

## Problems of Marxist Literary Criticism on Mainland China \*

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This is not a formal paper but a tentative essay of random reflections. I am adopting this format in order to raise some preliminary questions concerning the practice of Marxist literary criticism on Mainland China. In my reading of many current samples, I have been bothered by a consistent feeling of discontent: Why are they so lacking in methodological finesse? Why are they so "vulgar"? The obvious answer is that there is no pure "literary criticism" to speak of, even in Marxist terms; only political criticism. Beyond this, however, I suspect that the current practice is the product of a long evolution in the Chinese adaptation of Marxist theory. Thus the problems may have something to do with the theoretical origins of the Chinese practice. A certain intellectual imprint may be traced — a rather rigid "mind-set" — which tends to unite the various "literary critics" in spite of their differences. Hence this attempt to locate and explore a few problems of a theoretical nature.

The Marxist approach to literature was introduced in China in the 1920s in a context of transition from "Literary Revolution to Revolutionary Literature," to use the prevalent phrase of the Creation Society. The notion that literature must reflect society to the point of contributing extrinsically to the purpose of social reform was already deeply implanted in the manifestos of the May Fourth "Literary Revolution." As proclaimed by Chen Tu-hsiu and Hu Shih, the new mode for modern Chinese literature should be "realism" both as a reigning principle of literary writing and an intellectual tenet. As the general temper of the new writers became increasingly leftist since the mid-1920s, chiefly through the championship of the Creationists, the social purpose of literature was further "radicalized"

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in the slogans for revolution. The relationship between literature and revolution became the central obsession of leftist writers, including Lu Hsün. However, with the exception of Lu Hsün,<sup>1</sup> the intricacies and contradictions between the two concepts were not explored in any depth. When Kuo Mo-jo, Ch'êng Fan-ku and others clamored for "revolutionary literature", and a few younger members of the Creation Society called for "proletarian literature," their basic concern was not so much "aesthetic" as ideological. The idea was to get the writer allied with the "rising class" of the proletariat. Thus the initial Marxist formulation on the leftist literary scene consisted mainly in the notion of the class and of the class basis of literature. The self-styled Marxists (largely younger members of the Creation and Sun societies) began to brandish slogans proclaiming that a new kind of "proletarian" literature was on the rise and modern Chinese writers, who belonged to non-proletarian classes, should henceforth transform their "world-view" so that they could truly represent the proletarian class. Therefore, from the very beginning, Marxist literary criticism in China became crudely judgmental: it amounted to brandishing certain kinds of literature as good, and the rest bad, according to the presumed political outlook and personal background of their authors. To be sure, this categorical distinction between the progressive and regressive kinds of literature is a common feature of rudimentary Marxist analysis. It became even more prescriptive in the highly charged polemical atmosphere of the Chinese literary scene during the late 1920s and the early 1930s, where the leftists used such primitive distinctions to separate friends from foes and, for a few zealots, even to criticize "enemies" in their own camp.

As is well known, it was in reaction against criticism from the younger "revolutionary" writers that Lu Hsün began seriously to translate and help introduce foreign Marxist theoretical works. Most of them came from Soviet Russia and Japan. Lu Hsün and Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai were the primary translators. Much research remains to be done to see how these two early pioneers selected what they considered to be significant texts to translate from an already diversified tradition.<sup>2</sup> In Lu Hsün's case, he seemed more interested in keeping up with Soviet literary doctrines and policies. Hence his introduction of the works of Trotsky and (after he learned of Trotsky's disgrace) of Plekhanov and Lunacharsky.<sup>3</sup> Although he and Qu had also translated a few letters from Marx and Engels (e.g. to Margaret Harkness), they did not seem able to evolve a general Marxist framework in which the contributions of the Russian theoreticians could be placed. The canons of Plekhanov and Lunacharsky were held by Lu Hsün as orthodox which he used as theoretical

buttress in his feuds with the younger leftist critics. The result was a decade of ideological debates — all in the name of Marxism — full of sound and fury yet signifying little knowledge of how to conduct literary criticism in a Marxist mode.

