

Becoming a Femme Fatale or Revealing Female Frailty: *Ta-Chun Chang's My Kid Sister*

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Abstract

Ta-Chun Chang's *My Kid Sister*, set in the 1980s and 1990s in Taiwan, is the narrator's depiction of his interaction with his kid sister, who is 10 years junior to him. Through this depiction, the narrator attempts to understand the kid sister as a kin, a teenager and a woman. Yang Zhao in the epilogue to *My Kid Sister* (1993) mentions that Chang adopts the tone and style similar to those of *The Confessions of Saint Augustine* and of Rousseau's *Confessions* in his exploring the patriarchal oppression of women in Taiwanese and Chinese society. While Chang seeks a revolutionary way to narrate a story about a Taiwanese teenage girl, the presentation of the female protagonist, the narrator's kid sister, becomes fragmentary partly due to the 10-year age gap between her and the narrator and partly because of the inadequacy of accommodating the teenage girl and assimilating her into the mainstream, male-dominant society. The narrator's kid sister embodies the alternative probability of being an adolescent in the 1990s of Taiwan, of being a teenage girl when the nuclear, bourgeois family goes awry. The kid sister remains marginalized, revealing female frailty while becoming a femme fatale. While her marginalization undermines the patriarchy, it also silences her at the expense of a holistic representation of her self.

Keyword: a femme fatale, female frailty, patriarchy, adolescence, the 1990s in Taiwan