

Modern China

<http://mcx.sagepub.com>

Politics, Critical Paradigms: Reflections on Modern Chinese Literature Studies

Liu Kang

Modern China 1993; 19; 13

DOI: 10.1177/009770049301900103

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://mcx.sagepub.com>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

Additional services and information for *Modern China* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://mcx.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://mcx.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations <http://mcx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/19/1/13>

Politics, Critical Paradigms

Reflections on Modern Chinese Literature Studies

LIU KANG

Pennsylvania State University

Two major tendencies have arisen in the current debate about postmodernist culture and cultural studies: one is to historicize radically topics in the humanities, including language, culture, literature, and the arts; the other, to turn critical inquiry on itself, questioning and critiquing its own paradigms, premises, and basic assumptions. In the realm of modern Chinese literature studies, historicist impulses have been very strong both inside and outside of China. But until very recently, modern Chinese literature studies in the West have been little affected by the contemporary theoretical debates about literary criticism itself. Although articles that appropriate contemporary theories to analyze modern Chinese literary texts have recently appeared in scholarly journals or in anthologies, theoretical self-assessment still seems rare.

It is true that modern Chinese studies in the West have only very recently been recognized as an independent field, after decades of hard battle with the academic sinological hegemony dominated by classicists, historians, and sociologists. But the context under which this field came into being in the West has changed over the years. One central change is that scholarship in the field is no longer a monologue among a handful of Western China experts or students. Scholars now

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *An earlier version of this article was presented at the Conference on Politics and Ideology in Modern Chinese Literature, Duke University, October 24, 1990. My thanks to Arif Dirlik, Caroline Eckhardt, Richard Gunde, Carol Hamrin, Jia Hao, and Leo Ou-fan Lee for their constructive comments. Thanks also go to Zhang Longxi, whose criticism as a discussant of my paper at the Duke conference helped me crystallize my argument. The responsibility for the views expressed here, however, is mine alone.*

MODERN CHINA, Vol. 19 No. 1, January 1993 13-40
© 1993 Sage Periodicals Press

must come to grips with their counterparts in China in a mutual exchange of opinion that has grown considerably since the 1980s. International conferences, exchanges of scholars, and most recently the emergence of young scholars with background in critical theory and comparative literature have all contributed to the growth of a more lively, diverse enterprise with a broader horizon and a greater impact on the intellectual community. This exchange and dialogue have also compelled Western critics to question their own critical paradigms and presuppositions. But ironically, the harsh reproach and dismissal that Western critics have customarily accorded to their Chinese counterparts nearly vanish into thin air once the pressures of critical scrutiny begin to turn back on themselves.

In China, however, debate about literary theory and criticism has gained centrality in intellectual circles in recent years. In the course of less than a decade, Chinese critics are effecting a discernible change. Their practice signals, first and foremost, a radical break with Maoist critical discourse. Their challenge to Maoist cultural and literary policies has understandably attracted great attention from abroad. In the West and in post-Mao China, Mao's view has been the central target for assaults on Chinese communist cultural totalitarianism. But as the Foucaultian revelation concerning the complicity of power and knowledge, as well as the politics in the discursive formation of historical or aesthetic texts, have been touted as a powerful critique of the liberal humanist myths dominating the humanities in the West, one tends to forget that, for good or ill, Mao's conception of the relationship between politics and aesthetics might in fact have inspired Foucault's radical critique of Western liberal humanism. The fact that Mao considered these matters from the angle of political strategy and the power struggle certainly makes his views prone for repressive cultural policies. But this does not alter the fact that politics always permeates, in various forms, every cultural formation and institution. The People's Republic of China's (PRC) avant-garde writers and critics of the late 1980s tried to counter the Maoist political dominance in literature by a cultivation of the aesthetic object of language or artistic form. But this very act of aestheticization is in itself political. It attests to Mao's view of the political nature of cultural and literary activity, rather than undermining that view.

I think it is relevant to assess the persistent problem of the entanglement of politics, ideology, and modern Chinese literature by once again "stating the obvious." Perhaps when we examine politics closely as it is internalized or institutionalized in academic critical practice, rather than treating it as an extraliterary or extrinsic factor that can be brushed aside once we enter the serious business of intrinsic literary criticism, we may see the problem in a new light. To be sure, it is a truism that literature and criticism in China are inexorably politicized, a fact often invoked in disparaging their artistic defects and mediocrity. But this is not so obvious when one looks at the statements and positions of Western critics of modern Chinese literature. Western critics more often than not tend to neutralize their own political standpoint by assuming objective, nonpartisan, pluralistic, and liberal positions vis-à-vis the arbitrary, dogmatic, and authoritarian Chinese Marxist line.

Since the late 1970s, a "civil war" has raged in North American literary studies, primarily in the traditional areas of the "mainstream" literature, that is, Western European literatures. Toward the end of the 1980s, however, this controversy has increasingly assumed an international character in what is now a global debate about postmodern culture and literature, with attention to the traditionally marginal and peripheral areas such as the "third world," minority groups, women, and the "subalterns." Politics, that is, the political power structures and institutions that govern and shape the formation and dissemination of knowledge and scholarship, has become one of the central concerns in the debate. The time is ripe, therefore, for rethinking the issues arising out of modern Chinese literature studies, which is but an integral part of the whole institutional superstructure that has come under rigorous scrutiny in the current postmodernist debate. Without thinking through all the aspects, the political in particular, of the critical discourse of modern Chinese literature studies, we cannot hope to know where exactly this particular discourse stands with respect to the contemporary global debate. Here I do not intend to give a comprehensive historical review of the field.¹ Notwithstanding the danger of overstatement, incompleteness, and generalization, I will focus on a few representative works from different critical paradigms to illustrate each paradigm's historical and ideological limitations. For

Western critical practice, I will discuss the formalist, romanticist, and historicist approaches, as presented primarily by critics in the United States. For Chinese critical practice, the focus will be on the transformation from the early recovery of May Fourth humanist values of subjectivity, as a reaction to Maoist cultural policies, to the rise of an avant-garde formalism. The representative works examined in this article show a common effort to go beyond the social scientific paradigms, and to reconcile various intrinsic and extrinsic views. By trying to negotiate between aesthetic and political considerations, they bring to light a problem inherent in modern Chinese studies, which relates to a general issue of principles of cohesion in representing and interpreting culture and literature. The problem is, in other words, no longer whether the intrinsic or the extrinsic paradigms are more profitable. What is at stake is rather that the basic concepts in the field have become problematic. As Raymond Williams observes, "there is no sense in listening to their sonorous summons or their resounding clashes. We have only, if we can, to recover the substance from which their forms were cast" (Williams, 1977: 11).

*BETWEEN THE POLITICS OF MODERNITY AND MODERNISM:
THE DILEMMA OF THE FORMALIST
APPROACH TO MODERN CHINESE LITERATURE*

In modern Chinese studies in the West, the predominant mode of inquiry is based on models of social science, such as sociology and political science. Accordingly, Western students of modern China tend to view modern Chinese literature as essentially a type of documentary evidence for their broader sociological and historical findings and conclusions. Their extrinsic approaches, largely concerned with extraliterary factors in this body of literature, were taken for granted during the formative years of the field in the 1950s and in the following decades. There are striking similarities in the patterns of sociological and historical approaches, both in China and in the West. Although Western critics take pride in their objective, liberalist, and pluralistic approaches, it is a mistake to believe that their practice has been free from the influence of political contingencies.

