

## Western Theory and Historical Studies of Chinese Literary Criticism

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the formation of modern historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism in terms of its interaction with and transformation of western theory. The discipline emerged during the eastward movement of Western ideas in the early twentieth century, promoting the "scientific study" of classical Chinese learning, and instituting curriculum and textbooks in Chinese universities. The reception of Western concepts of "literature" and "literary criticism" in the early twentieth century, largely through Japan, laid the very foundation of historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism as an independent subject of study. This paper argues that when adopting Western methods and cross-referencing Chinese and Western learning, the specificity of classical Chinese literary criticism should be the central issue of inquiry.

**Zhirong ZHU**

## **Western Theory and Historical Studies of Chinese Literary Criticism**

Although commentaries on poetry and prose, and criticism of fiction and drama, abounded in China in ancient times, they did not, in the modern sense, form a systematic discipline. Historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism are clearly under the influence of the modern university system and disciplines, particularly the Western concepts of "literature" and "literary criticism," largely through the intermediary of Japanese scholarship. In fact, the term "literary criticism" itself comes from the West. Classical Chinese learning included commentaries on poetry and prose, as well as criticism of fiction and drama, which, due to the biases of tradition, had a lower standing. Inevitably, the Chinese pioneers of modern scholarship learned from the West, at the historical juncture of the eastward movement of Western ideas. This exchange had decisive impact on the formation of modern Chinese learning in general and the historical study of classical literature and criticism in particular. Presently, with the surge of exceptionalism and exclusiveness in China, it is necessary to revisit the disciplinary history itself, in order to better understand the insights and blindness in the modern encounter between Western and Chinese learning.

### **I**

Modern historical study of classical Chinese literary criticism was established as a subject of study in the context of the eastward movement of Western ideas, thus as part of the social-ideological trend of using scientific methods to organize national heritage, and the need to modernize the university system and its disciplines. The present understanding of the "eastward movement of Western ideas" is that it is part of a long historical process that started in the late Ming dynasty (1368-1644), persisted through the Qing dynasty (1644-1912), and reached its climax in the early Republican period (1912-1949). Western ideas were first introduced by missionaries. Later, returning overseas Chinese students, having studied in Europe, the United States, Japan, and other places abroad, also helped to popularize Western ideas. In 1907, Rong Hong (容闳), or Wing Yung (1828-1912), published in English his autobiography *My Life in China and America*. It was translated in 1915 into Chinese with a Chinese title *Eastward Movement of Western Ideas* (西学东渐). From that time onwards the expression "the eastward movement of Western ideas" became popular in China. The use of Western ideas to study classical Chinese literature can be traced to the late Qing dynasty and the early Republic of China—and this also led to changes in the very conception of literature in China. For example, Wang Guowei (王国维, 1877-1927) and Liang Qichao (梁启超, 1873-1929) emphasized the importance of the study of fiction and drama in the modern sense, and helped to displace the classical Chinese literary concept of lyricism as the orthodox. In 1895, Yan Fu (严复, 1854-1921), in his academic paper that introduced Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* and his theory of evolution (Wang S. 16), and in his translation of Thomas Henry Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*, introduced to China theories of evolution in biology.

These ideas of evolution further influenced the historical study of classical Chinese literature. For instance, both Chen Zhongfan's (陈中凡, 1888-1982) 1923 *Trend of the Evolution of Chinese Literature* (中国文学演进之趋势), and Zheng Zhenduo's (郑振铎, 1898-1958) 1927 *A New Approach to the Study of Chinese Literature* (研究中国文学的新途径) (Zheng 9-10) describe the historical development of classical Chinese literature through these new lenses of evolution. Guo Shaoyu (郭绍虞, 1893-1984) also published two papers on the development of classical Chinese literature, using the same interpretation. Apart from literature, these new ideas about evolution also influenced the historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism. In this respect, at the beginning of the first chapter, "An overview of Chinese literary criticism," of his *History of Chinese Literary Criticism* (中国文学批评史), Guo Shaoyu divides the history of Chinese literary criticism into three stages: the evolution of the concept of literature (文学观念演进期), the restoration of the concept of literature (文学观念复古期), and the completion of literary criticism (文学批评完成期) (Guo, *History* 2). The naming of the three stages reflects the influence of the theory of evolution on the historical study of classical Chinese literary criticism.

