *A History of Chinese Lianhuanhua (Zhongguo lianhuanhua shi hua* 中国连环画史话*).* Beijing: Chinese Classical Art Publishing House (*Zhongguo gudian yishu chubanshe* 中国古典艺术出版社).

Barou, Guillaume. (2015) “Nationalists, Communists and Bandits” (*Nationalistes, Communistes et Brigands*). *Le Monde Diplomatique*. September. p. 25.

Beijing News Publisher (*Beijing xinwen chubanshe* 北京 新闻出版社). (1951a) *The Conditions for the Xinhua Bookstore Assisting Each Primary School to Obtain Comics* (*Xinhua shudian xiang ge xiaoxue tigong lianhuanhua de qingkuang* 新华书店向各小学提供连环画的情况). Available from: Beijing Municipal Archive (Reference: 008-002-00157) (D117).

———(01/1951b) *Lianhuanhua Research Report* (*Lianhuanhua yanjiu baogao* 连环画研究报告). Available from: Beijing Municipal Archive (Reference: 008-002-00158) (D116).

——— (03/1951c) *The Voice of Black America* (*Meiguo heiren de husheng* 美国黑人的呼声). Available from: Beijing Municipal Archive (Reference: 008-002-00159) (D123).

———(05/1951d) *An Investigation into Lianhuanhua* (*Diaocha cheng xiaorenshu* 连环画调查). Available from: Beijing Municipal Archive (Reference: 008-002-00775) (D127).

——— (08/1951e) *Report Concerning Comic Censorship* (*Baogao guanyu lianhuanhua shencha zhidu* 关于连环画审查制度的报告). Available from: Beijing Municipal Archive (Reference: 022-012-00523) (D128).

———(1954) *Record of a Meeting Concerning Lianhuanhua* (*Lianhuanhua zuotan hui jilu* 连环画座谈会记录). Available from: Beijing Municipal Archive (Reference: 0008-002-00741) (D121).

Beijing News Publisher (*Beijing xinwen chubanshe* 北京 新闻出版社) and Xinhua Bookstore (*Xinhua shudian* 新华书店). (19/05/1951) *Subsidies for New Comics*（*Xin lianhuanhua de butie* 新连环画的补贴*)*. Available from: Beijing Municipal Archive (Reference: 008-002-00190) (D124).

Beijing People’s Government (*Beijing renmin zhengfu* 北京市人民政府). (12/1951) *Work Plan for Disposing of the Obscene and Reactionary Lianhuanhua* (*Chuzhi yin xie ji fandong lianhuanhua de gongzuo jihua* 处置淫亵及反动连环画的工作计划). Available from: Beijing Municipal Archive (Reference: 008-002-00739) (D126).

Berry, Christopher and Farquhar, Mary Ann. (2006) *China on Screen: Cinema and Nation*. Columbia: Columbia University Press.

Berry, Michael. (2011) *A History of Pain: Trauma in Modern Chinese Literature and Film*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bi, Lijun. (2013) “Chinese Children’s Literature in the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976).” *Studies in Literature and Language.* 6 (1). pp. 82–86.

Braester, Yomi. (2003) *Witness Against History: Literature, Film, and Public Discourse in Twentieth-Century China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Braester, Yomi, and Chen, Tina Mai. (2011) “Film in the People’s Republic of China, 1949–1979: The Missing Years?” *Journal of Chinese Cinemas.* 5 (1). pp. 5–12.

Cai, Qianyin (蔡千音), and Hua, Sanchuan (华三川). (1961) *The Flaming Warrior 1: Shi Gengxin Breaks the Siege with One Shell* (*Liehuo jingang 1: Shi Gengxin yi dan tuwei* 烈火金刚 01 史更新一弹突围). Tianjin: Tianjin Fine Arts Publishing House (*Tianjin meishu chubanshe* 天津美术出版社). Available from: http://www.28lu.com/zzx/1018292539.html

Cai, Qianyin (蔡千音) and Wang, Zhijie (汪志杰). (1962). *The Flaming Warrior 2: Auntie Sun Generously Attempts a Rescue* (*Liehuo jingang (2): Sun daniang zhangyi jiu nan* 烈火金刚 02 孙大娘仗义救难). Tianjin: Tianjin Fine Arts Publishing House (*Tianjin meishu chubanshe* 天津美术出版社). Available from: http://www.28lu.com/zzx/1023502540.html.

———(1963) *The Flaming Warrior 3: Qi Ying’s Skilful Stratagem* (*Liehuo jingang (3): Qi Ying qiao shi mihunzhen* 烈火金刚 03 齐英巧施迷魂阵). Tianjin: Tianjin Fine Arts Publishing House (*Tianjin meishu chubanshe* 天津美术出版社). Available from: http://www.28lu.com/zzx/1801322541.html.

Chang, Shih-ying (張世瑛). (2011) “A Study of Taiwan’s Political Cartoons in the 1950s” (*1950 niandai tawain zhengzhi manhua chutan* 1950 年代台湾政治漫画初探). In *Taiwan Literature* (*Taiwan wenxian* 臺湾文献). Nantou: Taiwan Historica (*Nantou shi: guo shi guan taiwan wenxian guan* 南投市:国史馆台湾文献馆). pp. 351–402.

Chen, Baichui (陈佰吹) and He, Gongchao (何公超). (1962) *Chinese People’s Political Consultation Conference, Shanghai Municipal Third Plenary, Conference to Strengthen Leadership over the Comic Vendors* (*Zhongguo renmin zhengxie, Shanghaishi wei di san ci quanti huiyi, jiaqiang lingdao lianhuanhua gong ying shang de huiyi* 中国人民政，上海市委第三次全体会议，加强领导连环画供应商的会议). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: L1-1-239-17) (D111).

Chen, Guangyi (陈光镒). (1954) *Zhang Fei (*张飞). Shanghai: New Fine Arts Publishing House (*Xin meishu chubanshe* 新美术出版社). Available from: http://www.28lu.com/mingzhu/133118937_34.html.

Chen, Guangyi (陈光镒). Qian, Xiaodai (钱笑呆), Wang, Yushan (汪玉山) and Yan, Shaotang (严绍唐). (1959) *Great Scientists-Zhang Heng* (*Da kexuejia-zhang heng* 大科学家-张衡). Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Fine Arts Publishing House (*Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe* 上海人民美术出版社）. Available from: http://www.28lu.com/rw/104705270.html.

Chen, Minjie. (2011) “Friends and Foes on the Battlefield: A Study of Chinese and US Youth Literature about the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945).” Thesis: University of Illinois.

Chen, Yanfan (陈烟帆). (1952) “Seriously Engage in Comic Creation” (*Ying yansu renzhen de chuangzuo lianhuanhua* 应严肃认真地创作连环画). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报), 11th September, 2nd Ed.

Cheng, Jia (程佳). (2011) “On the Socialist Transformation of the Comic Book Industry in Shanghai (1949-1956)” (*Lun Shanghai lianhuanhua ye de shehui zhuyi gaizao* 论上海连环画业的社会主义改造 1949-1956). Dissertation: Graduate School of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (*Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan yanjiusheng yuan* 中国社会科学院研究生院).

Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department, Jing’an District (*Zhonggong Shanghaishi jing'an qu wei xuanchuanbu* 中共上海市静安区委宣传部). (1956) *Report on the Regulation of Lianhuanhua Bookstall Vendors, Jing’an District* (*Lianhuanhua shu tan gongying shang de jianguan, jing’an qu de baogao* 连环画书摊供应商的监管，静安区报告). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: A79-2-406-30) (D2).

Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Propaganda Department of Public Utilities (*Zhonggong Shanghaishi gongyong shiye weiyuanhui xuanchuanbu* 中共上海市公用事业委员会宣传部). (1953) *How to Use Lianhuanhua, Posters, Films etc. to Propagate the New Marriage Law* (*Ruhe shiyong lianhuanhua, xuanchuan haibao, dianying deng chuanbo xin hunyingfa* 如何使用连环画，海报，电影等传播新婚姻法). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: A59-1-298-108) (D1).

Chinese *Lianhuanhua* Publisher (*Zhongguo lianhuanhua chubanshe* 中国连环画出版社). (1998) *Chinese Contemporary Art Collection 18-19 Lianhuanhua* (*Zhongguo xiandai meishu quanji* 中国 现代 美术 全集. 18-19: 连环画). Vol. 1. Beijing: Chinese *Lianhuanhua* Publisher (*Zhongguo lianhuanhua chubanshe* 北京: 中国连环画出版社).

Coble, Parks M. (1995) “The Shanghai Capitalists and the Nationalist Government, 1927-1937.” *The Journal of Asian Studies.* 54 (1). pp. 19–42.

Clunas, Craig. (1999) “Souvenirs of Beijing: Authority and Subjectivity in Art Historical Memory.” In Evans, Harriet and Donald, Stephanie (eds.) *Picturing Power in the People’s Republic of China: Posters of the Cultural Revolution*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Incorporated. pp. 47–61.

Cong, tou lai (pen name). (2006) ‘A Brief Discussion of the Comic Adaptations of the Novel *Red Rock*’ (E tan genju xiaoshuo ‘hong yan’ gaibian de lianhuanhua 略谈根据小说《红岩》改编的连环画). Availaible from: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4a05d05c0100053w.html.

Croizier, Ralph. (2008) “Politics in Command.” In Chiu, Melissa (ed.) *Art and China’s Revolution*. New York: Yale University Press. pp. 57–73.

Dang Dai Xuesheng (当代学生). (2012) “*Lianhuanhua:* Little Person’s Books, Big World” (*Lianhuanhua: xiaorenshu, da tiandi* 连环画:小人书,大天地). *Dang dai xuesheng* (当代学生). 4 (1). pp. 78–81.

Dan, Wenchang (单文昌). (1951) “Three Comic Newspaper” (*San ben lianhuanhuabao* 三本连环画报). *New Children’s World* (*Xinwen ertong shijie* 新儿童世界). Available from: Shanghai Library Modern Documents Room (D96).

DeMare, Brian. (2012) “Local Actors and National Politics: Rural Amateur Drama Troupes and Mass Campaigns in Hubei Province, 1949-1953.” *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*. 24 (2). pp. 129–178.

Deng, Ke (邓柯). (2010) “Teacher Hua Sanchuan” (*Hua sanchuan laoshi* 华三川老师). *Lianhuanhuabao* (连环画报). 2 (1). p. 34.

Denton, Kirk. (1996) *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature, 1893-1945*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Dolby, William. (1976) *A History of Chinese Drama*. New York: Barnes and Noble.

Donald, Stephanie. (1999) “Children as Political Messages: Art, Childhood and Continuity.” In Evans, Harriet and Donald, Stephanie (eds.) *Picturing Power in the People’s Republic of China: Posters of the Cultural Revolution*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Incorporated. pp. 79–100.

Dudziak, Mary. (2011) *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Du, Ying. (2014) “Shanghaiing the Press Gang: The Maoist Regimentation of the Shanghai Popular Publishing Industry in the Early PRC (1949–1956).” *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*. 26:2 (Fall). pp. 89–141.

Du, Ziling（杜滋龄). (1963) *Li Shuangshuang* (李双双). Tianjin: Tianjin Fine Arts Publishing House (*Tianjin meishu chubanshe* 天津美术出版社). Available from: http://lhh.a8z8.com/thread-452386-1-1.html.

Eco, Umberto and Lumley, Robert (ed.). (1994) *Apocalypse Postponed*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Education and the Public (*Jiaoyu yu minzhong* 教育与民众). (1936) “Tianjin Public Education in Recent News: (ii) Ban *Lianhuanhua*” (*Tianjin shi minzhong jiaoyu jin xun: (ii) qudi xiaorenshu* 天津市民众教育近讯:(二)取缔小人书). 8 (1). pp. 173–174.

Evans, Harriet, and Donald, Stephanie. (1999) “Introduction.” In Evans, Harriet, and Donald, Stephanie (eds.) *Picturing Power in the People’s Republic of China: Posters of the Cultural Revolution*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Incorporated.

Fang, Xian (访仙). (1937) “On the ‘Comics’ and Children” (*Lu ‘xiaorenshu’ yu ertong* 论’小人书’与儿童). *Family Weekly* (*Jiating xingqi* 家庭星期). 2 (14). pp. 213–215.

Farquhar, Mary Ann. (1999) *Children’s Literature in China: From Lu Xun to Mao Zedong*. New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc.

Flath, James. (2014) “It’s a Wonderful Life: *Nianhua* and *Yuefenpai* at the Dawn of the People’s Republic.” *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*. 16 (2). pp. 123–159.

Galikowski, Maria. (1998) *Art and Politics in China, 1949-1986*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press.

Glosser, Susan. (2003) *Chinese Visions of Family and State, 1915-1953*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Gunning, Tom. (2013) “The Transforming Image: The Roots of Animation in Metamorphosis and Motion.” In Buchan, Suzanne (ed.) *Pervasive Animation*. New York: Routledge. pp. 51–70.

Han, Bo (寒波). (1939) “Create Strong Comics” (*Chuangli jianquan de lianhuan tuhua* 创立健全的连环图画). *Shenbao* (申報). 3rd November. p. 8.

Hang, Krista Van Fleit. (2013) *Literature the People Love: Reading Chinese Texts from the Early Maoist Period (1949-1966)*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Harrison, Henrietta. (2000) *The Making of the Republican Citizen: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China, 1911-1929*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hershatter, Gail. (2002) “The Gender of Memory: Rural Chinese Women and the 1950s.” *Signs*. 28 (1). pp. 43–70.

He, Yaoming (何耀明). (1952) “*The Lianhuanhua of The Thirty Years of the Communist Party of China* is a Good History Textbook for Rural People” (*Zhongguo gongchandang sanshi nian lianhuanhua shi xiang nongcun dangyuan jiangjie dang shi de hao keben* 中国共产党三十年连环画”是向农村党员讲解党史的好课本). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报), 22nd January.

He, Youzhi (贺友直). (1960) *An Immortal Life* (*Buxiu de shengming* 不朽的生命). Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Fine Arts Publishing House (*Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe* 上海人民美术出版社). Available from: http://www.28lu.com/geming/093723867.html.