The predominance of the sociological approach was challenged in 1971 by C. T. Hsia's publication of the pathbreaking *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, 1917-1957* (hereafter referred to as *A History*), which attempts to offer a systematic historical overview of modern Chinese literature as seen from one coherent critical perspective—that of Anglo-American New Criticism. Hsia's book strives to set up a literary canon in modern Chinese fiction, in the manner of F. R. Leavis and his *Scrutiny* group, who redrew the map of English literature according to a liberal humanist vision (Eagleton, 1986; Mulhern, 1979). Despite Hsia's manifest political prejudices in the book, it is misleading to simply label his work as anticommunist. Charges that his book failed to "build up a systematic picture" because of his "lack of comprehension for the social function of literature" are equally misplaced (Prusek, 1980: 379). *A History* is, in effect, a genuine attempt at the systematic assessment of modern Chinese literature from a formal and literary point of view, although one that is also socially conscious and ethical. Through over three decades of dissemination, several of C. T. Hsia's distinct concepts have become widely accepted, and a veritable canon of a nonleftist Chinese tradition of satirical and humanitarian realism has been established. In a sense, this article, although critical of Hsia's paradigm, pays tribute to Professor C. T. Hsia, for without his invaluable contribution, it would be hard to imagine the considerable achievements of the field we see today.

The principle of cohesion in *A History* is ostensibly nonpolitical. In the preface to the first edition, Hsia made it clear at the outset that "the present book is not of course designed as an adjunct to political, sociological, or economic studies. The literary historian's first task is always the discovery and appraisal of excellence." He reiterated in his conclusion that "I have been principally guided by considerations of literary significance" (Hsia, 1971: vi, 498). In his rejoinder to Prusek's harsh criticism in 1962, Hsia countered the former's charges against his political intention by reaffirming the priority of aesthetic standards over political ones, and the autonomy of art through independent moral probing and judgment. He insisted that the primary task for a "pioneer survey of modern Chinese fiction" was "discrimination and evaluation" (Hsia, 1963: 232).

Yet Hsia's evaluation of modern Chinese literature is based on a critical paradigm that is avowedly Eurocentric, formalist, and ahistorical. In American and English academia, the reigning norm in the 1950s and 1960s, New Criticism and Leavisian criticism, was predicated on a romantic vision of aesthetic organicism and the autonomy of art. It is a modernist discourse adamantly opposed to modernization, industrialization, and technological progress.² It may appear odd that Hsia should adopt such an antimodern modernist paradigm for a body of texts expressing nothing if not an unreserved enthusiasm for modernization, democracy, science, and progress. Yet the intellectual and institutional ambience of the 1960s in the United States was such that Hsia's choice of a professedly apolitical, literary, intrinsic approach to modern Chinese literature was, in hindsight, a "politically correct" one. It was at this time that European high modernist literature and the arts became institutionalized, and that the modernist hostility to the market was assimilated, and transmuted into an immanently marketable commodity. Tempered by an anticommunist, Cold War ideology, Hsia's modernist, New Critical interpretation of modern Chinese literature successfully established, for the first time, the legitimacy of modern Chinese literature studies as an academic speciality in the intellectual marketplace, amid the scorn and dismissal of the classicists then dominating Sinology.

A History relentlessly privileges a symbolist, individualistic mode of writing. The author asserts that

literature—imaginative literature—cannot deal with mankind in the abstract without forfeiting its specific character as literature; it can only deal with individuals. . . . Hence I contrast the concrete, the realistic, the individually human in literary representation with the abstract, the idealistic, the stereotyped [Hsia, 1963: 235].

The result of his contrastive studies is a literary canon in which the works of Shen Congwen, Zhang Ailing, and Qian Zhongshu figure most prominently. In his close readings of what he considers the best works of modern Chinese fiction, Hsia's modernist biases are most apparent. In *A History*, Hsia (1971) praises Zhang Ailing's writing as "a prose fraught with the richest visual imagery of any modern Chinese writer," which makes her "the foremost symbolist among Chinese writers of fiction" (pp. 393, 396); Shen Congwen's gift of "negative

capability" in creating a pastoral vision, which renders him "the greatest impressionist in modern Chinese literature" (pp. 207-208); Qian Zhongshu's "elegant prose with its attentiveness to concrete detail and its carefully wrought imagery," making him a great "symbolist" (p. 459).

On the other hand, Hsia blames modern Chinese writers' obsessive "moral burden" of concern with China's national well-being, as well as their lack of a religious awareness of original sin. Apparently, this is a biased judgment based on a narrow understanding of Western culture. The implication that Christian religion is the foundation of all of Western literature is an oversimplification of Western cultural development, for it ignores that central to the development of modern Europe is a nonreligious, secular culture, what Gramsci calls a "civil conquest" that makes the modern European state possible (Gramsci, 1971: 171; Said, 1982: 159).

In contrast to its favorable readings of "symbolist" works of non-leftist writers, *A History* finds fault with modern Chinese literature on primarily allegorical grounds, although the word *allegory* is not directly used to stigmatize this literature. In his analysis of Wu Zuxiang, for instance, on the one hand Hsia praises Wu Zuxiang for his "bold symbolism," the mimetic and moral intensity in his novels and short stories. Wu Zuxiang is said to be able to give a "dozen deft sketches" of the characters in his short novel *Eighteen Hundred Piculs*. But on the other hand, the novelist is castigated for supplying a "cheap trick" of a peasant uprising in the end, "thrown in almost as an afterthought in compliance with fashion." The theme of the "peasant uprising," according to Hsia, is a "sad falling off from the sustained social and psychological drama of the main body of the narrative" (Hsia, 1961: 282-287). He offers a clue to the leftist "ideological fashion" in its literary manifestation when he asserts: "I deplore literature which, to use Keats' phrase, has a 'palpable design' upon us insofar as that design is incompatible with the full-bodied [re]presentation of reality" (Hsia, 1963: 235). In *A History*, the works of Shen Congwen, Zhang Ailing, and Shi Tuo are considered to be elegant literature because they deal with moral and religious issues in concrete and nonideological terms; most leftist literary works are considered to be bad because they conform to communist ideology. Lu Xun and Mao Dun are at

their best when they explore moral issues in a satirical vein or through psychological dramatization; once they accept the Marxist tenets of social revolution and class struggle, their imagination deteriorates and their sensibility becomes impoverished.

