

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **CONCLUSION**

Having analysed the novel, I am of the opinion that the novel is unique, as it is one of the first novels published in China that portrays the author's generation of women, born in the 1970s and seeking to manage the constant tensions between traditional values and more liberal Western influences. The novel is provoking as it is filled with social issues that have long been taboo in China, including female sexual adventures. As a result, this novel was banned in China due to pornography, and that it may give a bad influence to the Chinese young generation.

In the novel, Coco as the protagonist is interestingly portrayed as a talented writer who manages to publish her first book that later brings fame and attention to her life. Yet, Coco is not easily satisfied by the success. According to her, traditional Chinese writing is boring, thus she wants to create a new kind of writing. Unfortunately, for this quality, Coco is considered to be rebellious. Coco is also portrayed rebellious in terms of romantic relationship, as she is involved

in a love triangle between Tian Tian, her Chinese boyfriend and Mark, her German lover. As a result, Coco is deemed to have a bad girl image due to her life style and her determination to break free from Chinese literary tradition.

In addition, Coco is portrayed as a revolutionary and business-minded woman. Coco is revolutionary since instead of presenting herself as an intellectual writer, Coco presents herself as a fashionable writer who would attract the readers' attention, especially those of male readers. In relation to her image, Coco turns the act of writing into a business in which she writes a novel using a formula that would appeal and sell to the readers. Again, Coco puts herself in a position where she is considered to be rebellious since her writing formula is not in agreement to Chinese literary tradition.

What is most interesting in the portrayal of Coco as the protagonist concerns her relationship with two men, Tian Tian, the Chinese boyfriend and Mark, the German lover, as the relationship shows the dynamics between the East and the West. Coco fetishizes on the German whereas the Chinese is considered to be impotent and unable to satisfy Coco's sexual needs. Moreover, not only that Coco fetishizes on the Western man, she also fetishizes on Western products that includes fashion and music. This fetishization then leads to Coco's confusion as in the end of the novel, Coco asks the question "Who am I?" These last words of the novel signify Coco's search for identity amid the excitements of postcolonial Shanghai.

The controversy created by Shanghai Baby is because Coco, the protagonist of the novel is portrayed as an attractive free-spirited woman author, who is also ambitious and adventurous in terms of exploring her sexuality. Coco

treats sexual activities as parts of life which must be enjoyed fully and leisurely because they provide fulfillment for human emotional needs, which is in opposition to the traditional belief that sexuality should be treated personally and secretly and it is indecent to talk about it openly. Thus, despite the controversy raised by the description of sexuality, this novel conveys a new spirit of openness and rebellion.

The controversy is actually symptomatic of some more profound changes in Chinese literature, culture and society. Similar to Wei Hui, the author of the partly-autobiographical novel, *Coco* as the protagonist in Shanghai Baby, represents a new wave of female writers in China that also signals the changing role of the writer in Chinese society. The writer is no longer portrayed as an intellectual, but the writer writes with her body, writes about her body and is self-styled and self-advertised. Exposing the body, the body's private parts, private sensations, and private thoughts constitutes the substance of the literary works of these women. By posing to be sexual, young, beautiful, amoral, and rebellious, both *Coco* and Wei Hui aspire to create a media reaction and become celebrities.

In the hands of *Coco* and Wei Hui, the figure of the writer has been transformed from intellectuals to celebrities in the era of globalization. Moreover, in particular Shanghai Baby signals a shift from national literature to globalization. In this work, the writer has broken free from Chinese literary tradition that puts emphasis on history. Chinese history matters less, and what matters more in the novel is the instantaneous feeling of a shopper, consumer and lovers in the metropolis. Instead of having a historical depth, Shanghai Baby is full of descriptions of materialism and superficiality. In conclusion, *Coco* and

Wei Hui represent young women, particularly aspiring young women writers in contemporary Shanghai, who have made a large impact to those who are eager to escape from the traditional form of literature.