———(1961a) *Great Changes on the Mountain Part 1 (Shan xiang jubian* 山乡巨变第一). Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Fine Arts Publishing House (*Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe* 上海人民美术出版社). Available from: http://www.28lu.com/xd/163331698.html

———(1961b) *Great Changes on the Mountain Part 2 (Shan xiang jubian* 山乡巨变第二). Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Fine Arts Publishing House (*Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe* 上海人民美术出版社). Available from: http://www.28lu.com/xd/191804700.html

———(1962) *Great Changes on the Mountain Part 3 (Shan xiang jubian* 山乡巨变第三). Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Fine Arts Publishing House (*Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe* 上海人民美术出版社). Available from: http://www.28lu.com/xd/165635702.html

———(1965) *Great Changes on the Mountain Part 4 (Shan xiang jubian* 山乡巨变第四). Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Fine Arts Publishing House (*Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe* 上海人民美术出版社). Available from: http://www.28lu.com/xd/153959704.html

———(1964a) *Li Shuangshuang* (李双双). Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Fine Arts Publishing House (*Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe* 上海人民美术出版社).

———(1964b) *Li Shuangshuang* (李双双). Shanghai: Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House (*Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe* 上海人民美术出版社). Available from: http://28lu.com/gushi/151758631.html.

———(1982) *A Discussion about Creating Lianhuanhua* (*Lianhuanhua chuangzuo tan* 连环画创作谈). Hunan: Children's Publisher (*Shao nian ertong chubanshe* 少年儿童出版).

He, Yulin (何玉麟). (2012) "The High Style Line Drawing of the Ancient Masters: Huang Quanchang" (*Fengge gao gu de xian miao gaoshou: huang quanchang* 风格高古的线描高手: 黄全昌). *Lianhuanhuabao* (连环画报). pp. 68–74.

China Christian Advocate (*Hsinghua* 兴华). (1936) "Social Words: Comic Books and Children's Education" (*She yan: xiaorenshu yu ertong jiaoyu* 社言：小人书与儿童教育). *China Christian Advocate* (Hsinghua 兴华). 33 (30). pp. 2–3.

Huai, Zhi (槐之). (1962) "Praise for New Achievements in *Lianhuanhua*" (*Song lianhuanhua de xin chengjiu* 颂连环画的新成就). *The People's Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 27th May.

Hua, Junwu (华君武). (1951) "Introducing the Comic Newspaper" (*Jieshao lianhuanhuabao* 介绍连环画报). *The People's Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 2nd September.

Hua, Sanchuan (华三川). (1964) *The White Haired Girl* (*Bai mao nü* 白毛女). Shanghai: New People's Fine Arts Publishing House (*Xin meishu chubanshe* 新美术出版社). Available from: http://www.28lu.com/gushi/100445792.html.

———(1965) *The White Haired Girl* (*Bai mao nü* 白毛女). Shanghai: New People's Fine Arts Publishing House (*Xin meishu chubanshe* 新美术出版社). Available from: http://www.360doc.com/content/12/0816/10/8169391_230450891.shtml.

Huang, Yide (黄一德). (1953) *Village Cadre Tong Yulan* (*Cun ganbu tong yulan* 村干部佟玉蓝). Shanghai: New People's Fine Arts Publishing House (*Xin meishu chubanshe* 新美术出版社). Available from: http://www.997788.com/19117/auction/102/2099482/.

Huaqiao Affairs Committee General Office (*Huaqiao shiwu weiyuanhui bangong ting* 华侨事务委员会办公厅). (1956) "The You Sisters of the Red Chamber" (*Honglou er you* 红楼二尤). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B167-1-178-55) (D11).

Hubbert, Jennifer. (2006) "(Re)collecting Mao: Memory and Fetish in Contemporary China." *American Ethnologist*. 33 (2). pp. 145–161.

Hung, Changtai. (2001) "Revolutionary History in Stone: The Making of a Chinese National Monument." *China Quarterly*. No. 166. pp. 457–473.

———(2007) "Oil Paintings and Politics: Weaving a Heroic Tale of the Chinese Revolution." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 49 (4). pp. 783–814.

———(2011) *Mao's New World: Political Culture in the Early People's Republic*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Hung, Eva. (1996) "The Introduction of Dickens into China (1906-1960): A Case Study in Target Cultural Reception." *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*. 4. pp. 29–41.

Hwang, John. (1978) "Lien Huan Hua: Revolutionary Serial Pictures." In Chu, Goodwin (ed.) *Popular Media in China: Shaping New Cultural Patterns*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii. pp. 51–73.

Internal Affairs Bulletin (*Neizheng gongbao* 内政公报). (1933) "Police: Publication Check: Consult Provincial and Municipal Governments: Please Ban Seven Kinds of Comic" (*Jing Zheng: Chuban Wu Jiancha Shixiang: Sheng Shi Zhengfu: Qing Chi Shu Chajin Xiaorenshu Qi Zhong* 警政:出版物檢查事項:咨各省市政府: 請飭屬查禁小人書七種).

International Bookstores (*Guoji shudian zongdian* 国际书店总店). (1956) "Unnamed." Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B167-1-178-170) (D15).

Jia, Jia. (2005) "The Reconstruction of a Political Icon: Shi Lu's Painting Fighting in Northern Shaanxi." *Qualitative Inquiry*. 11 (4). pp. 535–548.

Jiang, Weipu (姜维朴). (1956a) "More and Better Comic Book Publishing Is Required" (*Yaoqiu chuban geng duo geng hao de lianhuanhua* 要求出版更多更好的连环画). *The People's Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 9th April.

———(1956b) "Learning from Lu Xun's Article on *Lianhuanhua*" (*Xuexi luxun xiansheng lun lianhuanhua de wenzhang de tihui* 学习鲁迅先生论连环画的文章的体会). *The People's Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 17th October.

———(1957). "The Comic Flowers of the Youth" (*Qingchun de lianhuanhua huaduo* 青春的連环画花朵). *The People's Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报), 1st May.

———(1960) "Comics Should Enhance the Dissemination of Communist Ideology" (*Lianhuanhua ying jiaqiang chuanbo gongchan zhuyi sixiang* 连环画应加强传播共产主义思想). *People's Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 16th November.

Johnson, Matthew. (2011) "The Science Education Film: Cinematizing Technocracy and Internationalizing Development." *Journal of Chinese Cinemas*. 5 (1). pp. 31–53.

Judd, Ellen R. (1985) "Prelude to the Yan'an Talks: Problems in Transforming a Literary Intelligentsia." *Modern China*. Vol. 11. No. 3 (July). pp. 377–408.

King, Richard (Guest Editor). (2007) "Leaping to Disaster: Chinese Literature and the Great Leap Forward." Special Issue of *Renditions*. Autumn.

———(2013) *Milestones on a Golden Road: Writing for Chinese Socialism, 1945-80*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Landsberger, Stefan. (2001) “Learning by What Example? Educational Propaganda in Twenty-First-Century China.” *Critical Asian Studies*. 33 (4). pp. 541–571.

Lee, Klaudia Hiu Yen. (2013) “Cross-Cultural Encounters: The Early Reception of Charles Dickens in China, 1895-1915.” University of Nottingham.

Lent, John. (2001) “Introduction.” In Lent, John (ed.) *Illustrating Asia: Comics, Humour Magazines, and Picture Books*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Liang, Dongfang (梁东方). (2012) “The Train that Flew” (*Lieche feiben* 列车飞奔). *Read Books* (*Bolan qun shu* 博览群书). pp. 90–93.

Liang, Ellen Johnston. (1988) *The Winking Owl: Art in the People’s Republic of China*. London: University of California Press.

Lianhuanhua Authors Association (*Lianhuanhua zuozhe lianyihui* 连环画作者联谊会). (1950). “Shanghai Art Community Opinion Survey Report Form” (*Tianbao Shanghaishi meishu shetuan diaocha yijian biao* 填报上海市美术社团调查意见表). Available From: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-4-40-13) (D70).

Lianhuanhuabao (1951a). People’s Fine Arts Publishing House. 1st May.

———(1951b). People’s Fine Arts Publishing House. 3rd July.

Lianhuanhua Review Group (*Lianhuanhua shendu zu* 连环画审读组). (1965) “*Lianhuanhua* Review GroupWork Summary” (*Guanyu lianhuanhua shendu gongzuo de zongjie* 关于连环画审读工作的总结). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B3-2-182-72) (D97).

Lianlian Bookstore (*Lianlian shudian* 连联书店). (1954) “Report by Lianlian Bookstore on the Comic Seminars and Conferences in the First Season of 1954” (*Shanghaishi shudian ye tongyegonghui lianlian shudian 1954 nian di yi jidu suo faxing de lianhuanhua jian mo hui he zuotan hui de gongzuo zongjie* 上海市书店业同业公会连联书店 1954 年第一季度所发行的连环画见摩会和座谈会的工作总结). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: S313-4-30-1) (D113).

Lian, Shaofu (连少甫). (2012) “The Transformation of the Beijing *Lianhuanhua* Industry” (*Beijing shi lianhuanhua ye de gaizao* 北京市连环画业的改造). *Contemporary Chinese Historical Research* (*Dangdai zhongguo shi yanjiu* 当代中国史研究). 19 (14). pp. 95–99.

Li, Desheng (李德胜). (1973) *A Ying* (阿英). Liaoning: Liaoning People’s Publisher (*Liaoning chubanshe*).

Li, Lu (黎鲁）. (1956) “Pay Attention to the Preparation of the Comic Scripts” (*Zhongshi lianhuanhua jiaoben de bianxie gongzuo* 重视连环画脚本的编写工作). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 9th April.

Lin, Sharon Chien. (1998) *Libraries and Librarianship in China*. London: Greenwood Press.

Lin, Shu. (1908) “Preface to Part One of David Copperfield (1908).” Translated in Denton, Kirk. (1996) *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature, 1893-1945*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. pp. 84–86.

Li, Shaonan (李劭南). (2011) *A Contemporary History of Beijing Comics* (*Dangdai Beijing lianhuanhua shihua* 当代北京连环画史话). Beijing: Contemporary China Publishing House (Dangdai Zhongguo Chubanshe 当代中国出版社).

Li, Zhai (立齋）. (1933) “Drizzle and Others” (*Maomaoyu ji qita* 毛毛雨’及其他). *Shenbao* (申報). 23rd November. p. 20.

Liu, Xun (刘迅). (1954) “Several Issues with Comic Creation” (*Lianhuanhua chuangzuo zhong de ji ge wenti* 连环画创作中的几个问题). *Meishu* (美术). 30th July.

Lü, Ming (吕明). (2012a) “Li Tianxin’s War Themed Comics” (*Li tianxin yu kangzhan ticai lianhuanhua* 李天心与“抗战题材”连环画). *Knowledge is Power* (*Zhishi jiushi liliang* 知识就是力量). (7). pp. 74–75.

———(2012b) “Inspired by the Taihang Mountains: Hua Sanchuan and The White Haired Girl” (*Linggan laizi taihangshan: Hua sanchuan yu bai mao nü* 灵感来自太行山——华三川与白毛女). *Colourful Culture* (*Binfen wenhua* 缤纷文化). January. pp. 74–75.

Lu, Duanfang. (2011) *Remaking Chinese Urban Form: Modernity, Scarcity and Space, 1949-2005*. Oxford: Routledge.

Lu, Hanchao. (1999) *Beyond the Neon Lights: Everyday Shanghai in the Early Twentieth Century*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Lu, Jun (陆军). (2005) “Heroes on the Comic Spectrum: Jiang Weipu Talks about Hua Sanchuan” (*Lianhuanhua chu yingxiong pu: jiang weipu tan hua sanchuan* 连环画出英雄谱—姜维朴谈华三川). *Art Watch (Meishu guancha* 美术观察). October. pp. 33–37.

Lu, Xun (鲁迅). (1932) ‘In Defence of “Comics”’ (*“Lianhuan Tuhua” Bianhu* “连环图画”辩护). Available from: http://www.ziyexing.com/luxun/nanqiangbeidiao/luxun_zw_nqbdj_06.htm

Lu, Zuohua (陆左华). (1962) “An Interview with a Shanghai People’s Fine Arts Publishing House Comic Author” (*Huiying you huisheng fang Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe lianhuanhua zuozhe* 绘影又绘声访上海人民美术出版社连环画作者). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 7th August.

Macdonald, Sean. (2011) “Two Texts on Comics from China (1932): In Defense of ‘Comic Strips’ by Lu Xun and ‘Comic Strip Novels’ by Mao Dun.” ImageTexT: *Interdisciplinary Comic Studies* 6 (1). Available from: http://www.english.ufl.edu/imagetext/archives/v6_1/macdonald/.

Macfarquhar, Roderick. (1997) *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: The Coming of a Cataclysm 1961-1966*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ma, Ke (马克). (1963) “Hailing New Achievements in Comic Production” (*Huanhu Lianhuanhua de xin chengjiu* 欢呼连环画的新成就). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 29th December.

———(1964) “Nurturing, Experiencing and Creating-Notes on a Visit to Several Shanghai Comic Artists (*Yunyu, tiyan he zai chuangzao-fangwen Shanghai jiwei lianhuanhua jia de biji* 孕育、体验和再创造——访问上海几位连环画家的笔记). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 16th February.

———(1965) “Comments and Modifications on the Comic *The White Haired Girl*” (*Ping lianhuanhua bai mao nü de xiugai* 评连环画《白毛女》的修改). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 4th April.

MacKinnon, Stephen R. (2008) *Wuhan, 1938: War, Refugees, and the Making of Modern China*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Mao, Dun. (1932) ‘Comic Strip Novels’ (*Lianhuan tuhua xiaoshuo* 连环图画小说). Avaliable from: http://www.lhh1.com/modules/news/newshow.php?id=64&pid=&charset=gbk

Mao, Dun. (1938) “Literature and Art for the Masses and the Use of Traditional Forms (1938).” Translated in Denton, Kirk. (1996) *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature, 1893-1945*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. pp. 433–435.

Mao, Zedong. (1942) “Talks at the Yan’an Forum on Literature and Art.” (*Zai Yan’an wenyi zuotan hui shang de jianghua* 在延安文艺座谈会上的讲话). Avaliable from: http://www.360doc.com/content/15/0903/21/9332630_496714163.shtml

McCloud, Scott. (1994) *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: Harper Collins.