In the famous essay appended to the second edition of *A History*, "Obsession with China: The Moral Burden of Modern Chinese Literature," the author chooses four texts to illustrate his point. These four texts, ranging from Li Ruzhen's *Flowers in the Mirror*, Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman," and Shen Congwen's "Alice in China," to the communist novel *A Thousand Miles of Lovely Land* by Yang Shuo, have either an explicit allegorical intent or messages that can be readily translated into political allegories. Hsia's last quote in the essay is taken from Yang Shuo's novel written in 1953, a novel about the lives of revolutionary soldiers and their love and dreams. The quote lends itself conveniently to Hsia's strategy of extracting hidden "subversive" political meanings. He contends that "outwardly a selfless advocate of the heroic life, the writer under Communism actually equates a bright socialist future with whatever little dreams of personal happiness still lurk in his heart" (Hsia, 1971: 553). The only worth of the novel, in spite of its topical and propagandistic schemata, is said to be the author's "deliberate or perhaps unselfconscious importation of a bit of fantasy in favor of domestic and individual happiness in a novel designed to glorify other-directed Communist heroism," which in the critic's view still sparks the "modern spirit" he so adores (p. 554). The hidden message to be extracted by the critic is that a bourgeois domestic fantasy undermines Communist heroism. The novel is thereby dissected allegorically into at least two chunks of political allegories: the ostensible allegory of Communist heroism and the latent bourgeois allegory of private fantasies. What is lost in the text, then, is the symbolic fullness or concreteness in representing real individual experience. *A History* applies an allegorical reading to modern Chinese fiction, only to find that the major part of this body of literature does not meet the expectation of symbolic representation.

The privileging of symbolist works over allegorical ones in *A History* is not merely an aesthetic preference. It reflects an intellectual as well as an emotional response to China's experience of modernity. Hsia's response to this issue is most explicit in his comparison of

Western modernist mainstream literature with modern Chinese literature. Modern Western literature, asserts C. T. Hsia, is primarily concerned with the "individual psyche," which "betrays its rebellious stance against the modern environment." Lionel Trilling's definitions of modern Western culture as "the disenchantment of our culture with culture itself" and as the "bitter line of hostility to civilization which runs through it" are cited by Hsia to reinforce his modernist argument. The conclusion that *A History* draws is that "[i]nsofar as modern Chinese literature implicitly endorses the rational ideals of democracy and science, it would seem to have little in common with modern Western literature as Trilling defines it" (Hsia, 1971: 536).

But Hsia's abhorrence of modernity does not stop at mere dislike of capitalist industrialization and dehumanization. It has more to do with China's political situation. China's modernity, or China's discourse of modernity, is inextricably connected to Chinese socialism, the proponents of which happen to be the major leaders of the May Fourth cultural movement. The modern Chinese writer, as Hsia admits,

has certainly shared the same passion [with Chen Duxiu] for a wealthy, strong, democratic, and technologically armed China. Insofar as its advocates regard Communism as a step beyond democracy, the democratic ideal would seem to be implicit in their vision of a classless society. . . . Mao Tse-tung persuaded a great many Chinese to accept his version of communism by writing a book beguilingly titled *The New Democracy* [p. 535].

Modernity, socialism, and nationalism are inseparable issues in modern Chinese history. A literary history of this period, such as *A History*, however ahistorical and formalist its approach may appear, has to come to terms with these political issues. *A History's* choice of a modernist, formalist critical paradigm serves the author's purposes well: by drawing on the Western modernist view of negativity, he joins the chorus, so to speak, to repudiate both the Western achievements of modernity and the Chinese socialist utopian vision of modernity. An imaginary, pastoral, and aestheticist vision cuts across *A History*, providing powerful ammunition for an assault on generally left-wing modern Chinese literature. But what remains unresolved is the hiatus between a modernist perception, based on liberal humanist assump-

tions of the autonomy of culture as a leading feature of modernity, and the predominantly left-wing literary practice that strives to integrate cultural activities with social, political, and economic struggles in order to realize a socialist vision of modernity.

Moreover, by adopting a modernist perspective in evaluating an essentially premodernist, realist literature, *A History* cannot come to grips with the central issues of realism and realist representation in modern Chinese literature. Despite the fact that the author considers realism to be the single most important feature of modern Chinese literature, his preoccupation with a modernist "transcendence" of imaginative power over the realist representation of social reality prevents him from seeing May Fourth realism in all its complexities—its significance to China's modernization project and its social and historical limitations. The ideological fashion, the palpable design, and the modern Chinese writer's fastidiousness toward the faithful representation of social reality ought to be examined from the perspectives of the internal contradictions and conflicts that exist between the realist form of representation, the political and aesthetic vision of the writer, and China's social reality within its historical context. But a preconceived notion, based on Western modernist aesthetics, of what modern Chinese literature *should* be, simply cannot do justice to it.

Conversely, a celebration of the political "national allegory" as the leading feature of Third World literature, a viewpoint of which Fredric Jameson is a major advocate, will also miss the point of the realist representation essential to modern Chinese literature. Based on a poststructuralist valorization of the avant-garde allegories subversive to Western bourgeois ideology, Jameson's formulation offers little help in the understanding of modern Chinese writers' struggle for discursive power. As a distinctly Western concept, allegory has been applied to Chinese texts, classical and modern alike, when their representational systems do not fit neatly into Western notions of mimetic realism.³ However, as Jonathan Arac points out, we need to "pursue the play of representation in the world, where the power of representation is something sought, indeed passionately struggled for, by groups that consider themselves dominated by alien and alienating representations" (Arac, 1986: xxi).

HISTORICAL STUDIES AND HISTORICIST MODELS: ALTERNATIVES TO FORMALISM?

If the formalist approach to modern Chinese literary history, as we have seen through Hsia's representative work, is ultimately unsatisfactory, will a more historically minded perspective enhance our understanding of the complex historical phenomena of modern Chinese literature? The answer is surely yes, but with two qualifications. First, among historical studies, we must differentiate between positivist and historicist approaches. The literary, formalist approach of Hsia is in fact a step beyond the positivist model of historical studies that treat literary texts as historical and sociological documents. Because our subject is modern Chinese literature studies, it is not within the scope of this article to evaluate the contributions of these positivist historical studies to the discipline of modern Chinese history. For our purposes, we are concerned primarily with works that combine historicist methods of periodization with literary formal analysis, which for us constitutes a significant move beyond ahistorical, formalist paradigms. Second, we should ask: what are the limitations of historicist approaches? What kind of political problematics are inherent in historicist models?

In the West until very recently, more critical works about modern Chinese literature were written by social historians than by critics trained in literary studies (a result, perhaps, of the American academic structure before the 1980s, which clearly showed a bias against studies of modern Asian literature).⁴ In the United States, there have been at least two major approaches in historical studies of modern China: the positivist and the historicist. Positivist approaches, based essentially on an epistemology of separation and difference, adopt a traditional mode of scholarship that mixes biography, bibliography, anthology, and disconnected emotive and impressionistic criticism, plus certain quantifying methodologies of statistics and data analysis borrowed from the natural and social sciences.

Yet claims for scientific accuracy and objectivity cannot conceal the fact that positivist literary history is the product of a specific political climate. John Fairbank, the leading figure in modern Chinese

historical studies in America, was deeply concerned that in an enterprise that is large, diffuse, and organized on pluralist principles, there is a chorus of different voices all supporting the same general policy directions (Evans, 1988: 337). Fairbank's concern, legitimate in its own right, is quite unsettling when one presses its logic to the conclusion that not only is a liberal humanist ideology deeply embedded in the mind of Western historians, but China scholarship as such tends to reinforce the general public opinion in terms of the ideological mystification of the superiority of Western capitalism.