Thus in the leftist literary circles of the 1930s, there did not exist a well defined and articulated body of Marxist aesthetics by Chinese theorists. The translations did not exactly constitute it due to the obvious difficulties of language. (One wonders how many Chinese critics understood Lu Hsün's "hard translations".) Had there been a more systematic inquiry into the Marxist tradition by Chinese writers or theorists themselves, even along lines suggested by Ly Hsün and Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai (both of whom were too embroiled in leftist debates to do much systematic writing), the subsequent situation might have been different. I am suggesting that due to this obvious theoretical lacuna, the way was paved for Mao's delivery of his famous Yen-an Talks in 1942, which aside from its strategic reasons (as part of the rectification campaign), fulfilled a certain intellectual need as well.

This is not the place to have a detailed analysis of Mao's Yen-an Talks against the standards of Marxist literary theory. Suffice it to say — and this is my contention — that its contributions to artistic theory are far more limited than its countless adulators have claimed. In my opinion, the Talks formulated political policy, not literary theory. Yet because of Mao's authority, the Talks has since become the undisputed canon of Marxist literary criticism in China — a position which may not have been intended by Mao himself.<sup>4</sup> The only "alternative" challenge came from Hu Fêng, whose notions of "realism" and "national forms" did not agree entirely with Mao's and harked back to the early May Fourth tradition.

The thrust of Mao's Talks was directed toward the "audience" of rural population. It represented a significant reorientation from the May Fourth author-centered view. Between the author and the audience, the notion of the literary "text" was neglected. Henceforward, the primary concern for all creative writing became: literature for whom (answer: the "people"—i.e., workers, peasants, soldiers) and to achieve what kind of social effect? With the growth of political campaigns, these external concerns were exacerbated: literature was to reflect the current Party policy, instead of true reality. Thus in the name of extolling the virtues of the people, the May Fourth tradition of realism with its emphasis on negative exposure was downgraded.<sup>5</sup> The problem of the primacy of the political "thesis" ("*Chu-t'i hsien-hsing*") could be traced to the excessive canonization of Mao's

Talks. It was the external message which must be contained, often conspicuously, in a literary work, that served as the major yardstick of literary creation and criticism.

Thus this familiar historical survey reveals a crucial problem with the Chinese practice of Marxist literary criticism: its constant preoccupation with factors external to literature. Insofar as it has any bearing on the literary text itself, the tendency has been to seek out the obvious content, to the utter disregard of literary form. Moreover, the emphasis on message and effect led to a degree of "tendentiousness" which perhaps exceeded Soviet practice. The basic ethos underlying all these is a normative one, bordering on a kind of moral imperative. In other words, it is considered morally justifiable to insist on the "correct" political "content". And like Zhdanov, Chinese literary cadres also reinforced their moral righteousness with nationalism. The result has been a spate of works written in the same political-normative mode: their varying degrees of rigidity can be gauged by the varying pressures of political campaigns at different periods. Perhaps the most serious problem with this type of literary criticism is its intellectual reductionism — by which I mean the tendency to reduce a complex idea to a simplistic slogan. Perhaps the most glaring example can be found in the elevation of six terms contained in Mao's Talks into the so-called "Six Principles" during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>6</sup> This reductionist mentality, when applied to literary analysis, has given rise to a host of problems which present-day Chinese literary critics are only beginning to resolve.<sup>7</sup>

The following is a sampling of some significant problems and my own reactions to them in the light of my limited reading of Western Marxist theory.

### Realism and Reflectionism

As mentioned earlier, ever since the May Fourth period, the term "realism" (*Hsieh-shih Chu-i* or *hsien-shih chu-i*) has been considered, often normatively, as a mode of creative writing which must reflect society. In a Marxist framework, society is, of course, conceived in materialist terms as modes of production and relations of production. In reductionist (and mechanistic) formulations this becomes the thesis that literature passively reflects conditions and changes in the socio-economic base. Due to a lurking fear of "subjectivism" inculcated since the Yen-an years, Chinese literary critics and theorists have tended to downgrade the superstructure and its

possible influence on the base. In other words, the active role of human consciousness has been deemphasized. In literary terms, this means that the mediating role of the author — his or her own vision (which of course is shaped by the socio-economic conditions) and artistic technique — has not been duly stressed until very recently. Moreover, as Raymond Williams has argued, we should not expect to find directly “reflected” social realities in art, since the process of literary or artistic creation itself is a mediating process in which “their original content is changed.”<sup>8</sup> Western Marxist theorists have done enough work to indicate that not only the author serves a mediating function but the literary text as well, which by its very linguistic structure can only reflect or project — that is, mediate artistically — elements of reality. Between the author’s own consciousness (or ideology) and the “achieved” content of his literary text there could indeed be considerable discrepancies, as Lukacs and others have argued in their treatises on Balzac and Tolstoy.<sup>9</sup> However, the rigidity of the Chinese approach has been such that reflection is defined mechanistically in purely passive terms or normatively as following Party policy.