Meishu (美术). (1957) “Conceiving the Real - Comic Creation Notes by Ben Qingyu” (*Yuanyu yu zhenshi zhi zhong-lianhuanhua chuangzuo zhaji ben qingyu* 孕育于真实之中——連环画創作札記賁慶余).

Mittler, Barbara. (2008) “Popular Propaganda? Art and Culture in Revolutionary China.” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*. 152 (4). pp. 466–489.

———(2013) *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Centre.

Mulready-Stone, Kristen. (2009) “Organising Shanghai’s Youth, 1920-1942: A Review of Organizing Shanghai’s Youth: Communist, Nationalist, and Collaborationist Strategies, 1920-1942.” Thesis: Yale University.

Myers, Brian Reynolds. (2010) *The Cleanest Race*. New York: Melville House Publishing.

Nanjing Library (*Nanjing tushuguan* 南京图书馆). (1954) “Criticized Comic Index” (*Bei piping de lianhuanhua suoyin* 被批评的连环画索引). Available from: National Library, Beijing.

Nebiolo, Gino. (1973) *The People’s Comic Book: Red Women’s Detachment, Hot on the Trail and Other Chinese Comics*. New York: Anchor Press.

News Publishing House Guangzhou (*Xinwen chubanshe Guangzhou* 广州新闻出版社). (1951) “A Brother Agency to Review the List of Comics, Xinhua Bookstore Will Supply Samples” (*Xiongdi dali shang shencha xin lianhuanhua mingdan, xinhua shudian tigong yangben* 兄弟代理商审查新连环画名单, 新华书店提供样本). Available from: Beijing Municipal Archive (Reference: 008-002-00154) (D118).

Office of the Shanghai Municipal People’s Committee of Culture and Education (*Shanghaishi ren wei wenjiao bangongshi* 上海市人委文教办公室). (1965) “Some of the Issues Found in Censoring *Lianhuanhua*” *(Lianhuanhua shendu zhong faxian de yixie wenti* 连环画审读中发现的一些问题). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B3-2-191-49) (D98).

Onias, Felix. (1975) “The Political Uses and Themes of Folklore in the Soviet Union.” *Journal of the Folklore Institute*. 12 (2/3). pp. 157–175.

Pan, Lingling. (2008) “Post-Liberation History of China’s *Lianhuanhua* (Pictorial Books).” *International Journal of Comic Art.* 10. pp. 694–717.

Peng, Pu (彭浦). (2014) “The Quality and Reputation of the Early Republican Comic Was Destroyed by the Paomashu” (*Zaoqi minguo lianhuanhua zhiliang gao shengyu hui yu paomashu* 早期民国连环画质量高 声誉毁于跑马书). *China News*. 7th June. Available from: http://www.chinanews.com/cul/2014/07-06/6355569.shtml.

The People’s Daily (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). (1947) “Shandong and Henan Folk Artists Will Try to Draw Comics” (*Ji lu yu minjian yi hui shi hui lianhuanhua gan bian zhui zici* 冀鲁豫民间艺会 试绘连环画 赶编坠子词). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 27th September.

———(1951a) “Concerning the Criticism of the Comic *Yun Girl*” (*Dui ‘yun guniang’ lianhuanhua piping de dafu* 对“芸姑娘”连环画批评的答复). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 10th October.

———(1951b). “Use New Comics to Replace Poisonous Old Comics” (*Yong xin lianhuanhua daiti you dusu de jiu lianhuanhua* 用新连环画代替有毒素的旧连环画). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 15th December.

———(1952a). “The North China Bureau of the Central Committee Publicity Department Rewards an Outstanding Comic Book Author” (*Zhonggong zhongyang huabei ju xuanchuan bu jiangli youxiu de lianhuanhua zuozhe* 中共中央华北局宣传部奖励优秀的连环画作者). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 10th January.

———(1952b). “In Opposition to Slipshod Comics-A Summary of Letters Made to the Editor” (*Fandui cuzhilanzao de lianhuanhua-duzhe laixin zongsu* 反对粗制滥造的连环画——读者来信综述). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 8th June.

———(1953) “*Bao Tonghua* and *Reunion* Are Two Good Comics” (*Bao tong hua he tuanyuan shi liang tao hao de lianhuanhua* 暴同花和团圆”是两套好的连环画). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 3rd April.

———(1954) “An Original Comic Exhibition Was Welcomed by the Audience” (*Lianhuanhua yuanzuo zhanlan hui shoudao guanzhong huanying* 连环画原作展览会受到观众欢迎). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 15th October.

———(1955) “A Large Number of Comics Have Been Published” (*Dapi lianhuanhua ce jiang luxu chuban* 大批连环画册将陆续出版). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日). 9th July.

———(1959a) “Little Comics” (*Xiao xiao lianhuanhua* 小小连环画). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 19th June.

———(1959b) “Publishing News: The Shanghai People’s Fine Arts Publishing House Will Publish More Than One Thousand Comic Titles” (*Chuban xiaoxi: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe jiang chuban yiqian duo zhong lianhuanhua* 出版消息:上海人民美术出版社将出版一千多种连环画). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 3rd September.

———(1961) “*Lianhuanhua: A Red Flag on Everest*” (*Lianhuanhua: hongqi cha shangle zhumulangma feng* 连环画:红旗插上了珠穆朗玛峰连环画). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 21st May.

———(1963a) “The Film Press to Improve the Quality of Comics” *(Meishu, dianying chubanshe tigao lianhuanhua zhiliang* 美术, 电影出版社提高连环画质量). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 12th March.

———(1963b) “The National Comic Book Awards Are Announced” (*Quanguo lianhuanhua chuangzuo pingjiang jiexiao* 全国连环画创作评奖揭晓). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 28th December.

———(1965a) “*School for the Revolution*” (*Wei geming er xue* 为革命而学). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 5th June.

———(1965b) “Comics Reflect the Vietnamese People’s Patriotic Struggle Against US Aggression” (*Fenfen bianzhi fanying yuenan renmin kang mei aiguo douzheng de lianhuanhua* 纷纷编制反映越南人民抗美爱国斗争的连环画). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 15th June.

Radomski, Yohan. (2012) “Pang Xianjian (Editor): Today in China our Business is to Republish *Lianhuanhua*.” *Magazine Quotidien d’actualité de la Bande Dessinée*. 20th August.

Rawnsley, Gary. (2009) “The Great Movement to Resist America and Assist Korea: How Beijing Sold the Korean War.” *Media, War and Conflict.* 2 (3). pp. 285–315.
Rosen, Barbara, Norman Bock, Ching-Lan Jen, and Guo Jian. (1987) “The Wandering Life of Sanmao.” *Children’s Literature.* 15 (1). pp. 120–138.

Ross, Jason. (2008). “Shaping the Chinese People's Liberation Army’s Image: Historical Roots to Modern Trends.” Thesis: University of Oregon.

Rou, Jianshen (沈柔坚). (1960) “On Some of the Issues with *Lianhuanhua*, New Near Pictures and Propaganda Posters” (*Tan tan lianhuanhua, nianhua, zhengzhi xuanchuan hua chuangzuo zhong de yixie wenti* 谈谈连环画、年画、政治宣传画创作中的一些问题). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 9th November.

Schrift, Melissa. (2001) *Biography of a Chairman Mao Badge: The Creation and Mass Consumption of a Personality Cult*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Shanghai Cultural Bureau (*Shanghai Wenhua Ju* 上海市文化局). (1950) “Report on the Handling Methods for Replacing the Old *Lianhuanhua* with New *Lianhuanhua*” (*Shanghaishi wenhua ju guanyu jiu lianhuanhua huishou xin lianhuanhua de baogao* 上海市文化局关于旧连环画回收换新的报告). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-4-37) (D67).

———(1951a). “Draft of the *Lianhuanhua* Art Room Renovation Plan” (*Shanghaishi wenhua ju meishu shi guanyu jinyibu kaizhan lianhuanhua gaizao gongzuo jihua de qingshi* 上海市文化局美术室关于进一步开展连环画改造工作计划的请示). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-1-50-2) (D50).

———(1951b). “Copyright Issues Report” (*Cu zhi lan zao tou ji qu li，zhui cha banquan deng wenti de baogao* 粗制监造投机取利, 追查版权等问题的报告). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-1-75-1) (D60).

———(1951c) “Shanghai Cultural Bureau Report on the *Lianhuanhua* Selected for the *Lianhuanhua* Exhibition” (*Shanghaishi wenhua ju guanyu lianhuanhua zhanlan hui zuopin pingxuan de baogao* 上海文化局关于连环画展览会作品评选的报告). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-4-90-7) (D74).

———(1951d) “Shanghai Cultural Bureau Report on the Situation of *Lianhuanhua* in Shanghai (*Shanghaishi wenhua ju guanyu Shanghai lianhuanhua xianzhuang qingkuang de baogao* 上海市文化局关于上海连环画现状情况的报告). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-1-50-30) (D58).

———(1951e) “Application to Build a Comic Organisation” (*Lianhuanhua zuzhi* 上海市文化局关于连环画组织构及编配情形的报告). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B172-50-21) (D53).

———(1951f) “Shanghai Cultural Bureau *Lianhuanhua* Committee Record of the Second Meeting” (*Shanghai wenhua ju lianhuanhua gongzuo weiyuanhui di er ci kuai jihua Jilu*) Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-1-50-27) (D57).

———(1951g) “Attendance Numbers for the Shanghai *Lianhuanhua* Exhibition” (*Shanghaishi wenhua ju guanyu lianhuanhua zhanlan hui canguan renshu de tongli* 上海市文化局关于连环画展览会参观人数的统计). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-4-90-21) (D75).

———(1951h) “The Origins of *Lianhuanhuabao*” (*Lianhuanhuabao fa kan yuanqi* 上 ‘连环画报’发刊缘起). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-1-50-25) (D55).

———(1951i) “Shanghai Cultural Bureau Report on the Publishing of the *Lianhuanhua* Newspaper” (*Shanghaishi wenhua ju guanyu lianhuanhuabao chuban jihua* 上海市文化局关于连环画报出版计划). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-1-50-26) (D56).

———(1952) “Shanghai Cultural Bureau Special Summary Report on Shanghai Art Work and Three Years of *Lianhuanhua* Production” (*Shanghaishi wenhua ju guanyu Shanghai meishu gongzuo zhuanti baogao he san nian lai lianhuanhua chuangzuo, lianhuanhua gongzuo de zongjie* 上海市文化局关于上海美术工作专题报告和三年来连环画创作， 连环画工作的总结). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-1-74) (D59).

———(02/1953a) “Meeting Record Concerning the Illustration of Leaders and the Issues Regarding Bad *Lianhuanhua*” (*Shanghai renmin zhengfu wenhua ju guanyu chu li lingxiu yu youhai de lianhuanhua wenti zuotan hui de huiyi jilu* 上海人民政府文化局关于‘处理领袖’与有害的连环画问题座谈会的会议记录). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-4-246-1) (D77).

———(10/1953b) “Request That the 20 Students from the Comic Learning Programme Be Absorbed into the Cultural Office as Artists” (*Shanghaishi renmin zhengfu wenhua ju guanyu* *tongyi Shanghaishi renmin zhengfu wenhua ju xishou lianhuanhua xuexi ban jieye xueyuan ershi ming wenhuaguan gongzuo renyuan de fu han* 上海市人民政府文化局关于同意上海市人民政府文化局吸收连环画学习班结业学员二十名文化馆工作人员的复函). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B23-4-694-52) (D88).

———(05/1955a) “The Ministry of Culture and the Shanghai Cultural Bureau on Handling Reactionary, Obscene and Absurd *Lianhuanhua* and Related Issues” (*Wenhua bu, Shanghaishi wenhua ju guanyu chuli fandong yinhui huangdan tushu, lianhuanhua gongzuo zhong youguan wenti de qingshi pifu* 文化部，上海市文化局关于处理反动淫秽，荒诞图书，连环画工作中有关问题的请示批复). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-4-548) (D78).

———(10/1955b) “Shanghai Cultural Bureau *Lianhuanhua* Report” (*Shanghai wenhua ju lianhuanhua de baogao* 上海文化局连环画的报告). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B9-2-2-96) (D105).

———(01/1957a) “Shanghai Cultural Bureau Grant Relief Summary for National Painters and Comic Artists” (*Shanghaishi wenhua ju guanyu guohua, lianhuanhua gongzuo jinxing jiuli buzhu de gongzuo zongjie* 上海市文化局关于国画，连环画工作进行救济补助的工作总结). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-4-850-32) (D82).

———(03/1957b) “Additional Comments about the Organisation of the Comic Authors” (*Shanghai wenhua ju guanyu lianhuanhua zuozhe gongzuo anpai de buchong yijian* 上海文化局关于连环画作者工作安排的补充意见). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B9-2-87-9) (D108).

———(07/1957c) “Shanghai People’s Committee Agreement on Unemployment Relief for Comic Artists” (*Shanghai renmin weiyuanhui guanyu tongyi shiye lianhuanhua zuozhe jinxing jiuji de pifu* 上海人民委员会关于同意失业连环画作者进行救济的批复). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-4-850-52) (D83).

Shanghai Big Public Newspaper (*Shanghai dagong baoguan* 上海大公报馆). (1950) “*Living Buddha*” (*Huo pusa* 活菩萨). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B35-2-109-4) (D102).

Shanghai Literature and Art Department of Cultural Affairs (*Shanghai wenhua ju wenyi chu* 上海文化局文艺处). (1950) “Shanghai Literature and Art Department of Cultural Affairs Application for Money for the *Lianhuanhua* Vendors Association” (*Shanghai wenhua ju wenyi chu guanyu lianhuanhua chuzu zhe lianyi shenqing buzhu kuan han* 上海文化局文艺处关于连环画出租者联谊申请补助款函). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-4-37-1) (D68).