As Arif Dirlik and Maurice Meisner point out,

the discursive power of this lore ["orientalist" plus liberal humanist ideological mystification] is such that three decades of scholarly self-examination, which has revealed the vulnerability of American views of China to its power, have been of little consequence in counteracting it [Dirlik and Meisner, 1989: 6].

Much the same is true, too, in historical studies of modern Chinese literature. A quick glance at the title of English-language anthologies of contemporary Chinese literature and the Western critical views of it that were published over the last ten years or so gives the strong impression that the texts and topics are interesting primarily because of their political protest against Mao's China, and less so because of their artistic excellence. When some artistic merit in Chinese works is detected, such merit is always said to be influenced by Western techniques that were politically suspect in China.⁵ When one hears yet time and again the same disparagement—that modern Chinese literature is suffused with such a heavy-handed didacticism, is so lacking in aesthetic refinement, and is so unpalatable to the sophisticated taste of Western audiences—one wonders if this is but the reverse side of what Raymond Schwab has termed the "condescending veneration" of the Western orientalist (Schwab, 1986). Or, as Edward Said puts it, "Orientalist enthusiasm is often fueled by apathetic ignorance . . . especially of the modern Oriental" (Said, 1983: 264).

What needs to be added to this observation of the persistent orientalist prejudice in modern Asian studies is that this tendency can be, and in fact has been, expressed in the name of historical understanding. There is certainly no lack of empirical evidence in historical texts to support the claims of an absence of imagination in and the inferiority

of modern Chinese literary texts (which of course are treated preemptively as historical, rather than literary texts). In modern Chinese literature studies, universalist evaluations and judgments are often blatantly Eurocentric and arrogantly disdainful of their objects. This practice is justified from a historical point of view. Simply because modern Chinese literary texts themselves lack or are intentionally opposed to the high classical cultural values of China's past, and are heavily influenced by Western culture, they are seen as derivative, unauthentic, and innately inferior to both high classic Chinese culture and Western culture. It is therefore no more legitimate to apply Western criteria to assess Western-influenced modern Chinese literature than it is to set Chinese texts against Western master texts as an evaluative scale. In this sense, this kind of historical understanding differs only minimally from the formalist approach of C. T. Hsia. In fact, these two approaches, the formalist and the positivist historical, are incorporated together in many a critical study of modern Chinese literature.

Aside from the predominant positivist historical studies, there are also historicist approaches. Leo Ou-fan Lee's *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers* (hereafter referred to as *The Romantic Generation*), published in 1973, is an eminent example. It combines a historicist method of periodization with meticulous literary analysis. The historical sweep of the book, emplotting modern Chinese literature with a single coherent concept of romanticism, delineates the contours of a new historicist paradigm of modern Chinese literature studies. By incorporating the insights of Prusek's historicist approach to modern Chinese literature, *The Romantic Generation* represents a point of departure from C. T. Hsia's literary criticism based on a self-contained, ahistorical and moral-aesthetic conceptual framework.

Historicist models of modern Chinese literature in the United States have developed under the influence of German historical philosophy and historiography, from Herder and Hegel to Ranke, Marx, and Weber (Richter, 1989: 394). Benjamin Schwartz, an eminent scholar of modern Chinese intellectual history, has engaged in polemics against the dominant historicist models of modern China—those represented by Levenson and Wittfogel—models that are in turn based on a small set of assumptions about “China's response to the West,”

the conflict of "tradition and modernity," "Western imperialism and Chinese modernization," and "Oriental despotism" (Schwartz, 1972: 71-88; Cohen, 1984: 80). However, Schwartz's own works do not constitute a radical break with the general historicist conceptualization. His seminal works on Chinese communism and Yan Fu, published respectively in the 1950s and 1960s, explore modern Chinese intellectuals' overarching preoccupation with power and wealth. Schwartz singled out particular Chinese concerns in their visions of socialism, communism, and modernity, which were not generally accepted at the time. But once his views about nationalist concerns in Chinese socialism and projects of modernity are established, the limit of Schwartz's conceptual basis within the overall "impact and response" paradigm becomes obvious (Schwartz, 1964, 1972; Dirlik, 1989: 369). Historians influenced by Schwartz, such as Lin Yu-sheng and Leo Ou-fan Lee, face the same problem of coming to grips with the cultural and historical limitations of their transhistorical concepts. When Lin Yu-sheng presents his highly influential and intriguing thesis of a totalistic cultural determinism underlying modern Chinese intellectuals' radical iconoclasm, he seems content with his liberalist conceptual basis that envisions historical movements as ultimately transcultural and transhistorical events, generalizable by a historical vision as totalizing as that which he sets out to refute (Lin, 1979).

In *The Romantic Generation*, however, the question is how to comprehend an enormous cultural phenomenon by means of the single concept of romanticism, and the attendant imperative to periodize the phenomenon by that concept. Romanticism is certainly an appropriate concept to grasp the dominant *Zeitgeist* around the turn of the century. Chinese literature during this period is known for its intense subjectivism, its radical assaults on traditional values of communal and familial cohesiveness, and its enthusiasm for the unique individual experience. Lee contends:

From a historical viewpoint, this kind of outlook [Chinese romanticists' utopianism, individualism, subjectivism and anti-traditionalism] often reflects a period of transition. What is known as romanticism was, above all, an inner reaction to that transitional period which dislocated all former ways and values, mixed up all classes, destroyed all faith, all proper orientation. Such a period often produces a number of individuals who do not organically belong to any established class of society. Lacking an

organic contact with life as a whole, this type of individual is compelled to fall back upon himself, and to oppose the value of his own ego to the rest of his society. . . . Their basic outlook, emerging perhaps in a historical context of transition and uncertainty, was anything but realistic [Lee, 1973: 295].

By centering the notion of romanticism on features of cultural transition and transformation, Lee places Chinese writers' romantic ethos squarely in the context of China's sociopolitical structures and cultural tradition, as well as their interactions with Western culture. Unlike dogmatic Marxist literary history, *The Romantic Generation* does not make simple links between the content of individual works and social history. Nor does it, on the other hand, critique the formation of romanticist aesthetics through differentiating their aesthetic principles and political statements on the basis of the transformation of the social institutions of art. In the chapters analyzing various individual writers, Lee shifts his attention to the biographical details of each writer's personality and temperament, which, he seems to suggest, are ultimately responsible for their romantic proclivity and eventual disillusionment with the Communist revolution.

The account of modern Chinese intellectuals' alienation and separation from organic society begs a whole set of unresolved questions about the historicist assumptions of modernity and the Chinese experience. The romanticist ethos of modern Chinese intellectuals is portrayed as a response to the dynamic forces of modernity by a group of individuals dislocated by the process of urbanization. Modernity presupposes a progressive, dynamic movement as opposed to a cyclical, static tradition. The Wertherian and Promethean archetypes in modern Chinese literature are described as corresponding to the anxieties of modern Chinese intellectuals caught between nostalgia for the organic past of Chinese tradition and excitement for the dynamic momentum of modernity brought forth by the Western powers. This description reveals a dilemma with which students as well as agents of modern Chinese history have yet to come to terms: subscribing (consciously or unconsciously) to the conceptual matrix of modernity as the telos of history, one is hardly able to overcome the anxiety of China being forever a shadow lagging behind the advanced Western cultures that are progressing toward a more modern, or postmodern phase.