It may be said furthermore that the literary tastes of Marx, Engels and Lenin themselves did not go beyond the classics and Realist works of the European tradition. Chinese Marxists have justifiably cited their canonical championship of realistic literature.<sup>10</sup> Adding to this obvious inheritance is also the leftist legacy of the 1930s, in which the morally and politically upright critics (Lu Hsün included, though his private artistic taste is far diversified) had denounced various forms of modernistic art as “decadent”. The issue of artistic modernism as a form of confrontation with bourgeois ideology did not concern Marx and Engels at all and was only tangentially mentioned, with a certain condescending tolerance, by Lenin. This is the obvious lacuna which a number of brilliant Marxists (Adorno, for instance) in Europe have attempted to fulfil. It was only recently that Chinese critics have begun to address themselves to this problem perhaps as a response to the experiments of new techniques by a number of young writers.<sup>11</sup> Yet questions remain: Is realism definitely preferable to modernism or romanticism from a Marxist point of view?<sup>12</sup> How do we account for originality and in what way? In view of the normative weight of the term “realism” in China — whether “critical” or “socialist” or “revolutionary” realism — how can a Chinese Marxist critic properly evaluate a non-realistic work of art? How can one accommodate generic differences — say, between the novel and poetry — in a “realist” framework or in

reflectionist theory?<sup>13</sup> All these questions bring us to the *problematique* of literary form itself. However, unless the sinister implications of "formalism" (*hsing-shih chu-i*) can be divested from long-standing Chinese usage, it would still be difficult to solve the problem adequately, not to mention such related issues of linguistic "Formalism" and structuralism.

### Typicality

It is interesting to note that even in a most recent collection of translated sources of literary theory,<sup>14</sup> the first three categories are: (1) literature as a reflection of social life; (2) typicality in literature; (3) the social function of literature. The issue of typicality is closely related to that of realism and reflectionism and is central to Marxist literary thinking. Marx and Engels remarked on several occasions on the issue of typicality. The classic source is, of course, Engels's famous letter to Margaret Harkness: "Realism, to my mind, implies, besides truth of detail, the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances."<sup>15</sup> Engels's view received a further amplification in the writings of the three Russian realist theoreticians — Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and Dobrolyubov — who together with Gorky are also the best known figures in China. In their view (particularly Belinsky's), to be "typical" means basically to be fully characteristic or representative; the "typical" character is one who concentrates and intensifies a much more general reality. It is to be differentiated from the "ideal" types, which are normally attached to "heroes" in literature.<sup>16</sup> Thus Belinsky praises Gogol for introducing character types from lower levels of society into Russian literature where previously only ideals reigned.<sup>17</sup> It must also be pointed out that Marx and Engels in their discussions of typicality seldom, if ever, implied political prescription. The normative qualities come perhaps from Chernyshevsky who, in his famous novel *What Is To Be Done* introduced "positive heroes" who are ideal. The transformations of the "positive hero" have had a long literary history in Russia.<sup>18</sup> It became one of the essential features of the Soviet novel of Socialist Realism. When transplanted into China, the "typical" character became increasingly identified with the "positive" character. In Mao's Talks, the words "typical" and "ideal" are mentioned in the same breadth as two of the six characteristics of literature, thus initiating a process of political idealization which culminated in the novels of Hao Ran during the Cultural Revolution. Thus reflection and prescription are combined to turn "typicality" into an

ideological guideline which has governed Chinese literature for at least three decades.