Shanghai Municipal People’s Committee of Culture and Education Office (*Shanghaishi renmin weiyuanhui wenjiao bangongshi* 上海市人民委员会文教办公室). (1965) “Office of the Shanghai Municipal People’s Committee for Culture and Education Report Concerning Censoring and Collecting the *Lianhuanhua* Held by the *Lianhuanhua* Vendors” (*Shanghaishi renmin weiyuanhui wenjiao bangongshi guanyu qingli shou huan zu shu tan lianhuanhua* *gongzuo de qingshi baogao ji zhonggong Shanghaishiwei de pifu* 上海市人民委员会文教办公室关于清理收换组书摊连环画工作的请示报告及中共上海市委的批复). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B3-2-182-1) (D93).

Shanghai Municipal People's Government Department of Cultural Affairs (*Shanghaishi renmin zhengfu wenhua ju*). (1953) "Report on Comic Worker Classes" (*Lianhuanhua gongzuo zhe xuexi ban de baogao* 连环画工作者学习班的报告). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-5-1106) (D86).

Shanghai Municipal People's Government Press and Publication Department (*Shanghaishi renmin zhengfuxinwenchubanchu* 上海市人民政府新闻出版处). (1950) "*Living Buddha*" (*Huo pusa* 活菩萨). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B35-2-109-2) (D101).

Shanghai Municipal People's Government, the Municipal Public Security Bureau, the Cultural Bureau (*Shanghaishi renmin zhengfu shi gong'an ju shi wenhua ju* 上海人民政府，市公安局，文化局). (1950) "Shanghai Municipal Government, the Municipal Public Security Bureau, the City's Department of Cultural Affairs on Preparations for the *Lianhuanhua* Renters Fellowship Association" (*Shanghaishi renmin zhengfu shi gong'an ju, shi wenhua ju, guanyu choubei lianhuanhua* 上海市连环画出版业联谊会协助处理旧连环画图画存稿存版实施办法于步骤). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-4-41) (D71).

Shanghai People's Committee Literature and Art Office (*Shanghaishi renmin weiyuanhui wenyi bangongshi* 上海市人民委员会文艺办公室). (1956) "Concerning Grant Relief Summary for National Painters and Comic Artists" (*Guanyu guohua, lianhuanhua zuozhe he tezhong shouyi gongren de jiuji buzhu fangan de pifu* 关于国画, 连环画作者和特种手工艺工人的救济补助方案的批复). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-4-850-17) (D81).

Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House Leadership Rectification Team (*Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe zhengfeng lingdao xiaozu* 上海人民美术出版社整风领导小组). (1961) "*Lianhuanhua* Creative Production Circular" (*Lianhuanhua chuangzuo shengchan de tongzhi* 连环画创作生产的通知). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-486-16) (D33).

Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House Rectification Leadership Group (*Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe zhengfeng lingdao xiaozu* 上海人民美术出版社整风领导小). (1961) "Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House Rectification Leadership Group Comic Book Report" (*Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe zhengfeng lingdao xiaozu lianhuanhua bagao* 上海人民美术出版社整风领导小组连环画报告). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-486-21) (D35).

Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House (*Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe* 上海人民美术出版社). (1955) "Printing Arrangements" (*Yinshua anpai* 印刷安排). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B167-1-76-51) (D8).

———(1957) “*Lianhuanhua* Report” (*Lianhuanhua baogao* 连环画报告). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B167-1-240-34) (D16).

———(03/1958a) “*The Triumphant Expedition to the South*” (*Nan zheng kai gui* 南征凯归). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B167-1-272-21) (D18).

———(03/1958b) “*Lianhuanhua Report*” (*Lianhuanhua baogao* 连环画报告). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-272-248) (D19).

———(04/1959a) “Incentives for *Lianhuanhua* Artists” (*Jili lianhuanhua yishujia* 激励连环画艺术家). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-331-31) (D20).

———(04/1959b) “*Shanghai Waves*” (*Shanghai de langhua* 上海的浪花). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-346-98) (D24).

———(06/1959c) “*Following Chairman Mao’s Long March*” (*Gensui Mao Zhuxi changzheng* 跟随毛主席长征). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-341-44) (D22).

———(06/1959d) “Stop Printing Thirty-Eight *Lianhuanhua*” (*Zeling tingzhi dayin sanba lianhuanhua* 责令停止打印三八连环画). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-346-113) (D27).

———(09/1959e) “*The Iron Oxen Tractor Driver*” (*Tie niu hao tuolaji shou* 铁牛号拖拉机手). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-346-101) (D25).

——— (11/1959f). “*Lianhuanhua Report*” (*Lianhuanhua baogao* 连环画报告). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-339-114) (D21).

———(12/1959g) “Report on the Content of *The Rumyantsev Case*” (*Lumianchaifu anjian de baogao neirong* 鲁勉柴夫案件的报告内容). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-346-118) (D28).

———(12/1959h) Jade River (*Yutang chun* 玉堂春). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-346-4) (D23).

———(12/1959i) “*The Mastermind Raids the Prison*” (*Zhiduoxing huxue qiao jieyu* 智多星虎穴巧劫狱). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-346-103) (D26).

——— (12/1960a) “*The Story of Chairman Mao*” (*Mao zhuxi de gushi* 毛主席的故事). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-394-57) (D29).

——— (12/1960b) “*Lianhuanhua* Report” (*Lianhuanhua baogao* 连环画报告）. Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-5-255-32) (D84).

———(1961) “Changes to the Creative Cadres Work Plan” (*Genggai chuangyi ganbu gongzuo jihua* 更改创意干部工作计划). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-486-2) (D31).

———(1962) “Report Concerning Adding Pinyin to the Comic Title Page” (*Lianhuanhua shu ming ye jia pinyin de baogao* 连环画书名页加拼音的报告). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-543-1) (D37).

———(01/1965a) “The Sixth *Lianhuanhua* Printing Plan” (*6 lianhuanhua yinshua jihua* 连环画印刷计划). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-729-166) (D38).

———(02/1965b) “*Lianhuanhua* Primary School Book Programme” (*Lianhuanhua xiaoxue tu shu jihua* 连环画小学图书计划). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-729-190) (D39).

Shanghai Press and Publication Department of Cultural Affairs (*Shanghaishi wenhua ju ji xinwen chuban chu* 上海市文化局暨新闻出版处) (1951) “Shanghai Cultural Bureau of Press and Publication Record of the First Meeting of the *Lianhuanhua* Committee” (*Shanghaishi wenhua ju ji xinwen chuban chu lianhuanhua gongzuo weiyuanhui di yi ci huiyi jilu* 上海市文化局暨新闻出版处连环画工作委员会第一次会议记录). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-1-50-20) (D52).

Shanghai Publishing Bureau (*Shanghaishi chuban ju* 上海出版局). (1958a) “*Blind Scouts* and *Ou Ou Meets President Mao*” (*Xiazi zhencha bing, ou ou jian daole mao zhuxi* 瞎子侦察兵, 藕藕见到了毛主席). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B167-1-272-10) (D17).

———(10/1958b) “Changes to the Artist Pay System” (*Genggai yishujia xinchou zhidu* 更改艺术家薪酬制度). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B-167-486-1) (D30).

———(07/1961a) “*Lianhuanhua* Creative Production Circular” (*Lianhuanhua chuangzuo shengchan de tongzhi* 连环画创作生产的通知). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-486-6) (D32).

———(09/1961b) “*Lianhuanhua* Creative Production Circular” (*Lianhuanhua chuangzuo shengchan de tongzhi* 连环画创作生产的通知). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (B167-1-486-19) (D34).

Shenbao (申報). (1933) “Ban the Selling of Art and Calligraphy with Sprits and Devils and Obscene Content” (*Jin shou shengguai yinhui shuhua* 禁售神怪淫秽书画). *Shenbao* (申報). 14th November. p. 9.

———(1938) “More Than a Thousand Refugees Fled from the Gulangyu Chaozhou-Shantou, Shantou City Defense Campaign” (*Qian yu namin taoli gulangyu chaozhou shantou, shantou shi juxing baowei chaoshan yundong* 千馀难民逃离鼓浪屿 潮州 汕头，汕头市举行保卫潮汕运动）. *Shenbao* (申報). 27th May. p. 3.

———(1944) “In Brief” (*Jianxun* 简讯). *Shenbao* (申報). 13th August. p. 2.

———(1946) “Municipal Bureau Program for the Placement of the Small Street Bookstalls” (*Shi jiao ju jihua shezhi daiti jietou xiao shu tan* 市教局计划设置代替街头小书摊). *Shenbao* (申報). 26th August. p. 6.

———(1947) “Shenyang Education Council Decides to Ban Absurd Content in Comics” (*Xiaorenshu neirong huangmiu shen jiao ju juexin chajin* 小人书内容荒谬渖教局决 心查). *Shenbao* (申報). 12th January. p. 6.
———(1948) “A Scarcity of Cultural Food” (*Wenhua shiliang qi que* 文化食粮奇缺). *Shenbao* (申報). 3rd November. p. 6.

Shen, Kuiyi. (1997) “Comics, Picture Books, and Cartoonists in Republican China.” *INKS: Cartoon and Comic Art Studies*. 4 (3). pp. 2–15.

———(2000) “Publishing Posters before the Cultural Revolution.” *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*. 12 (2). pp. 177–202.

———(2001) “*Lianhuanhua* and Manhua - Picture Books and Comics in Old Shanghai.” In Lent, John (ed.) *Illustrating Asia: Comics, Humour Magazines, and Picture Books.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. pp. 100–120.

Shen, Peng (沈鹏). (1963) “Efforts to Create a New Image of the Countryside - On a Few Comics Which Reflect Rural Life” (*Nuli chuangzao nongcun xinren de xingxiang-tan ji ben fanying nongcun shenghuo de lianhuanhua* 努力创造农村新人的形象——谈几本反映农村生活的连环画). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 23rd June.

Shi, Dawei (施大畏). (2010) *Lianhuanhua 1949-2009. Vol. 6. Shanghai Modern Fine Arts History Series* (*Shanghai xiandai meishu shi da xi 6 lianhuanhua juan 1949-2009* 上海现代美术史大系 6 连环画卷 1949-2009). Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Fine Arts Publishing House.

Shui, Tianhong (水天宏). (1957) *The Snail Shell Girl* (*Tianluo guniang* 田螺姑娘). Hubei: Changjiang Literature and Art Publishing House (*Hubei: changjiang wenyi chubanshe* 湖北：长江文艺出版社) Available From: www.28lu.com. http://www.28lu.com/se/081636429.html.

Strauss, Julia. (2006) “Morality, Coercion and State Building by Campaign in the Early PRC: Regime Consolidation and After, 1949–1956.” *The China Quarterly*. 188. pp. 891–912.

Sun, Bin. (2007) “Picture Story Books Regain Popularity in China.” *China & the World Cultural Exchange*. No. 10. pp. 18–21.

Tang, Xiaobing. (2015) *Visual Culture in Contemporary China: Paradigms and Shifts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, Jeremy. (nd) "Introductory Essay." In *Enemy of the People: Visual Depictions of Chiang Kai-shek*. Available from: http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/chiangkaishek/background/.

———(2015) "Cartoons and Collaboration in Wartime China: The Mobilization of Chinese Cartoonists under Japanese Occupation." *Modern China*. July. Vol. 41. No. 4. pp. 406-435.

Tian Ling (田零）. (1949) "Liu Xiuzhen's *Lianhuanhua*" (*Liu xiuzhen lianhuanhua* 李秀真连环画). *The People's Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 4th February.

Teiwes, Frederick C. (1987) "Establishment and Consolidation of the New Regime." In Farquhar, Roderick and Fairbank. John K (eds.) *The Cambridge History of China: The People's Republic, Part 1: The Emergence of Revolutionary China 1949-1965*. Vol 14. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 51–143

Vittinghoff, Natascha. (2002) "China's Generation X: Rusticated Red Guards in Controversial Contemporary Plays." In Chong, Woei Lien (ed.) *China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: Master Narratives and Post-Mao Counter-Narratives*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield. pp. 285–318.

Wang, Lianfu (王连弗). (1951) "*The Voice of Black America"* (*Meiguo heiren de husheng* 美国黑人的呼声). Shanghai: Spark Publishing (*Huohua chubanshe* 火花出版社).

Wang, Naizhuang (王乃壮). (1959) *The Story of Mozart* (*Mozhate de gushi* 莫扎特的故事). Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House (*Renmin Meishu Chubanshe* 人民美术出版). Available From: http://www.28lu.com/wg/073334487.html.

Wang, Zhuoyi. (2011) "From The Life of Wu Xun to the Career of Song Jingshi—Crisis and Adaptation of Private Studio Film-Making Legacy: 1951–1956." *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 5 (1). pp. 13–29.

Wan, Sheng (万 盛). (2012) "How to Draw Comic Strips (2): The Second Chapter on Comic Book Painting Preparation" (*Zenyang hua lianhuanhua (2): di er zhang: lianhuanhua huihua chuangzuo de qianqi zhunbei* 怎样画连环画(二)第二章 连环画绘画创作的前期准备). *Lianhuanhuabao (*连环画报*),* August. pp. 46–49.

Whyte, Martin King. (1991) "Establishment and Consolidation of the New Regime." In Farquhar, Roderick and Fairbank. John K (eds.) *The Cambridge History of China: The People's Republic, Part 2: Revolutions within the Chinese Revolution 1966-1982*. Vol 15. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 682–742.

Wu, Shaofang (武少芳). (1951) "Criticism of a Comic Book" (*Dui yi ben lianhuanhua de piping* 对一本连环画的批评). *The People's Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报). 5th September.

Wu, Wenhuan (吴文焕). (1966) "Wu Wenhuan on Publishing the People's War Comics" (*Wu wenhuan guanyu chuban renmin zhansheng lianhuanhua xuanti qingkuang de baoga*o 吴文焕关于出版人民战争连环画选题情况的报告). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive B167-1-773-34 (D40).

Xian, Zhi (羡智）. (1957) “Try to Overcome the Issue of Comic Books Published in Duplication” (*Kefu lianhuanhua ce xuan ti chuban shang de chongfu xianxiang* 克服連环画册选题、出版上的重复現象）. *Meishu* (美术). 2nd March.

Xiao, De (小的). (1944) “*Xiaorenshu*” (小人书). *Three Six Nine Pictorial* (*San liu jiu huabao* 三六九画报).