The historicist paradigm in *The Romantic Generation* that searches for a dominant *Zeitgeist* can be said to belong essentially to a romanticist and aesthetic historiography. The romantic experience, through which historicity as such is manifested, serves in effect as a point of contact between the historian's mind and a given cultural complex from the recent past. The romantic experience is a subject of historical study as well as an expression of a moment for aesthetic appreciation and recreation. In *The Romantic Generation*, the romantic experience is in fact a source of aesthetic excitement and gratification rooted in the historian's personal experience, as the author himself acknowledges in the preface. This experience of history brings the individual subjectivity of the historian to bear on the historical subject under consideration.

One consequence of the close affinity between the historical subject and the historian's aesthetic experience inherent in the historicist model of *The Romantic Generation* is a tendency to view the historical context from within a literary, aesthetic perimeter. When the author concludes elsewhere that the May Fourth movement has its strongest impact in the realm of literature rather than in politics, science, or technology, he seems to conflate the aesthetic experience of the May Fourth intellectuals with diverse sociopolitical, and economic determinations and contradictions (Lee, 1969). If, according to the author's thesis, modern Chinese literature is by and large conditioned by a romantic attitude, then it is difficult to explain Lu Xun's perception and critique of Chinese culture, which can hardly be described as romanticist. In literary terms, the leftist mainstream of realism championed by Lu Xun and Mao Dun implies an aesthetic and ideological program consciously opposed to romanticist presuppositions, and responds to social conditions that can hardly be contained by romanticist conceptualizations.

After all, realist representation as the central preoccupation of modern Chinese literature cannot be adequately dealt with by a critical viewpoint primarily concerned with a cultural ethos of romanticism, even though the critical approach is eminently historical and contextual. To some extent, what a modernist and formalist paradigm ultimately fails to come to grips with, that is, the struggle of modern Chinese writers for the discursive power of representation in bringing about their visions of China's modernity, remains unresolved in the

romanticist conceptualization, which takes a cultural ethos or *Zeitgeist* as its fundamental trope of periodization.

In his recent monograph on Lu Xun, Lee develops an in-depth view of Lu Xun's ambivalent attitude toward Chinese and Western cultures, including the influence of romanticism. This study modifies his earlier statements on the romanticist nature of modern Chinese literature (Lee, 1987). Lee Ou-fan Lee is in fact one of those veteran scholars who enthusiastically welcome contemporary critical theories in modern Chinese literature studies and encourage "paradigm shift" in the field. His book on Lu Xun, and other research projects in which he has engaged recently, demonstrate his genuine interest in new approaches and perspectives.

*CRITICAL THEORY AND CHANGING PARADIGMS:
CRITIQUES OF REPRESENTATION, SUBJECTIVITY,
AND THE RISE OF AVANT-GARDE CRITICISM*

The year 1990 is remarkable in modern Chinese literature studies in the West. In the 1980s, a growing number of conferences and articles, published in journals such as *Modern China* and *Modern Chinese Literature*, began to address the crucial issue of the lack of interest in, or even resistance to, critical theories. In 1990, apart from two conferences dedicated to modern Chinese literature held at Harvard University and Duke University respectively, a number of important critical works were published. Among them, Marston Anderson's *The Limits of Realism: Chinese Fiction in the Revolutionary Period* is a cogently argued, theoretically informed analysis of the central issue of realist representation in modern Chinese literature. As Theodore Hutters puts it, Anderson's book "brilliantly provides a new paradigm at a time when the old has lived its years of useful service" (Hutters, 1990b). Instead of applying a single Western theoretical perspective to Chinese texts, the book examines the Chinese May Fourth theories of literary realism in comparison with Western theories of realism and representation, as well as classical Chinese theories of literature. Anderson investigates the tangled relationships between the May Fourth theories and actual creative practice, aspirations for faithfulness to reality and ideological constraints of form, between

demands of realist form and political praxis. He discovers, among other things, the ineluctable contradictions, inconsistencies, and ambiguities of realist aesthetics that reveal "as much about the presuppositions and limitations of realism itself as about modern Chinese literature" (Anderson, 1990: 6).

A major methodological move in *The Limits of Realism* is its comparative horizon that puts Western theories, in particular the recent theories of narratology, reception aesthetics, and poststructuralism, to the test in a modern literary tradition with unique cultural and political bearings of its own, which is nonetheless an important, integral part of world literature. In the same year, 1990, another critical study of modern Chinese literature in a similar vein also appeared, Rey Chow's *Woman and Chinese Modernity: The Politics of Reading between West and East*. Chow's book, appropriating a variety of modern Western theories from feminism to poststructuralism, formulates a poignant argument about the politicization of both the aesthetics of writing and the critical assessment of literature. She unrelentingly dismantles the politics that decidedly marginalizes the literary imagination, women, and the popular culture of modern China by dichotomizing the "real political" non-West and the "imaginative" West (Chow, 1990b: xiii). What emerges in Chow's book is a powerful critique and reevaluation of the struggle for the representational power of modern Chinese writers: the anxieties, predicaments, and innovations in their efforts to fulfill their vision of modernity and to construct a modern subjectivity.

Also published in 1990 was an anthology of critical essays written primarily by veteran critics, *Reading the Modern Chinese Short Story*, an outcome of a workshop held in Hawaii in 1982 on critical approaches to modern Chinese fiction. The introduction to the volume suggests that, given the glaring contrast between the "richness," the formal attentiveness, and the innovation of modern Chinese writings and the "generally dismal critical environment" in China, in which any formal self-consciousness is all but stifled, there is an urgent need to recuperate the formal achievements of modern Chinese literature by "close reading informed by a concern for methodology." As the editor, Theodore Huters, points out, each contributor takes pains to "keep the notion of the difference between Chinese and Western literatures as a central analytical concept," thus implicitly setting the task of avoiding the pitfalls of Western-centered formalist approaches in each contri-

butor's sociopsychological, formal, and ideological reading of modern Chinese texts (Huters, 1990a: 17).

The rallying cry to break through the "dismal critical environment" in China, however, had been made in the mid-1980s. Since 1985, the contemporary Chinese literary scene has undergone a series of changes in terms of form and language. In the words of PRC critic Li Tuo, these changes amount to nothing less than a "cultural avalanche," a "revolution of language" that threatens to subvert the hegemony of "Maoist discourse" (Li Tuo, 1989: 1; 1990: 15). A new oppositional political consciousness and aesthetic vision have emerged. The new literary sensibility differs fundamentally from the experiments of the early 1980s with "modernist techniques" such as stream of consciousness. Although the exact orientation of this new literary movement is hard to pinpoint, and its impact on Chinese culture still difficult to fathom, there is a clear self-consciousness of the global meanings of Chinese literature in the contemporary world. The younger generation of critics in the PRC are fascinated by this avant-garde literature, and in the meantime, feel deeply frustrated that their theoretical mode and vocabulary remain enmeshed in Stalinist-Maoist criticism. The old-fashioned theoretical tools, bereft of the procedures of formal analysis, are far too inadequate to grasp the formal inventiveness of this new literature.