Under Soviet influence, Chinese formulations of "typicality" (*tien-hsing*) are inseparable from the imperative of socialist realism: the "typical" character must embody not only those elements of present reality but also something embryonic of the future society. Thus the typical character cannot but be "positive". This narrow Zhdanovite view cannot easily accommodate characters with negative qualities in works written before the revolution. The controversy surrounding Lu Hsün's Ah Q as a "typical character" is a good illustration. A more sophisticated formulation can be found in Lukacs's notion of "totality": a great work is typical and socially progressive in the sense that "it realizes the vital 'world-historical' forces of an epoch which make for change and growth, revealing their unfolding potential in its fullest complexity."<sup>19</sup> In this somewhat Hegelian formulation, character and characterization are not so crucial: in fact, Lukacs, like Marx and Engels, stresses the need for individuality and vividness of depiction. Lucien Goldmann, going one step further than Lukacs, looks for "totality" in the "genetic structure of literature of a historical period" for the degree to which it embodies the structure of thought (or "world vision") of the social class to which the writer belongs."<sup>20</sup> Presenting his Marxist approach as a "sociology of literature", Goldmann is not concerned with the issue of literary technique or, for that matter, the individual writer. In fact neither Goldmann nor Lukacs has much to offer on the narrative structure of literary texts. One could even argue that this is precisely where the general Marxist mode of analysis fails to accomplish, and it takes a scintillating mind like Frederic Jameson to tackle the problem.<sup>21</sup> Since for most Chinese literary critics typicality can only be analyzed as characterization,<sup>22</sup> they tend to dismiss the formalistic aspects of a literary text as irrelevant or, even worse, ideologically suspect. Their entire methodology becomes deficient – and the entire concept of typicality in doubt – when confronting works of a non-realist mode. For the practicing writer, the demand of typicality could be very confining: I would argue that the failure of Wang Meng's otherwise daring fictional works is due to a lurking sense of obligation to depict a "typical" character, such as the wronged cadre in "Butterfly" (*Hu-tieh*) or "Bolshevik Salute" (*Pu-li*).<sup>23</sup>

### Subjectivity and Consciousness

This is certainly the one area in which Western Marxists have done most seminal work. For Chinese Marxists, this preoccupation with "superstructural" studies may be a "reflection" of a certain Kantian idealism.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, because Marxism always claims to be an "objective" science (its literary analysis included) and because the word "subjectivity" (*chu-kuan*) carries a bad connotation since the Yen-an period, it remains difficult to reopen the discussion of the problems of subjectivity and consciousness without incurring the charge of anti-Marxism or "revisionism". On the other hand, however, one of the legacies of May Fourth literature with Chinese scholars on the Mainland chose to neglect is precisely its broadly "subjective" orientation -- its "realism" was expressed from essentially the author's own angle and often accompanied by an outpouring of personal emotions. The glorification of the author's individual personality -- together with his own perception -- is another manifestation of what may be called "romantic" subjectivity. This is, of course, not exactly the same as what is defined philosophically as "subjectivity" and "subjectivism". Yet it was nevertheless this individualistic variant which was attacked in the Yen-an period. Thus the word, "chu-kuan" was often equated with "*kê-jên chu-i*" (individualism), a word laden with negative meaning.

Chinese theoreticians like to discuss almost *ad infinitum* the dichotomy of "subjectivism" and "objectivism" ("*chu-kuan*" / "*k'ê-kuan*") almost in the same breadth with "idealism" and "materialism" ("*wei-hsin*" / "*wei-wu*"). Surely the two terms are not diametrically opposed even in Marxist discourse as two totally separate entities with no mutual interaction. Yet when Zhu Guangjian attempted to combine the two in terms of a basically Marxist dialectical synthesis, he was roundly criticized by Ts'ai I and Li Tsê-hou as maintaining but another version of his old Croce-ridden "*wei-hsin chu-i*"<sup>25</sup> Again this is not the place to go into a detailed assessment of this series of fascinating debates which began in the late 1950s. I am not equipped with the necessary philosophical training to make my own judgments. But when abstract aesthetics is transformed into critical practice (and Marxism does emphasize the interlocking relationship between theory and "praxis"), the issue of subjectivity is crucial, in my view, to any sophisticated Marxist approach to literary form. The challenge of modernism -- from Baudelaire to Kafka to Joyce in literature; from Klimt to Picasso in painting; and from Schoenberg to Webern to Henze in music -- has transformed the entire

