Abstract

The writing career of Ding Ling (1904-1986) can be generally classified into three phases, each characterized by literary works of different writing styles and themes. Early works of Ding Ling portrayed an intense exploration of female subjectivism, with "The Diary of Miss Sophie" being the most representative of all. This was in stark contrast to the revolutionary literature which she wrote since 1931, and especially so after she began writing from Yanan from the 1940s onwards. However, this radical change was not unprecedented. In fact, during the years from 1929 to 1930, Ding Ling's fiction went through a transitional stage. Three of her fictional works completed during this period - "Wei Hu" and "Shanghai, Spring 1930" (I and II) were often deemed to have been modeled after the "revolution plus love formula", which was essentially a hallmark of the revolutionary literature during the late 1920s in China.

The intent of this thesis is to examine the male characters in Ding Ling's "revolution plus love" stories, and to explore how they represent Ding Ling "negotiating a passage from love to revolution". Besides a close analysis of the three novels, the discussion also draws references to
literary trends and political situations in China during the late 1920s to early 1930s, as well as people and events central to Ding Ling's life. It is argued that the use of male characters as self-representation showed Ding Ling's transition during her attempt to move into the revolutionary world, and to transform herself into a revolutionary writer. The use of male characters also illustrates the fact that Ding Ling had realized the dichotomy between revolution and the female characters which have characterized her early works. This, to a large extent, has to do with the relationship between urban Shanghai and the modern girl, as well as the literary trends as advocated by the League of Leftist Writers and the Chinese Communist Party.