Liu Zaifu, early in his career in the late 1970s a sensitive critic of Lu Xun, took the lead in challenging the conceptual basis of the dominant Marxist theoretical model. His landmark essay "On the Subjectivity of Literature" (1985) and his other writings triggered a major controversy over the principal issues in literary theory and criticism. This debate in the field of literary studies then became a major component of the general cultural debate in China, which began in the mid-1980s. In June 1989, just a few days before the Tiananmen crackdown, a group of avant-garde critics associated with the literary monthly *Beijing wenxue* had finished editing a July special issue containing nine critical essays on the contemporary experimental fiction of Yu Hua, Wang Anyi, Ma Yuan, Sun Ganlu, and Lin Jinlan. The essays in this issue indicated an undoubtedly poststructuralist orientation: charged with a strong sense of vengeance against Maoist literary doctrine, the critics celebrate the deconstruction of ethical and political binary opposites in literary texts, and the freedom of literary

"signifiers" gaining independence and autonomy from the convention of socialist realism.

But Liu Zaifu's overall conceptual framework is not as radical as that of the young avant-garde critics. His views remain largely humanist Marxist, with a Hegelian bent. He is quite explicit about his objectives of dialectical recovery or return: a recovery of creative subjectivity and a recovery of literature itself ("return to the subject and return to the text," so to speak) (Liu Zaifu, 1990). By invoking the romantic and humanist claims in Marxian aesthetical thinking, Liu Zaifu's ambition is to reconstruct a human-centered literary theory against Mao's terrorist assaults on the aesthetic function of the arts and on human individual subjectivity. Liu Zaifu's writings in the 1980s inaugurated an intellectual movement of cultural reflection by reinventing single-handedly a host of critical categories, concepts, and positions in modern Chinese literary criticism.

By 1985, modern literature studies in China had come to an impasse. The attacks on Maoist terrorist literary policy almost exhausted their targets. Most of those critical views banned during the Cultural Revolution were "rehabilitated." On the other hand, enthusiasm for Western "new" methodologies began to wane, simply because the gimmicks of the "three new theories" (systems theory, cybernetics, and information theory) all failed to provide novel insights into literary history and texts themselves. Although formalism and structuralism were indiscriminately treated as "new" technologies along with other Western theories, critics of modern Chinese literature were frustrated and disoriented, unable to apply the newly imported critical technologies to the content of their studies. More philosophical-minded critics like Liu Zaifu determined to try out aesthetic and philosophical solutions. Hence there appeared Liu Zaifu's essay, "On the Subjectivity of Literature." The author mainly draws on the Chinese philosopher Li Zehou's thinking on Marxist, practical subjectivity in reinscribing a Kantian critical philosophy into historical materialism.⁶ Liu Zaifu's essay stunned critical circles in China not so much by its novelty of conception as by its bold challenge to the fundamental tenets in Chinese official Marxist literary criticism (Chen and Jin, 1988; Lin, 1987).

From Hu Feng's famous statement on the "subjective fighting spirit" in the 1940s to Liu Zaifu's theory of subjectivity in the 1980s,

literary criticism in China seems to have gone full circle, to a rediscovery of and return to the humanistic values of subjectivity (Liu Kang, 1992). The effacement of the individual subject in official Marxist theory is primarily subject to political and ideological determination that cannot be explained in purely literary and cultural terms. As a reaction to the Maoist ideological denouncement of individualism, Liu Zaifu's aesthetic reconstruction of subjectivity must also be seen as a political and ideological strategy. From an Althusserian view, the aesthetic is ideological. The aesthetic centers the human subject in an imaginary relationship with a pliable, purposive reality, thereby granting it a delightful sense of its immediate, sensuous, and concrete experience (Althusser, 1971; Eagleton, 1990: 98-99). By equating the aesthetic with the essence of human beings and then defining literature as that which embodies the level to which the human being understands himself, Liu Zaifu's formulation endows the aesthetic with a power to transgress the border of the imaginary and the real, thus challenging the notion of aesthetic representation. For Liu Zaifu's theory, the sociopolitical reality of China, which denies the very existence of subjectivity, is not real; the real is the aesthetic being, or the "subject," in Liu's terms, which has been totally alienated and must therefore be reconstructed through literature and art. Liu Zaifu writes: "The significance of the thesis that 'literature is the study of human beings' (*wenxue shi renxue*) is self-evident" (Liu, 1985: 13), for it

restores the practical subjectivity of mankind and spiritual subjectivity in the realm of literature. The enrichment and development of subjectivity marks the progress of history. As a science of human beings, literature develops itself at a pace paralleling the level at which the human being understands himself [Liu, 1985: 6.14].

In Liu Zaifu's frame of reference, the progress of history as a Marxist teleology maintains the romanticist utopianism that characterized the young Marx in writing the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscript of 1844*. Liu Zaifu transfigures the Marxian utopian vision to the contemporary world, asserting that

mankind nowadays has already left the immediate daily process of labor behind it. Labor and aesthetic activity come to unite into one, and human nature has continued to enrich, develop and perfect itself. . . . Never has the self-consciousness of human subjectivity as a whole

become so manifest. Human beings are longing for modernizing themselves as they demand modernization of society [Liu, 1985: 6.15].

From a Schillerian-Marxian perspective of aesthetic education, Liu describes the aesthetic experience of reading as a process by which the reader realizes his or her free, complete, and self-conscious being. Reading is equated with the unfolding of humanity and the human being's essence of freedom and self-consciousness (Liu, 1985: 7.3). For many years in China, aesthetic judgment was subordinated to the cognitive function of literature and art in the interest of political propaganda and ideological indoctrination. Liu Zaifu's aesthetic experience of reading as a return of humanity challenges the Maoist politicization of reading in China's official Marxist theory.

In Liu Zaifu's own words, what he attempts to accomplish is to enrich China's Marxist critical framework by supplementing the dominant theory of reflection with an axiology of subjectivity (Liu, 1988: 5). From this new theoretical vantage point, Liu Zaifu characterizes modern and contemporary Chinese literature as essentially a process of discovery of humanity and human subjectivity at different historical conjunctures. He views literature as part of a profound cultural reflection on Chinese tradition. The central element of this cultural reflection is the question of subjectivity (Liu, 1988: 225-237). Liu Zaifu's theory of subjectivity constitutes a cultural theory with which to study modern Chinese literature. In a 1986 interview, Liu Zaifu proposed cultural studies as a new approach to modern Chinese literature as opposed to the dominant political and sociological approaches. He contended that the most important feature of modern Chinese culture is the transformation of cultural conceptions, characterized by recognition of the primacy of individuality and subjectivity (Liu, 1988: 181-195).

The prime impulse of Liu Zaifu's aestheticizing enterprise is a desire to counter the dominance of the political theories of reflection and representation with an aesthetic theory of subjectivity. Liu Zaifu's generation of Chinese intellectuals, disillusioned with politics, tries to distance itself from politics as much as possible. Yet politics inevitably intervenes at the very moment of depoliticization. Liu Zaifu tries to transcend politics by proposing aesthetic universals, but his aesthetic enterprise betrays a political intent he is unwilling to acknowledge.