19th-century tradition of Marxist aesthetics, of which Lukacs may be regarded as the last spokesman. The debate between Lukacs and Brecht becomes interesting precisely because of the challenge of modernism and Brecht's defense of it.<sup>26</sup> In Chinese Marxist discourse, the issue of modernist art and literature has never even occurred. [The examples given are still pre-20th century, such as Beethoven's symphonies or Tolstoy's fiction] Ironically, only Chu Kuang-kian, in his Croce phase, harbored a certain personal taste in modernism, which of course became evidence of his bourgeois "decadence". Since Chinese Marxist literary criticism remains in the content-analysis stage and not even the most astute aestheticians (such as Li Tsé-hou) have concerned themselves with problems of language (surely the most significant obsession in 20th-century Western criticism) the issues of "structure", "stylization", "distortion", and "displacement" etc., which all involve the mediational function of artistic language, remain alien to the Chinese mentality. It is only recently that the somewhat worn notion of "hsing-hsiang ssu-wei" (which may be loosely translated as "imagistic thinking") has come back into prevalence.<sup>27</sup> But it is still a far cry from the Frankfurt School.

I am not suggesting that Chinese Marxist critics must follow the examples of Adorno, Fischer or Garaudy, whose theories are likewise problematic. At the same time, however, a rigid and mechanical strategy centered only on message and content constitutes only half of Marxist analysis whose dialectics dictates a dynamic interaction of content and form. Without an attempt to resolve the issue of subjectivity, Chinese Marxist criticism in literature can only be called "half-baked". The current debate on the compatibility between Marxism and humanism,<sup>28</sup> again a reaction toward the past, is an indicator that subjectivity and consciousness will increasingly demand the attention of serious writers and theoreticians of the younger generation, whose adventurous readings of the early Marx (especially the concept of ("alienation") and Marcuse, of Kafka and existentialism, of French Symbolist poetry, are already challenging the mechanistic theoreticians of the Ts'ai I variety. Creative literature and art in China are taking the initiative which will ultimately compel complacent critics to find new ways to cope with it. It is in this connection that I find the works of the "Neo-Marxists" in the West relevant and stimulating, and the Maoist canon wanting.

Of course my critique of Chinese Marxism could itself be criticized by Chinese Marxists as too much a product of the Western environment to have sufficient bearing on the present Chinese case. Yet it is surely appropriate

that this avowedly Western brand of Marxism can offer a counter perspective to a Chinese analytic "paradigm" now reaching a point of crisis. In view of the burgeoning Chinese interest in the array of Western literary theories, including Marxism, it may not be too farfetched or premature to contemplate the thorny issue of a possible convergence or compatibility or, at the very least, complementarity between Marxist and other modes of literary analysis (for instance, structuralism, phenomenology, even psychoanalysis) and their possible relevance to Chinese literary criticism.<sup>29</sup> I would venture to argue that, given the nature of modern Chinese literature and its historical consciousness, an analytical strategy grounded in sophisticated Marxist theory can yield valid interpretations. What is needed, in my view, is closer attention to the formal and linguistic qualities of the literary text itself without, however, being confined solely within its "structure."<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, some degree of modernistic experimentation in current writing is being permitted and will likely continue, which in turn (even as an anomaly) will alter, though not fully replace, the dominant mode of realism. The phenomenon is already exposing the inadequacy of the old Maoist model of literary analysis. Thus even in practical terms, some sensible efforts will have to be made to incorporate structuralist and other approaches in order, so to speak, to do fuller justice to the new writings. At the very least, even for purposes of revitalizing an atrophied Marxist tradition in China, Chinese critics and theorists can no longer afford to be immune to Western challenges. In both China and the West, only those who uphold canonical rigidity and who reduce theoretical complexities to simplistic slogans are, consciously or unconsciously, practicing "vulgar Marxism".