Xiao, Lin (萧林). (1960) “*Dong Quanrong*” (董全蓉). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报), 31st July.

Xinhua Bookstore Shanghai Branch (*Xinhua Shudian, Shanghai Fendian* 新华书店上海分). (1955) “Temporary Regulations for *Lianhuanhua* Vendors” (*Zan Xing Guiding De Lianhuanhua Gong Ying Shang* 暂行规定的连环画供应商). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B167-1-80-182) (D9).

Gu, Bingxin (顾柄鑫). (1965) *How to Draw Lianhuanhua* (*Zenme hua lianhuanhua* 怎么画连环画). Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Fine Arts Publishing House.

Xu, Xu. (2011) “Chairman Mao’s Child: Sparkling Red Star and the Construction of Children in the Chinese Cultural Revolution.” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly.* 36 (4). pp. 381–409.

Yang, Lan. (2002) “The Ideal Socialist Hero: Literary Conventions in Cultural Revolution Novels.” In Chong, Woei Lien (ed.) *China’s Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: Master Narratives and Post-Mao Counter-Narratives.* Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield. pp. 185–211.

Yang, Qiushi (杨秋实). (1951) “A Good Way to Promote the Comic Books” (*Tuiguang lianhuanhua de hao banfa* 推广连环画的好办法). *The People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日报)), 4th March.

Yeh, Wen-Hsin. (1997) “Shanghai Modernity: Commerce and Culture in a Republican City.” *The China Quarterly*. 150 (June). pp. 375–394.

———(2011) “Beyond the Frame: The Camera in Republican Shanghai and Wartime Chongqing.” In Cody, Jeffrey and Terpak, Frances (eds.) *Brush and Shutter: Early Photography in China*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. pp. 111–119.

Yu (瑜). (1936) “Gardener Words: Don’t Allow Superstitious Comics” (*Yuanding dehua: buke mixin xiaorenshu* 园丁的话:不可迷信小人书). *Family Weekly (Jiating zhoukan* 家庭周刊).

Zaniello, Thomas A. (1978) “Flowers in Full Bloom: The Variety of Chinese Children’s Literature.” *Children’s Literature*. 7 (1). pp. 181–190.

Zhang, Mingcao (张明曹). (1955) *The Merchant of Venice* (*Weinisi shangren* 威尼斯商人). Beijing: New Fine Arts Publishing House (*Xin meishu chubanshe* 新美术出版社). Available from: www.28lu.com. http://www.28lu.com/wg/154214470.html.

Zhang, Gongzhe (张公者). (2012) "Interview with He Youzhi" (*He youzhi fangtan* 贺友直访谈). *Painting and Calligraphy* (*Shuhua yishu* 书画艺术). pp. 14–17.

Zhang, Shaoqian. (2014) "Combat and Collaboration: The Clash of Propaganda Prints between the Chinese Guomindang and the Japanese Empire in the 1930s-40s." *Transcultural Studies* (1). pp. 95–133.

Zhang, Shu (张舒研). (2012) "On the Comic Artistic Portrayal of 'Journey to the West'" (*Tan lianhuanhua huajia dui xiyou ji yishu xingxiang suzao de juda gongxian* 谈连环画画家对《西游记》艺术形象塑造的巨大贡献). *Happy Reading* (*Kuaile yuedu* 快乐阅读). No. 30. pp. 118–119.

Zhang, Ying (张颖). (2012) "The Painting Techniques of Comic Book Master Mr. Liu Hanzong" (*Lianhuanhua dashi liu hanzong xian sheng de zuopin yu huihua Jiqiao* 连环画大师刘汉宗先生的作品与绘画技巧). *Youth Writers* (*Qingnian wenxue jia* 青年文学家). No. 16. pp. 112.

Zhao, Fengchuan (赵枫川). (1952) "A Brief History of the Chinese Communist Party" (*Zhongguo gong chan dang jian shi lianhuanhua* 中国共产党简史连环画). North China People's Publishing House (*Huabei renmin chubanshe* 华北人民出版社). Available from: Stanford: Harvard-Yenching Collection » 4292.26 4842.

Zhao, Hongben (赵宏本). (1955) "Zhao Hongben Talks about the Situation of *Lianhuanhua* Writers and Requests Assistance" (*Zhao hongben tongzhi tan shehui lianhuanhua zuozhe de anpai wenti* 赵宏本同志谈社会连环画作者的安排问题). Available from: Shanghai Municipal Archive (Reference: B172-4-850-1) (D79).

Zhao, Hongben (赵宏本) and Youzhi, He (贺友直). (1965) *The Lights of Yan'an* (*Yan'an de denghuo* 延安的灯火). Shanghai: Little Children's Publishing House (*Shao nian ertong chubanshe* 少年儿童出版社). Available from: http://www.28lu.com/se/172544113.html.

Zhong, Hua (钟华). (2011) "Great Art in a Small Space: Hua Sanchuan's Work *The White-Haired Girl*" (*Xiao kongjian da yishu: hua sanchuan de lianhuanhua bai mao nü zuopin jiedu* 小空间 大艺术——华三川的连环画《白毛女》作品解读). *Grand Art Review (Meishu* Daguan 美术大观). December. pp. 44–45.

Zhong, Xueping. (1999) "'Long Live Youth' and the Ironies of Youth and Gender in Chinese Films of the 1950s and 1960s." *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 11 (2). pp. 150–185.

Zong, Jingfeng (宗静风) and Chen, Huiguan (宗静风). (1958) *The Nation of Women* (*Nü'er guo* 女儿国). Shanghai: Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House (*Shanghai renmin* *meishu chubanshe* 上海人民美术出版社). Available from: http://www.28lu.com/se/161531497.html.

Appendix

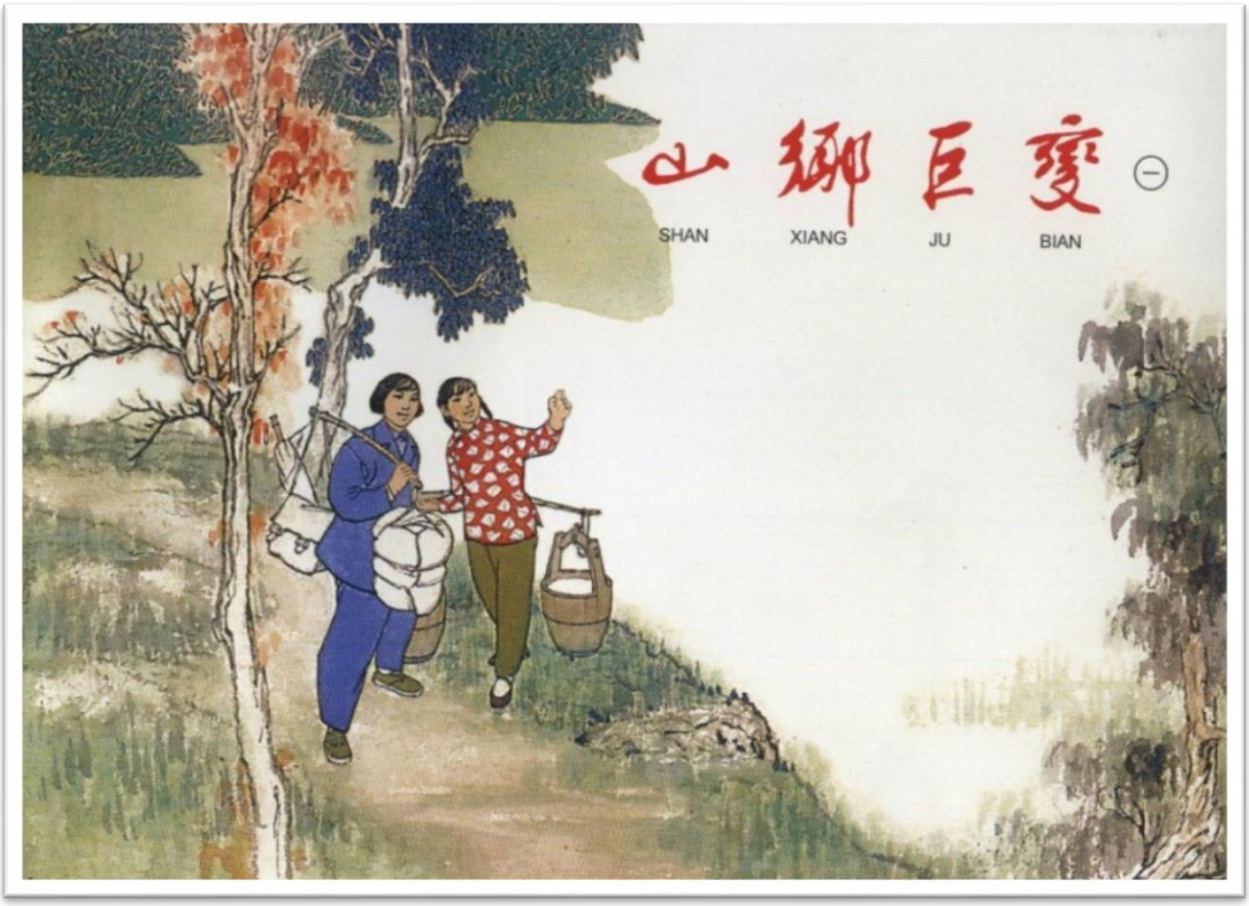

山鄉巨變 ㊀
SHAN
XIANG
JU
BIAN

Figure 1: He Youzhi. (1961). *Great Changes on the Mountain Part 1*, Cover Page.