Now, Maoist guardians are vehemently assaulting Liu Zaifu's theory on political grounds; staying above politics cannot defuse these attacks, nor can it clear the way for aesthetic contemplations or cultural studies above and beyond politics.

On the other hand, the new avant-garde critics, if we can provisionally use this less-than-accurate label for want of a better term to describe their quite diverse approaches and orientations, have displayed a much stronger political self-consciousness in their undertakings. Li Tuo, one of the leaders of this new group of critics, has on various occasions asserted the objectives of their deconstructive strategy: to uncover and assess "the challenge and assault mounted by contemporary Chinese literature against Maoist discourse" (Li, 1990). The self-referential, self-reflexive, experimental fiction of Yu Hua, Ma Yuan, Can Xue, Ge Fei, Su Tong, and others, and the earlier "misty poetry" of Bei Dao and Gu Cheng, invariably create effects of estrangement and defamiliarization through their cultivation of a new linguistic medium that expresses feelings of alienation, disillusionment, and existential angst in Mao's China.

Li Tuo and others celebrate the demystifying power of the new language of experimental literature. But despite their enthusiasm for the new aesthetic sensibilities, critics have yet to come to grips with a number of difficulties: the prospect of the new language becoming reified and commodified in a society with an increasingly consumerist orientation; and the elitist tendency in the eminently modernist aesthetics or antiaesthetics that favors a cultural superiority (inherent, too, in the views of Liu Zaifu and other thinkers and critics in the recent debate on culture). And last but not the least, by virtue of the fact that the militant, antagonistic new discourse is nurtured in the very Maoist discursive ambience, there arises a paradoxical dilemma in that the subversive new language can be readily incorporated into the equally subversive and rebellious Maoist discourse itself. The avant-garde critical discourse, too, is indeed implicated in this entanglement of political reality and cultural praxis. In a sense, Chinese avant-garde literature and literary criticism, and the whole debate on culture that started in the mid-1980s, can be comprehensible only in the light of the interrogation of postmodern dilemmas and predicaments as global phenomena.

CONCLUSION: POLITICAL CRITICISM OR CRITICISM OF POLITICS?

Instead of speculating on the future of the field, I want to conclude by raising some questions about the politics that underlie the major critical models I have examined above, in the context of the current postmodernist debates affecting the humanities and social sciences. First, can modern Chinese literature studies remain politically aloof, or at least aspire to an apolitical objectivity and neutrality transcending political differences and historical gaps? The debate between Prusek and C. T. Hsia some thirty years ago is still a case in point: their differences stem essentially from rival political views about China, yet both critics tend to shift their grounds from political assumptions to issues of critical procedures, with equally strong claims to "scientificity" and objectivity. Critical writings in the West about modern and contemporary Chinese literature are usually very disapproving of the political content of their subject, but are hardly cognizant of their own political prejudices.

Second, to what extent might we still benefit from an essentially extrinsic perspective on Chinese Marxist literary criticism and left-wing literary praxis? Studies of the Marxist literary tradition abound. Yet how many really engage Chinese Marxism on its own terms? Liu Zaifu's theory of subjectivity raises serious questions about representation, subjectivity, and aesthetics. Can we simply dismiss it as another variant of "humanitarian" Marxist criticism, without engaging it from the theoretical positions developed by the Frankfurt school of Critical Theory, other neo-Marxist theories, and contemporary theories in general? As a related question, can we continue to ignore the opinions of Chinese critics like Liu Zaifu in discussing modern Chinese literature? The lack of dialogue, I suspect, is often due to our lack of preparedness to accept critical terms that are not immediately intelligible to our own mode of thinking. Aesthetic concerns have been central to modern Chinese writers and critics, but discussion of aesthetics in modern Chinese literature, let alone the updated versions of aesthetic questions in postmodernist debates, remains a rarity in the West.

Third, what can we gain from the contemporary theories and debates? Recent critical studies, such as Anderson's *The Limits of Realism*, place the critical locus in the internal mechanism of modern Chinese writers' appropriation and adoption of the Western literary

form of realism, with its attendant conflicts and contradictions, rather than discussing the deficiency or failure of Chinese texts in comparison with Western master texts. This points to a direction in which the issues of difference, otherness, heterogeneity, and alterity begin to gain centrality in critical inquiries. In *Political Unconscious* and other writings, Fredric Jameson spells out the notion of "cultural revolution" as a way to reconstruct culture in its totality: "that moment in which the coexistence of various modes of production becomes visibly antagonistic, their contradictions moving to the very center of political, social, and historical life" (Jameson, 1981: 95). Jameson's notion synthesizes the views of cultural and historical discontinuity and heterogeneity, nonsynchronicity of developments. It seems that the concept of cultural revolution may serve as a point of departure to reflect upon modern Chinese literature and culture in terms of intercultural dialogues and interactions at the moment of historical transformation. New theories and concepts are necessary in our study of modern Chinese literature, precisely because when we theorize differences, interactions, and dialogues, we certainly start with some theoretical presuppositions. In this sense, fears of misappropriating Western theories in the study of Chinese texts are misplaced. The real question is not whether we can theorize Chinese things with Western theories or by Western standards, but whether we can see loopholes in our theorizing attempts within the context of historical discontinuity and heterogeneity. (Here the insights of recent critical theories into the self-reflexive nature of criticism and interpretation are certainly helpful.)

My last question, in fact, is a set of queries partly elicited by Jameson's notion of "cultural revolution." Jameson invokes this concept in reference to the "recent experience in China" on several occasions. Although his attitude toward the Chinese Cultural Revolution is rather ambiguous, Jameson seems to stress the cultural dimension of his concept rather than dealing directly with the political implications of the so-called "Chinese experience." Terry Eagleton and Edward Said, among others, have chided Jameson for his idealist academicism of collapsing political issues with cultural and aesthetic ones (Eagleton, 1986: 63; Said, 1982: 148). We may further query the whole radical enterprise of postmodernist debates on the same ground. As politics has increasingly become the central issue of the debates,

it is legitimate to ask the following questions: where is the borderline between political criticism focusing on texts, and criticism of politics intervening in the world of events? Can criticism still remain locked in the idealist enclave of textuality, language, and aesthetics, as the Frankfurt school philosophers and the French new theorists have chosen to do? The Chinese experience of a Liu Zaifu suggests that separating cultural and political activities is impossible. Chinese critics and theorists are simply not afforded the luxury of drawing these lines. Postmodernist debates about politics will not be complete without taking this Chinese experience into consideration. As such, this experience can no longer serve as an eternal other; a certain cultural and political affiliation and involvement seems inevitable.

NOTES

1. Such a review was undertaken about fifteen years ago in an essay by Michael Gotz (1976), and we are in dire need of bringing it up to date with a thorough and theoretical examination.
2. For an introduction to the modernist literary movement in the West and its relationship to modernization and industrialization, see Bradbury and McFarlane (1976).
3. For the "national allegory," see Jameson (1986). For critical studies of Chinese literature that use allegory as a central concept, see, for instance, Andrew Plaks (1976) and Yu-shih Chen (1986).
4. Rey Chow has eloquently critiqued the "marginalization" of and discrimination against modern literature in Asian studies in her article in the journal *Differences* (Chow, 1990a).
5. The situation has changed considerably, though, in the last two or three years. One finally sees translations of Chinese texts based primarily on novelty of style and language. See, for instance, Jeanne Tai (1989), and Michael Duke (1991).
6. I have written a separate introductory study of Li Zehou's and Liu Zaifu's thinking about subjectivity in the recent debate about culture in China, tracing the issue of subjectivity back to the debates over Hu Feng's famous theory of the "subjective fighting spirit" in the 1940s-1950s (Liu Kang, 1992).