## Notes

1. See Lin Yu-sheng's paper, *The Morality of Mind and Immorality of Politics: Reflections on Lu Hsün*, *The Intellectual*, in Leo Ou-fan Lee ed., *Lu Hsün and His Legacy* (forthcoming, University of California Press).
2. The only existing in English remains that of Paul Pickowicz. See his *Marxist Literary Thought in China: The Influence of Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), and *Marxist Literary Thought and China: A Conceptual Framework* (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, University of California, 1980). The latter is more useful for our purposes in its succinct and perceptive survey. But Pickowicz has not gone deeply into Ch'ü's translations of Marxist writings by Russians included in his posthumous *Hai-shang shu-lin* edited by Lu Hsün. More

- work also needs to be done on the younger Creationists and their indebtedness to Japanese Marxist thinkers. For a historical survey without much in-depth theoretical discussion, see Ma Liang-ch'un and Li Pao-yen, "Ma-k'ê-ssü chu-i wên-i li-lun ai Chung-kuo" (Marxist literary theory in China), *Wên-i lun-ts'ung*, Vol. 8 (Shanghai: Shanghai wên-i ch'u-pan-shê, 1979), pp. 61-108. See also, Marian Galik's studies of Chiang Kuang-tz'u, Ch'ien Hsing-ts'un, Mao Tun, Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai and Lu Hsün in his book. *The Genesis of Modern Chinese Literary Criticism* (London: Curzon Press; Bratislava: Veda, Publishing House of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, 1980), Chapters 6-10.
3. For more discussion of this subject, see my article, "Literature on the Eve of Revolution; Reflections on Lu Hsün's Leftist Years," *Modern China*, 2, No. 3 (July, 1976), esp. 291-308.
  4. One might add that before Mao delivered his speeches, the Yen-an theoreticians, particularly Chou Yang, had been quite conscientious in further introducing Soviet literary doctrines, including the recent Zhdanov version of Socialist Realism.
  5. Recent Chinese scholars are now returning to the arguments of realism of "critical realism" as it had been reaffirmed in the early 1950s by Ho Ch'i-fang, Ch'in Chao-yang, and others.
  6. These are taken from the following lines from the Talks: "It is because while both are beautiful, literature and art that have been processed are more *organized* and *concentrated* than literature and art in their natural form; they are more *typical* and more *idealized*, and therefore have greater *universality*". See Bonnie S. McDougall Tr. *Mao Tsê-tung's "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art": A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1980), p. 70.
  7. See the contents in almost every issue of the journal *Wên-i li-lun yen-chiu*.
  8. Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 98.
  9. Chinese scholars like Ch'êng Tai-hsi and others are currently reopening the whole case of Lukacs.
  10. See Ch'êng Tai-hsi's studies of some of the standard figures and themes in the Marxist tradition; *Wên-i wên-t'i lun-kao* (Draft studies on the questions of literature and art; Shanghai: Shanghai wên-i ch'u-pan-shê, 1979).
  11. This is especially the case with the controversy of the so-called "obscure poetry". Most critics, either pro or con, have emphasized its social effect rather than the intrinsic qualities of this new type of poetry which is avowedly more modernist. For a discussion of the entire phenomenon, see William Tay, "How Obscure Is 'Obscure Poetry'?", paper presented at the Conference on Contemporary Chinese Literature: New Forms of Realism, St. Johns University, New York (May, 1982).
  12. Professor Li Tsê-hou argued this point in one of his learned articles included in his *Mei-hsüeh lun chi* (Studies on aesthetics; Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chuban she, 1980), pp. 360-388.
  13. This is, of course, also Lukacs's problem as he clearly favors the 19th-century novel and offers little insight into poetry. For a more schematic analysis of largely the limitations of the Marxist theory of literature, see Douwe Fokkema, "Strength and Weaknesses of the Marxist Theory of literature with Reference to Marxist Criticism in the People's Republic of China," in John J. Deeny ed., *Chinese-western Comparative literature: Theory and Strategy* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1980), pp. 113-128.