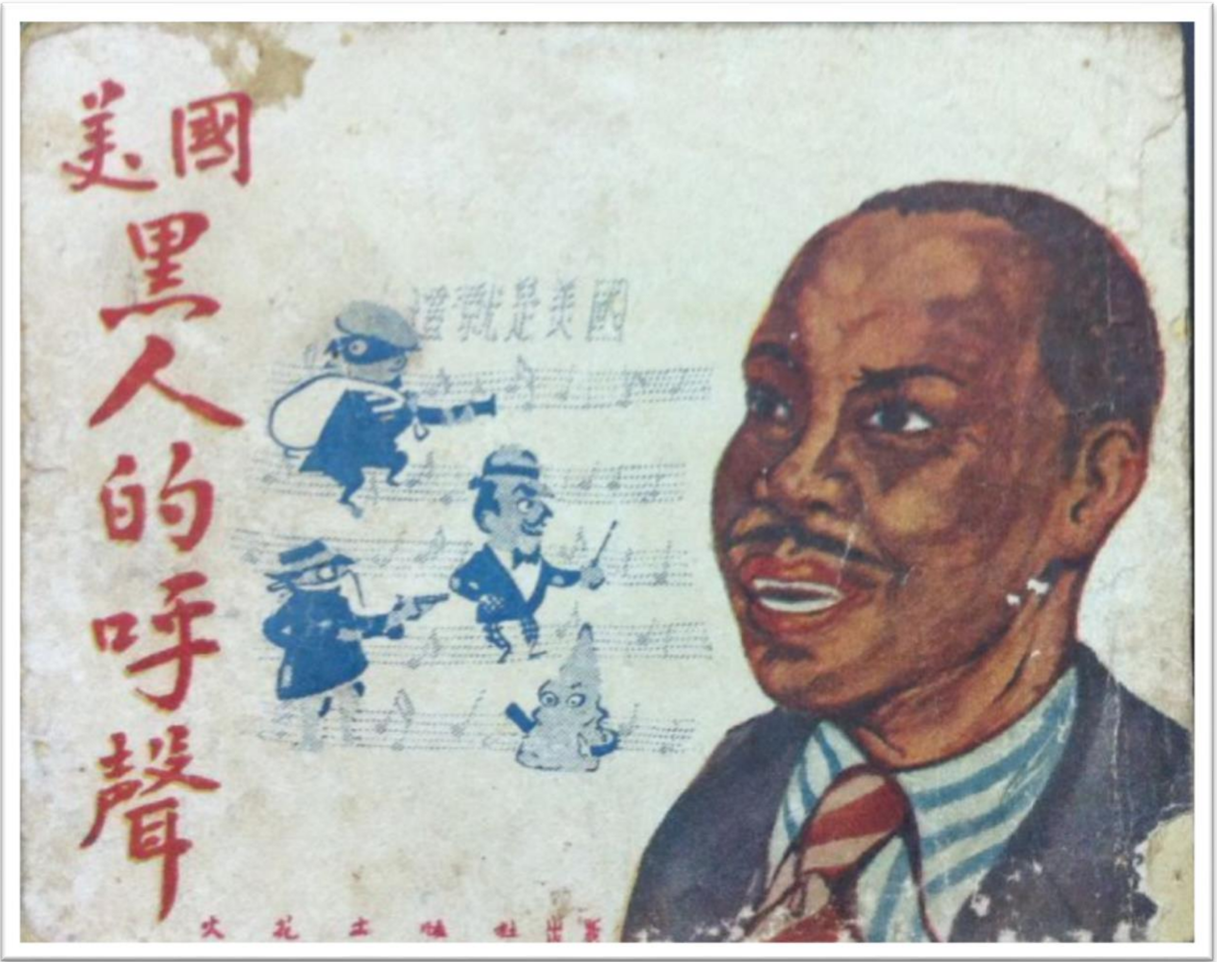
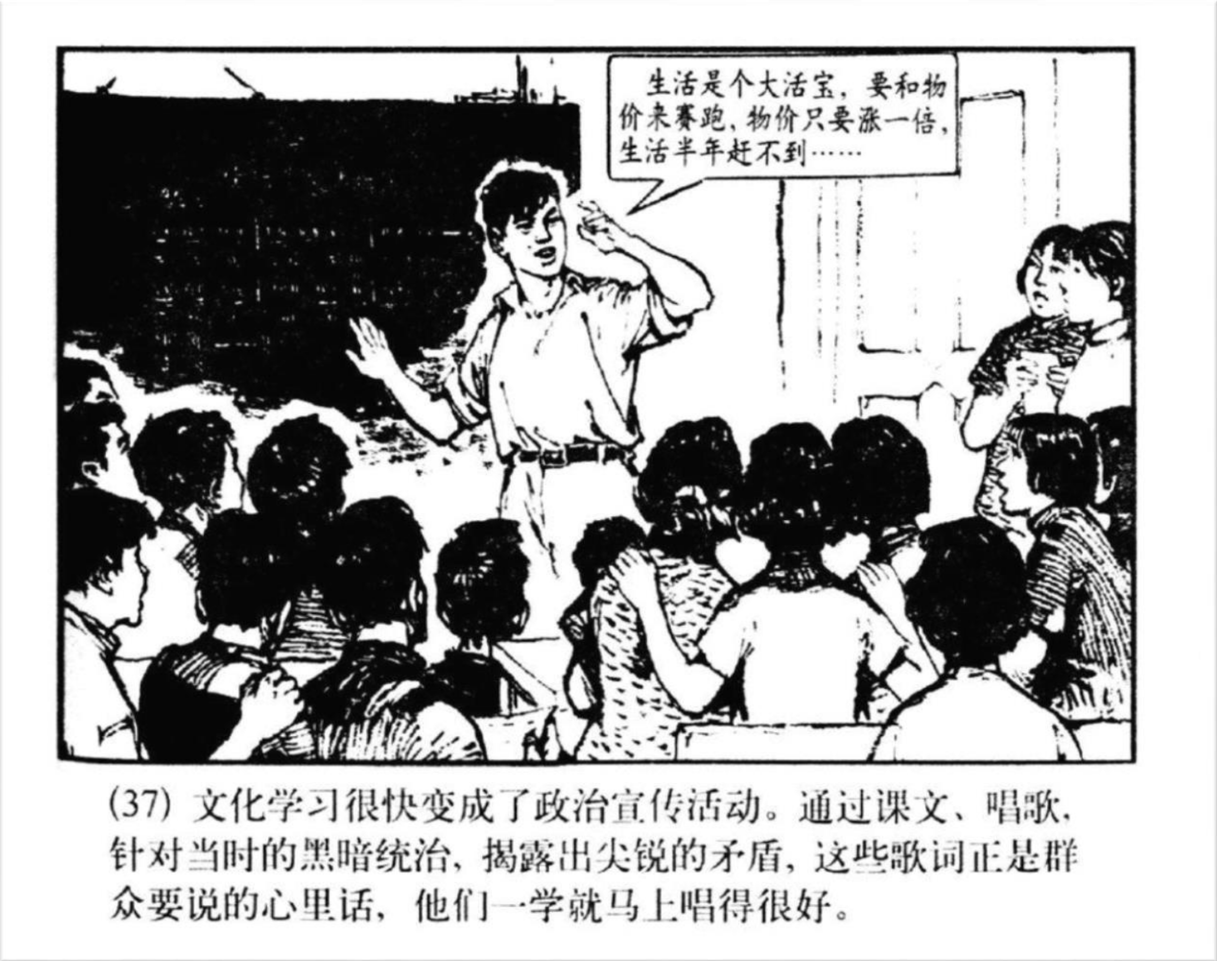
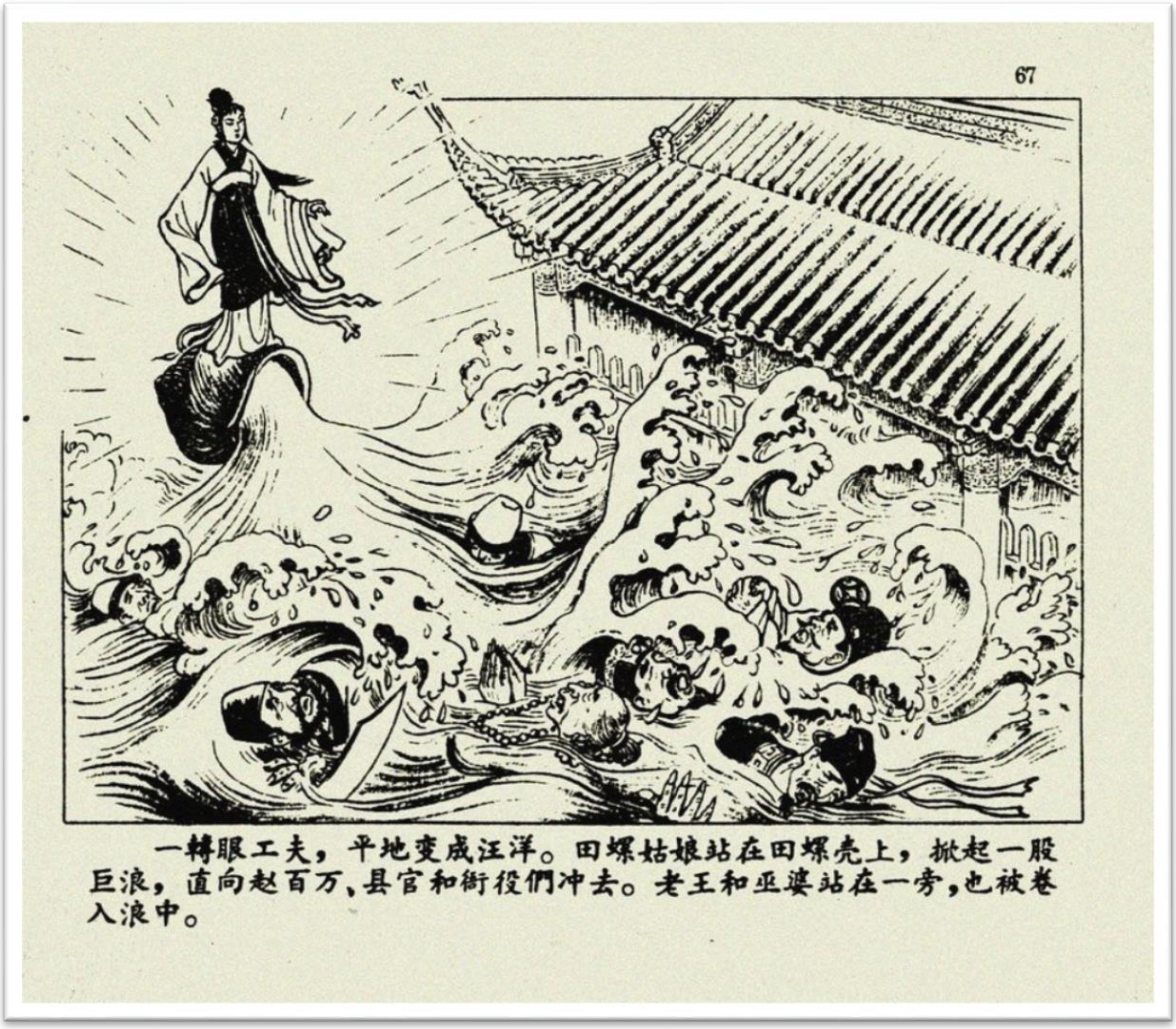

美國黑人的呼聲
這就是美國

Figure 2: Wang, Lianfu. (1951). *The Voice of Black America*, Cover Page.


生活是个大活宝，要和物价来赛跑、物价只要涨一倍，生活半年赶不到……

(37) 文化学习很快变成了政治宣传活动。通过课文、唱歌，针对当时的黑暗统治，揭露出尖锐的矛盾，这些歌词正是群众要说的心里话，他们一学就马上唱得很好。

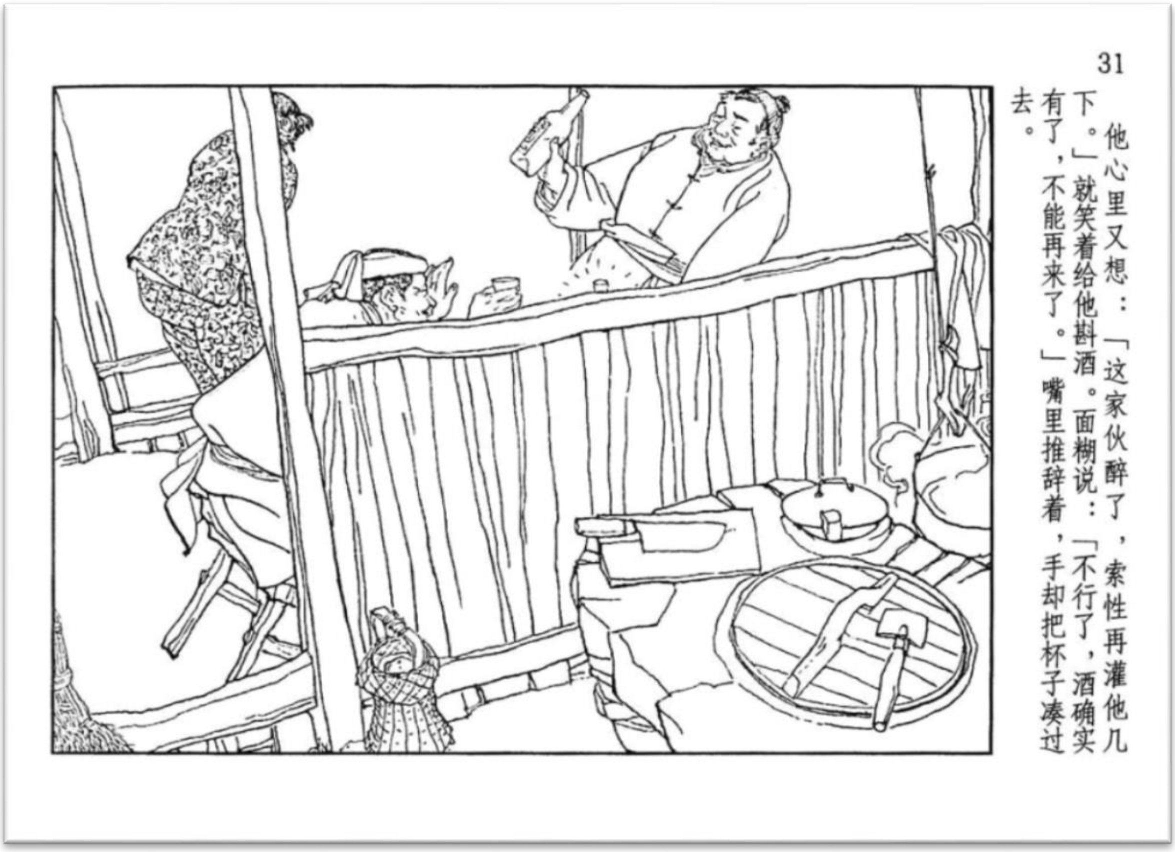
Figure 3: He, Youzhi. (1960). *An Immortal Life,* pg. 37.



67

一轉眼工夫，平地变成汪洋。田螺姑娘站在田螺壳上，掀起一股巨浪，直向赵百万、县官和衙役們冲去。老王和巫婆站在一旁，也被卷入浪中。

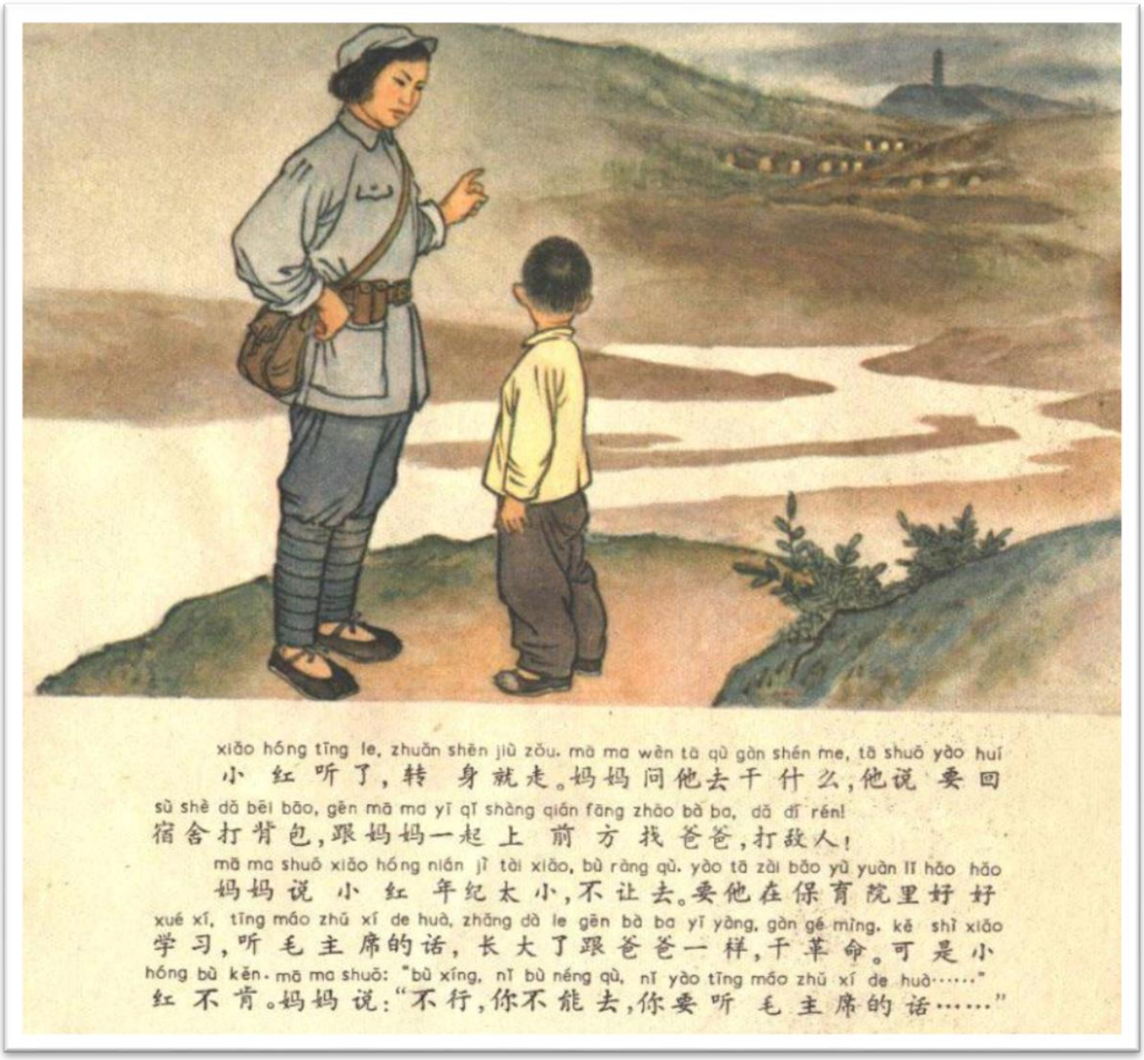
Figure 4: Shui, Tianhong. (1957). *The Snail Shell Girl*, pg. 67.