REFERENCES

- ALTHUSSER, LOUIS (1971) "Ideology and ideological apparatuses," pp. 165-201 in *Lenin and Philosophy*. Translated by Ben Brewster. London: NLB.
- ANDERSON, MARSTON (1990) *The Limits of Realism: Chinese Fiction in the Revolutionary Period*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.
- ARAC, JONATHAN [ed.] (1986) *Postmodernism and Politics*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press.
- Beijing wenxue [Beijing Literature] (1989) Beijing.

- BRADBURY, MALCOLM and JAMES McFARLANE [eds.] (1976) *Modernism, 1890-1930*. New York: Penguin.
- CHEN YAN'GU and JIN DACHENG (1988) "Liu Zaifu xianxiang pipan" (A critique of the Liu Zaifu phenomenon). *Wenxue pinglun* 2: 16-30. Beijing.
- CHEN, YU-SHIH (1986) *Realism and Allegory in the Early Fiction of Mao Tun*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.
- CHOW, REY (1990a) "The politics and pedagogy of Asian literatures in American universities." *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 2, 3: 29-51.
- (1990b) *Woman and Chinese Modernity: The Politics of Reading between West and East*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press.
- COHEN, PAUL (1984) *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press.
- DIRLIK, ARIF (1989) "Postsocialism? Reflections on 'socialism with Chinese characteristics,'" pp. 362-384 in A. Dirlik and M. Meisner (eds.), *Marxism and the Chinese Experience*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- DIRLIK, ARIF and MAURICE MEISNER (1989) "Introduction: politics, scholarship, and Chinese socialism," pp. 3-26 in A. Dirlik and M. Meisner (eds.), *Marxism and the Chinese Experience*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- DUKE, MICHAEL [ed.] (1991) *Worlds of Modern Chinese Fiction*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- EAGLETON, TERRY (1986) "The idealism of American criticism," pp. 49-64 in T. Eagleton (ed.), *Against the Grain*. London: NLB.
- (1990) *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- EVANS, PAUL (1988) *John Fairbank and the American Understanding of Modern China*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- GOTZ, M. (1976) "The development of modern Chinese literature studies in the West: a critical view." *Modern China* 2, 3: 397-416.
- GRAMSCI, ANTONIO (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey N. Smith. New York: International Publishers.
- HSIA, C. T. (1963) "On the 'scientific' study of modern Chinese literature: a reply to Professor Prusek," pp. 231-266 in *The Lyrical and the Epic*, by J. Prusek (1980). Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.
- (1971) *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*. 2nd edition. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.
- HUTERS, THEODORE [ed.] (1990a) "Introduction," pp. 3-21 in *Reading the Modern Chinese Short Story*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- (1990b) *Comments on Marston Anderson's book, on the leaf of the Limits of Realism*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.
- JAMESON, FREDRIC (1981) *The Political Unconscious*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.
- (1986) "Third world literature in the era of multinational capitalism." *Social Text: Theory/Culture/Ideology* 15 (Fall): 65-88.
- LEE, LEO OU-FAN (1969) "Wusi yundong yu langman zhuyi" (The May Fourth movement and romanticism). *Ming Bao Monthly* 5 (May): 46-69. Hong Kong.
- (1973) *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.
- (1987) *Voices from the Iron House: A Study of Lu Xun*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.
- LI TUO (1989) "Xuebeng he chu?" (Where does the avalanche go?). *Wenlun bao* 5, 6: 1-2. Beijing.
- (1990) "The New Vitality of Modern Chinese." Paper presented at the Wheatland Foundation Conference on Contemporary Literature, June, San Francisco.

- LIN XINGZHAI (1987) "Women shidai de wenyi lilun—ping Liu Zaifu de wenyi guan" (Literary theory of our time—a study of Liu Zaifu's view on literature and arts). *Dangdai zuojia pinglun* 1: 9-19. Shenyang.
- LIN, YÜ-SHENG (1979) *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness*. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press.
- LIU, KANG (1992) "Subjectivity, Marxism, and cultural theory in China." *Social Text* 31/32 (Spring/Summer): 114-140.
- LIU ZAIFU (1985) "Lun wenxue de zhuti xing" (On the subjectivity of literature). *Wenxue pinglun* 6: 11-29 (Part 1), 7: 3-19 (Part 2). Beijing.
- (1988) "Wusi wenhua geming yu ren de sheji" (The May Fourth cultural revolution and the design of humanity); "Wenxue yanjiu zhong de wenhua shijue" (The cultural perspectives in literary studies—an interview 1986), pp. 181-198; "Zhongguo xiandai wenxue shi shang dui ren de san ci faxian" (Three discoveries of humanity in modern Chinese literature), pp. 225-239 in *Liu Zaifu ji* (Selected Essays of Liu Zaifu). Harbin: Heilongjiang jiaoyu chubanshe.
- (1990) "Zou chu dudan lun: Zhongguo dangdai wenxue pinglun shiji mo de zhengzha" (Beyond totalitarian theories: the fin de siècle struggles of contemporary Chinese literary criticism). Keynote speech at the Conference on Politics and Ideology in Modern Chinese Literature, Duke University, October 24-26.
- MULHERN, FRANCIS (1979) *The Moment of "Scrutiny."* London: Routledge.
- PLAKS, ANDREW (1976) *Archetype and Allegory in the Dream of Red Chamber*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press.
- PRUSEK, JAROSLAV (1980) *The Lyrical and the Epic*. Edited by Leo Ou-fan Lee. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.
- RICHTER, U. (1989) "Out of the ivory tower—the transition of Western sinology from classical philology to modern social science." *Chinese Studies* 7, 2: 374-403.
- SAID, EDWARD (1982) "Opponents, audiences, constituencies and community," originally published in *Critical Inquiry* (September), reprinted in Hal Forster (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic* (1983). Port Townsend: Bay Press.
- (1983) "Raymond Schwab and the romance of ideas," pp. 248-267 in *The Word, the Text, and the Critic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.
- SCHWAB, RAYMOND (1986) *The Oriental Renaissance*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press.
- SCHWARTZ, BENJAMIN (1964) *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.
- (1972) "The limits of 'tradition versus modernity' as categories of explanation: the case of the Chinese intellectuals." *Daedalus* 101, 2 (Spring): 137-153.
- TAI, JEANNE [ed. & trans.] (1989) *Spring Bamboo: A Collection of Contemporary Chinese Short Stories*. New York: Random House.
- WILLIAMS, RAYMOND (1977) *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

Liu Kang is Assistant Professor of comparative literature at Pennsylvania State University. He is co-editor (with Tang Xiaobing) of Politics, Ideology, and Literary Discourse in Modern China, forthcoming from Duke University Press.