14. *Wên-hsüeh li-lun hsüeh-hsi tzu-liao* (Study materials on literary theory) edited by the Department of Chinese Literature of Beijing University (Pei-ching: Pei-ching ta-hsüeh ch'u-pan-shê, 1980), 2 vols.
15. Quoted in George Bizstray, *Marxist Models of Literary Realism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), P. 17. The book is also a useful guide to the issues of critical and socialist realisms and the questions of subjectivity and objectivity in the Soviet and East European context.
16. Williams, p. 101.
17. Ralph E. Matlaw ed., *Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and Dobrolyubov: Essential Writings by the Founders of Russian Literary and Social Criticism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), p. vii.
18. See Rufus Mathewson's classic study, *The Positive Hero in Russian Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958).
19. Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 29.
20. Eagleton, p. 32.
21. See his *Marxism and Form* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), Chapter 5, and his recent book, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981).
22. For a typical recent discussion of the topic, see the article by Lü Tê-shên in *Mei-hsüeh lun-ts'ung*, No. 1 (1979), 63-82.
23. For a discussion of Wang Mêng's fiction, see my paper, "The Politics of Technique: Perspectives of Literary Dissidence in Contemporary Chinese Fiction," presented at the St. Johns Conference. The Conference volume, which includes this paper as well as Tay's, is being considered for publication by the Harvard East Asian Research Center.
24. Li Tsê-hou criticizes Chu Kuon-kian's aesthetic theory in this light. According to Li, *Chu's* theory has consistently evinced Kantian and subjectivist tendencies. See his *Mei-hsüeh lun-chi*, pp. 1-99.
25. The entire debate, waged since the 1950s and still going on, is centered around three polemical positions represented by Chu, Li, and *Ts'ai I*. For a selection of the articles published in the 1950s, see *Mei-hsüeh wên-ti t'ao-lun-chi* (Discussions on aesthetics; Pei-ching: Tso-chia ch'u-pan-shê, 1957, 1959), 3 vols. Professor William Tay is at work on a projected book on this subject.
26. See *Aesthetics and Politics: Debates between Ernst Bloch, Georg Lukacs, Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno* (London: NLB, 1977). See also a competent discussion in Chinese by William Tay, or Cheng Shu-sen in his book, *Wên-hsueh li-lun yü pi-chiao wên-hsueh* (Literary theory and comparative literature; Taipei: Shih-pao ch'u-pan kung-ssu, 1982), pp. 113-150.
27. See the book edited and translated by Ch'ien Chung-shu al, *Lun hsing-hsiang ssu-wei* (On imagistic thinking; Hong Kong: San-lien Shu-tien, 1980).
28. This debate was partially triggered by a novel, *Jên Ah Jên!* (People, Ah, people) written by a young instructor, Tai Hou-ying, who argued forcefully that Marxism and humanism are indeed compatible and that a fictional technique beyond realism is needed to depict the consciousness of modern Chinese. For a detailed discussion of the novel, see Michael S. Duke, "Intellectual Confession and Affirmation in Dai Houying's Novel, *Jên Ah Jên!*", paper presented at the panel, "Romanticism Rehabilitated", the AAS Annual Meeting, San Francisco (March 27, 1983).
29. Recent Chinese writings on Western Marxism are numerous. See, for instance,

"Hsü Ts'ung-wên, Hsi-fang Ma-K'ê-ssu chu'i ti lai-lung ch'ü-mai" (The intellectual threads of Western Marxism), in *Hsien-tai wai-kuo ch'ê-hsüeh lun-chi* (Studies on modern foreign philosophies) ed. Chung kuo hsien-tai wai-kuo ch'ê-hsüeh yen-chiu hui (Pei-ching. San-lien, 1981), pp. 45-72. The same volume contains an article on structuralism and semiotics. Among recent collections of translations from Western literary theories; Shanghai: Shanghai i-wên Ch'u-pan-shê, 1983), Errors abound, however, not only in translation but in selection (putting wrong representatives under wrong schools or omitting central figures). Still, the voluminous output represents increasing interest and effort. I am indebted to William Tay for these sources. Among the many discussions on the Western Marxist side concerning possible compatibility with other theories, I find an article by Raymod Williams particularly illuminating: "Marxism, Structuralism, and Literary Analysis." *New left Review*, No. 129 (1981), pp. 51-66. See also, Tony Bennett, *Formalism and Marxism* (London: Methuen, 1979).

30. A recent workshop held in Honolulu (December 1982) on "Critical Approaches to Modern Chinese Stories" marks the first step toward a disciplined study of modern Chinese fiction as literary texts. I have prepared another paper to indicate, on the other hand, the possible limitations of a narrowly text-oriented approach as applied to analyzing modern Chinese fiction in favor of a more "open-ended" methodology combining texts and history which may be considered vaguely Marxist. See Leo Ou-fan Lee, "Modern Chinese Fiction: An Interpretive Overview," paper prepared for the Conference on "Korean Literature in the Context of East Asian Literature", Seoul, Korea (June, 1983). It represents a beginning attempt to develop a viable way of understanding (more than "reading") modern Chinese literature.