31

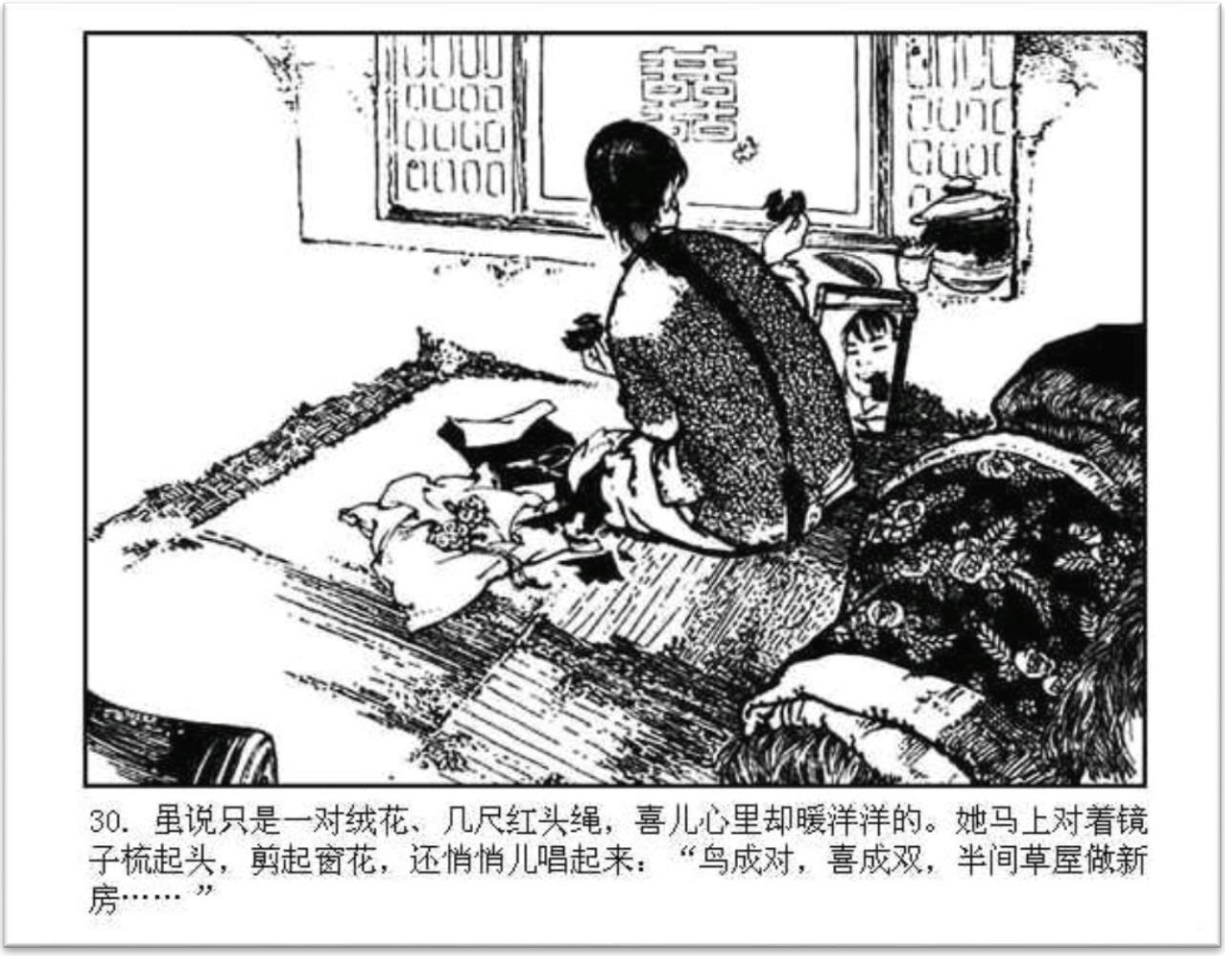
他心里又想：「这家伙醉了，索性再灌他几下。」就笑着给他斟酒。面糊说：「不行了，酒确实有了，不能再来了。」嘴里推辞着，手却把杯子凑过去。

Figure 5: He Youzhi. (1965). *Great Changes on the Mountain Part 3*, pg. 31.



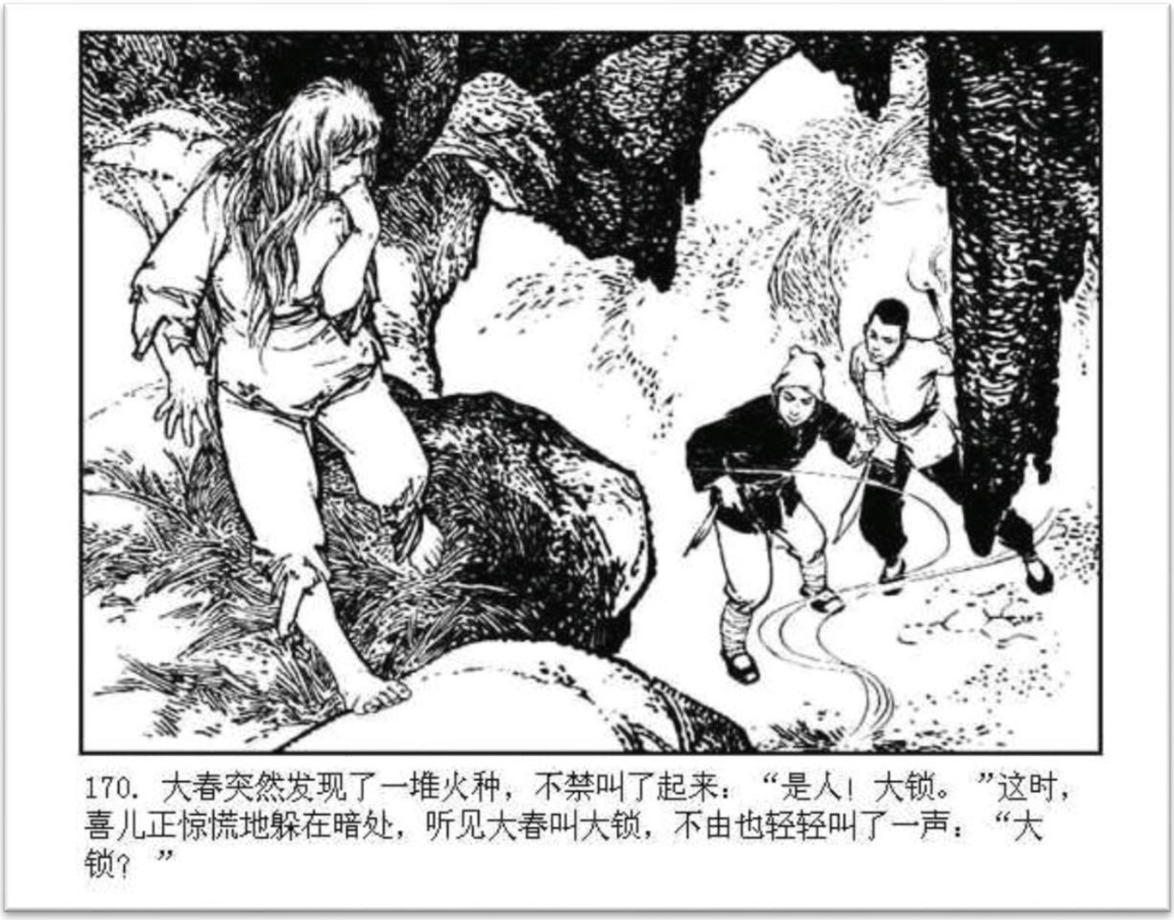
xiǎo hóng tīng le, zhuǎn shēn jiù zǒu. mā ma wèn tā qù gàn shén me, tā shuō yào huí
小 红 听了，转 身就走。妈妈问他去干什么，他说 要回
sù shè dǎ bēi bāo, gēn mā ma yī qǐ shàng qián fāng zhǎo bà ba, dǎ dí rén!
宿舍打背包，跟妈妈一起上 前 方 找 爸爸，打敌人！
mā ma shuō xiǎo hóng nián jì tài xiǎo, bù ràng qù. yào tā zài bǎo yù yuàn lǐ hǎo hǎo
妈妈说 小 红 年纪太小，不让去。要他在保育院里好好
xué xí, tīng máo zhǔ xí de huà, zhǎng dà le gēn bà ba yī yàng, gàn gé mìng. kě shì xiǎo
学习，听毛主席的话，长大了跟爸爸一样，干革命。可是小
hóng bù kěn. mā ma shuō: "bù xíng, nǐ bù néng qù, nǐ yào tīng máo zhǔ xí de huà……"
红不肯。妈妈说："不行，你不能去，你要听毛主席的话……"

Figure 6: Zhao, Hongben and He, Youzhi. (1965). *The Lights of Yan'an*.



30. 虽说只是一对绒花、几尺红头绳，喜儿心里却暖洋洋的。她马上对着镜子梳起头，剪起窗花，还悄悄儿唱起来：“鸟成对，喜成双，半间草屋做新房……”

Figure 7: Hua, Sanchuan. (1965). *The White Haired Girl*, pg. 30.



170. 大春突然发现了一堆火种，不禁叫了起来：“是人！大锁。”这时，喜儿正惊慌地躲在暗处，听见大春叫大锁，不由也轻轻叫了一声：“大锁？”

Figure 8: Hua Sanchuan. (1965). *The White Haired Girl*, pg. 170.

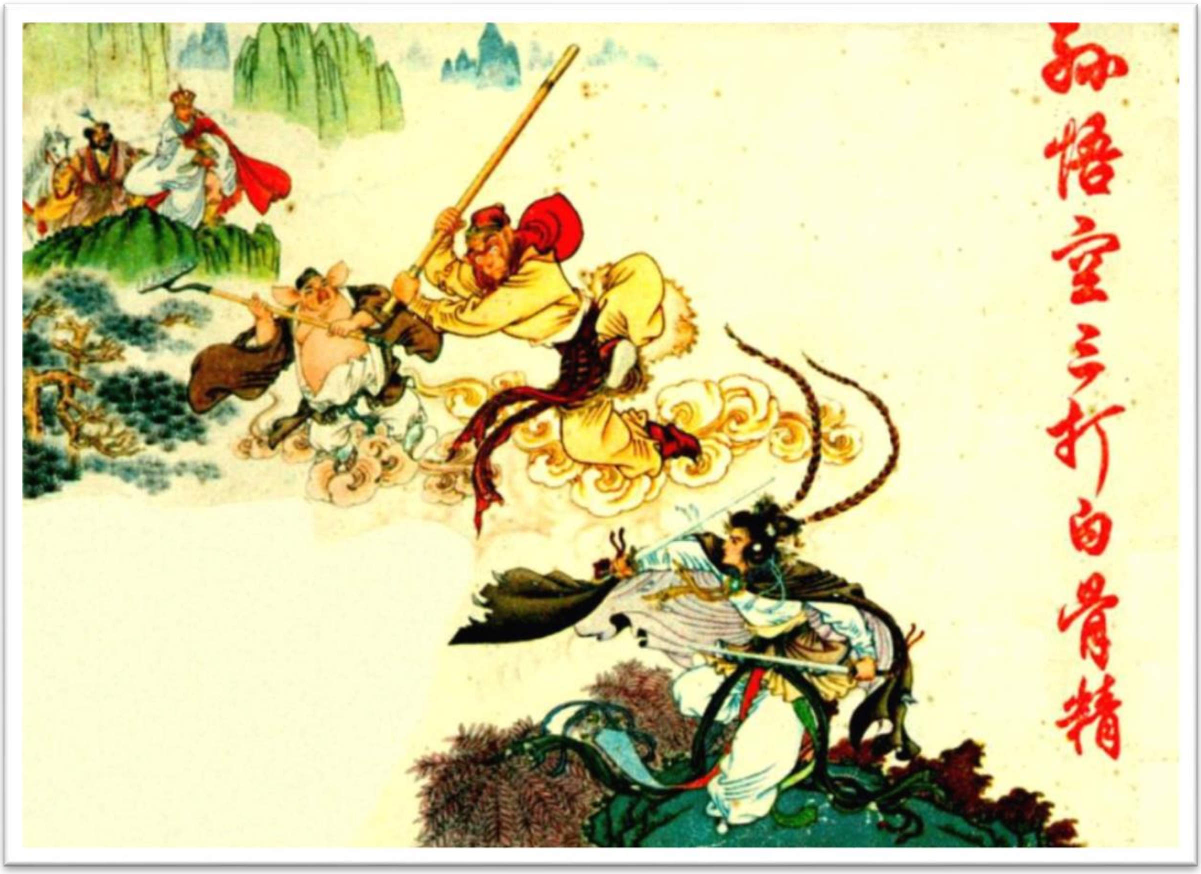
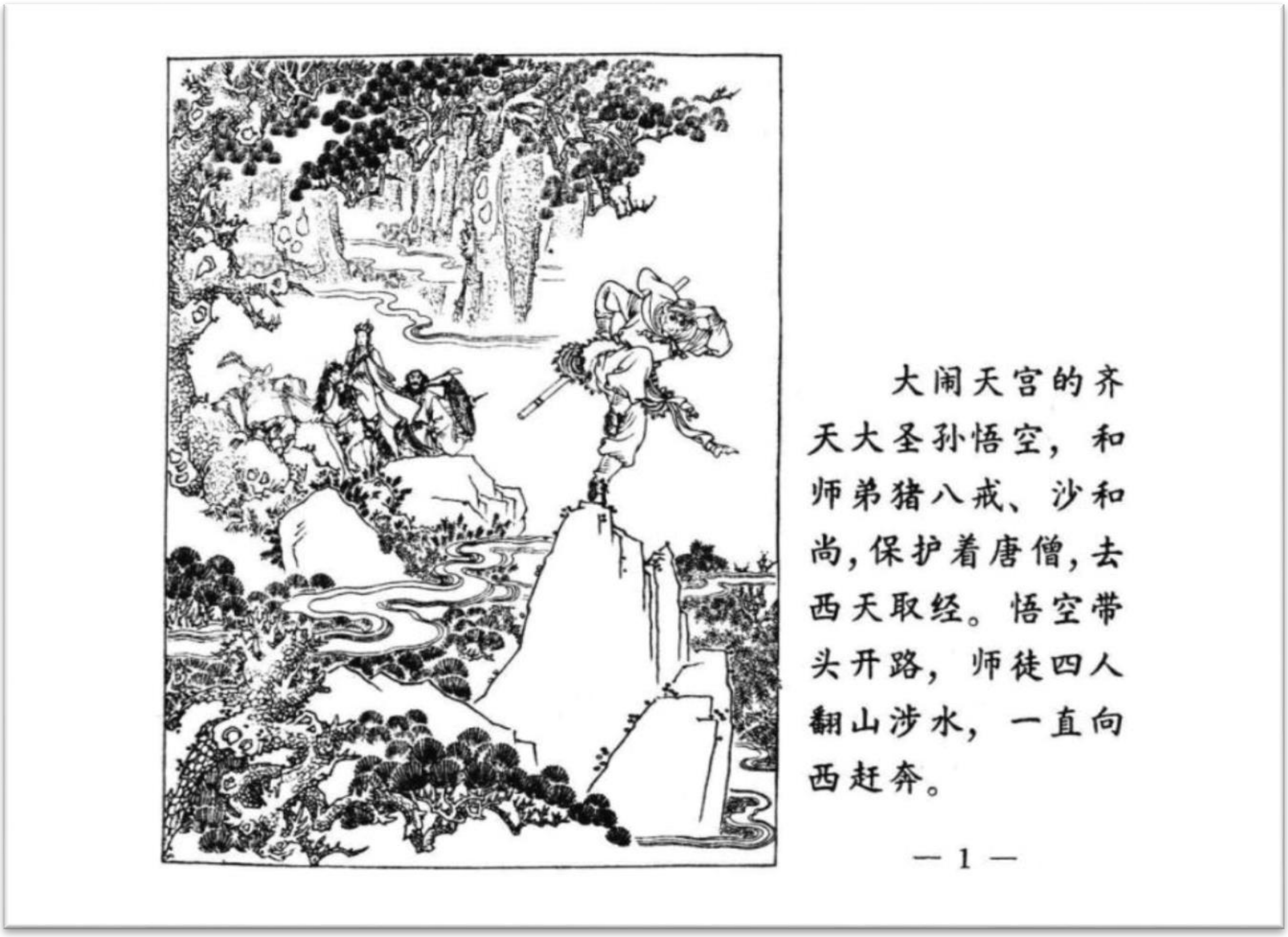


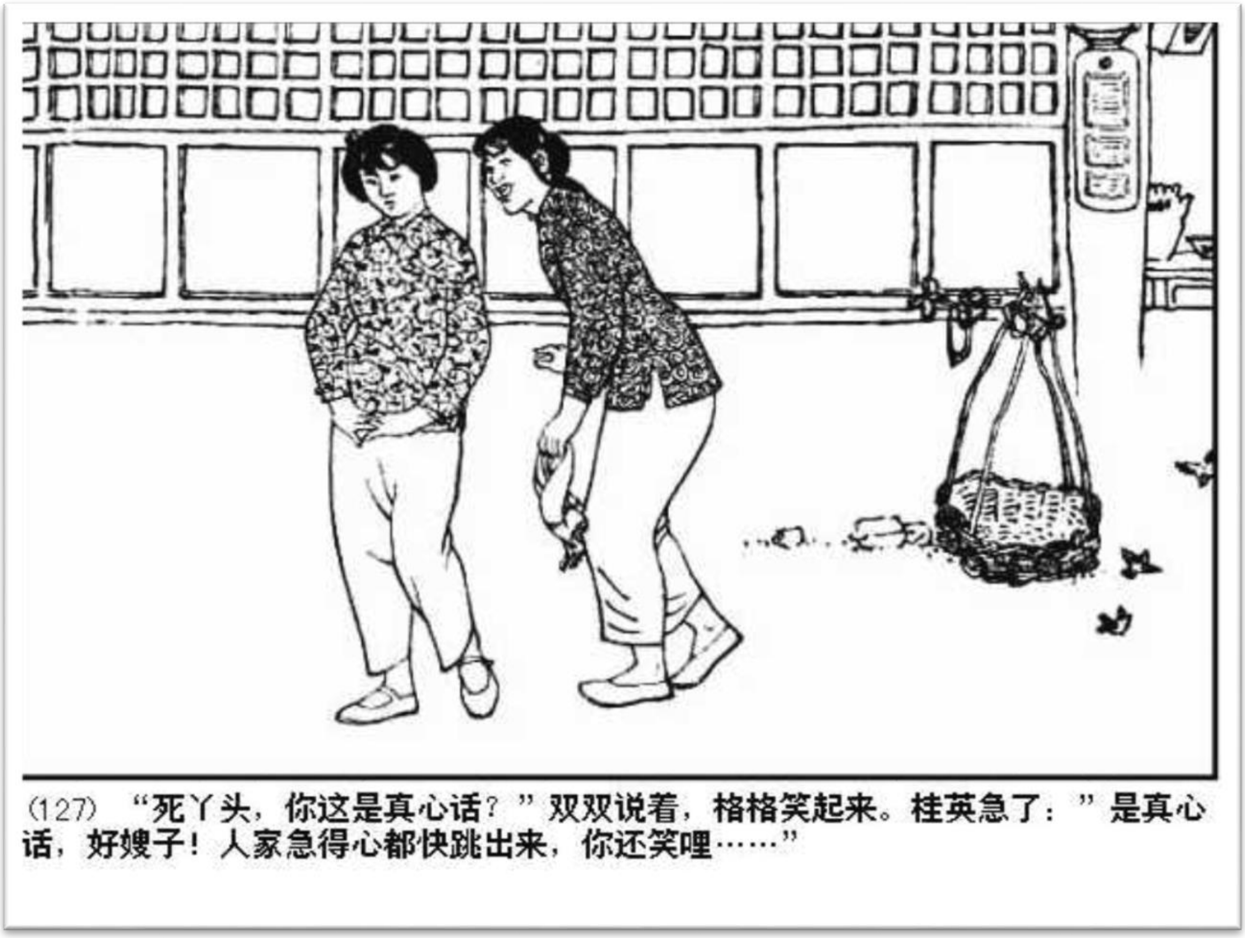
Figure 9: Zhao Hongben. (1962). *Monkey Thrice Beats the White Boned Demon*, Cover Page.



大闹天宫的齐天大圣孙悟空，和师弟猪八戒、沙和尚，保护着唐僧，去西天取经。悟空带头开路，师徒四人翻山涉水，一直向西赶奔。

— 1 —

Figure 10: Zhao Hongben. (1962). *Monkey Thrice Beats the White Boned Demon*, pg 1.



(127) “死丫头，你这是真心话？”双双说着，格格笑起来。桂英急了：”是真心话，好嫂子！人家急得心都快跳出来，你还笑哩……”

Figure 11: He, Youzhi. (1964). *Li Shuangshuang*, pg 127.

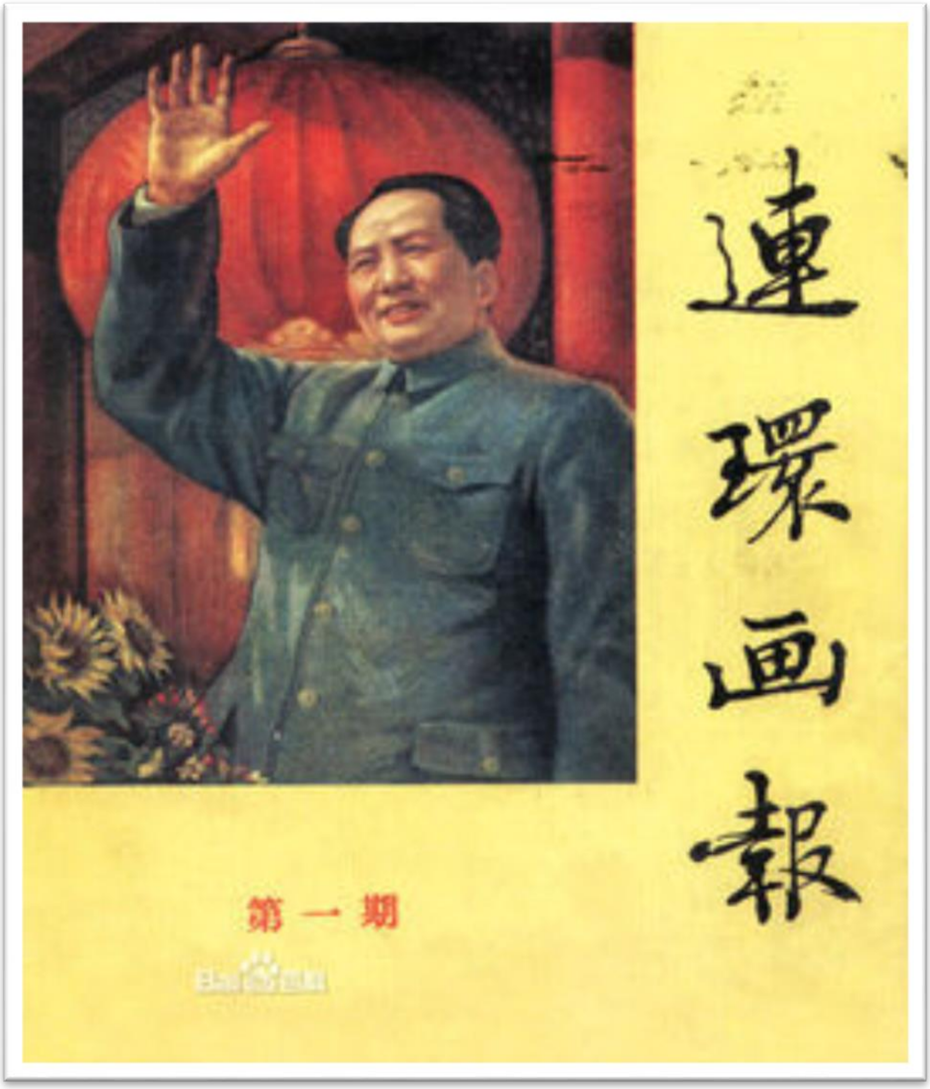
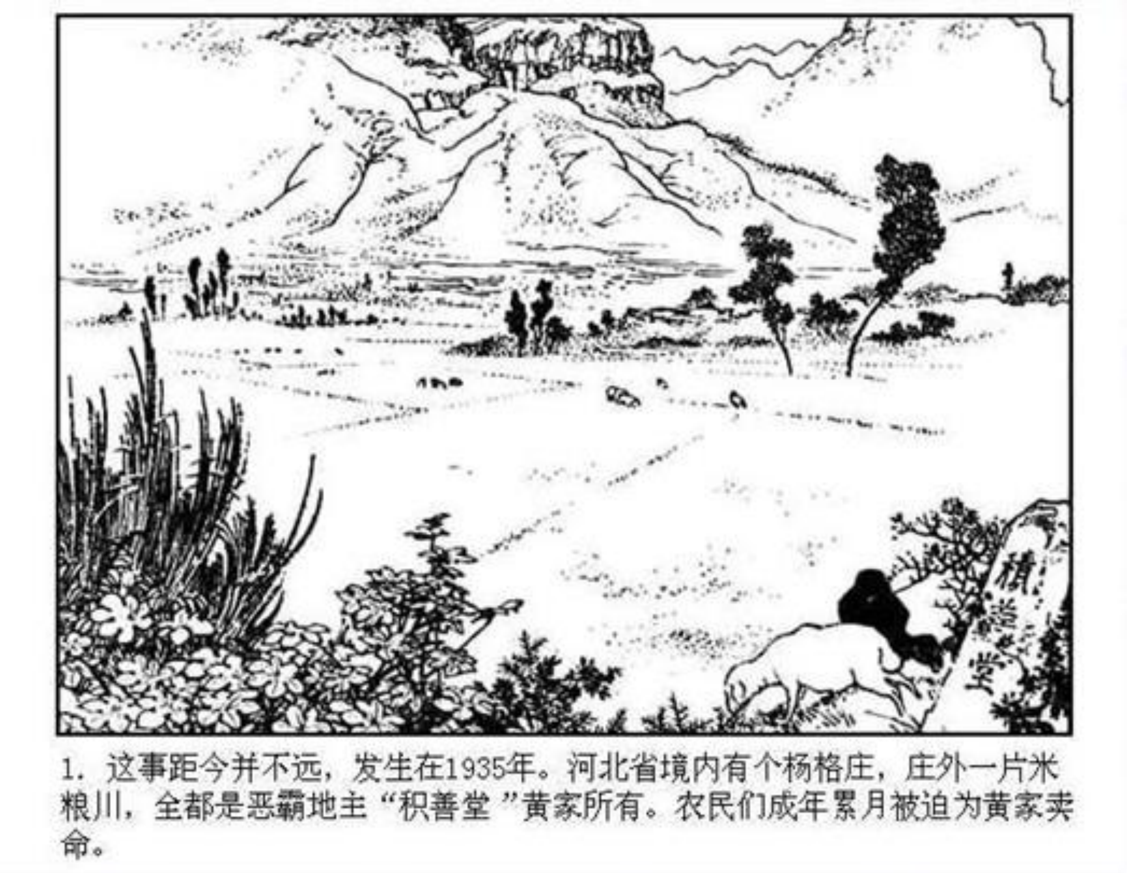


Figure 12: *Lianhuanhuabao*. (1951). May. 1, Cover Page.

Figure 12: Hua Sanchuan. (1965). *The White Haired Girl*, pg. 1.



1. 这事距今并不远，发生在1935年。河北省境内有个杨格庄，庄外一片米粮川，全都是恶霸地主“积善堂”黄家所有。农民们成年累月被迫为黄家卖命。