In May 1919 Mao Zishui (毛子水, 1893-1988) published a paper, "National Heritage and Scientific Spirit" (国故和科学的精神), in the first issue of the magazine *The Renaissance* (新潮), which highlighted the need for using scientific methods to sort out Chinese national heritage, drawing on Zhang Taiyan's (章太炎, 1869-1936) paper "National Heritage on Balance" (国故论衡). Zhang's definition of literature, in turn, was influenced by the West and Japan. Following Mao Zishui's thinking, Hu Shi (胡适, 1891-1962) further elaborated in his 1919 paper "The Meaning of the New Ideological Trend" (新思潮的意义), where he proposed a systematic social-ideological approach as follows: "Study the problems, apply academic principle, sort out the national heritage, and rebuild a civilization" (Hu, *Collection vol. II* 551). In January 1923, Hu Shi in his "Publication Manifesto" (发刊宣言) in the *Quarterly Journal of Traditional Chinese Studies* (国学季刊) argued, along similar lines, that "the materials of traditional Chinese studies should be systematically organized" and "comparative studies should be used to help the organization and interpretation of materials of traditional Chinese studies" (Hu, *Collection vol. III* 17). This echoed Hu Shi's earlier attempt, in his 1922 Doctoral degree thesis at Columbia University, *The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China* (先秦名学史), to use modern European and American thought to study and promote traditional Chinese ideas (Hu, *Collection vol. VI* 10). This background to the "sorting out of the national heritage" is what promoted the birth of historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism. In his autobiography, written while teaching at the Southeast University in China, Chen Zhongfan recalled that he opposed the blind restoration of the school of Critical Review (学衡派), an academic school formed in the early period of the Republic of China, which advocated "organizing the national relics by scientific methods" (Wu 8). This idea of using scientific methods to organize national heritage also influenced Chen's writing of *History of Chinese Literary Criticism* (中国文学批评史).

The Chinese university system, including its disciplines and the compilation of textbooks, were undoubtedly influenced by the West and Japan. In January 1904 Zhang Zhidong (张之洞, 1837-1909) and his assistants compiled *The Constitution of the University* (奏定大学堂章程), which, drawing lessons from the Japanese educational system, proposed to divide the education system in China into eight core disciplines, which included "the arts" (文学科) and nine related subjects; "the subject of Chinese literature" (中国文学门) is one of the latter. Furthermore, "the subject of Chinese literature" included seven primary courses such as "Notes on Ancient Chinese Articles" (古文论文要言), when the course handouts were created by the universities' teachers. In 1923, Chen Zhongfan taught the course "Ancient Chinese Literature Review" (历代文评) at Southeast University, basing the material of the course on "Notes on Ancient Chinese Articles." The latter was also the initial motivation for his writing of *History of Chinese Literary Criticism*. Along similar lines, Zhu Dongrun (朱东润, 1896-1988) and others started to conduct research on historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism because of their academic and teaching jobs in universities. For example, in 1931 Zhu Dongrun set up a course titled "On the History of Chinese Literary Criticism" (文学批评史) at Wuhan University. In the course's information brochure, "A Glance at National Wuhan University" (国立武汉大学一览), Zhu described the course's content as "a brief description of the origin of and changes to Chinese literary criticism," which also reflected the historical consciousness of modern academia at the time.

## II

The reception of the Western concepts of "literature" and "literary criticism" laid the foundation for historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism as a subject of research. In ancient China, the term *wenxue* (文学) was used to describe literature, but it primarily referred to archives and classics (文献经典). Although it was once thought that many Chinese neologisms were borrowed from Japanese *kanji* translations, since the nineteenth century these have instead been translated directly from English. An example of this is the translation of "literature" via the Chinese word "文学" (Masini 250). Lu Xun's claim that *wenxue*, as the Chinese translation of the English word "literature," was "imported from Japan" is not accurate (Lu 96). However, the widespread use of this Chinese word to translate "literature" and reception of Western literary concepts in Japan have also influenced the literary studies in China. *Wenxue* only became the term for "literature" in a broad sense when Western learning was introduced to China in the nineteenth century. The expression *wenxue* refers specifically to literary works as art, that is, to the so-called belles-lettres primarily for their aesthetic effect and expression of emotions. Hu Shi stated that "when you express your ideas well and express your

emotions well, that is literature" (Hu, *Collection vol. II* 46). It is clear that Hu's understanding of *wenxue* is related to the Western concept of literature because it highlights its independent value and status. Along similar lines, when defining the concept of *wenxue*, Chen Zhongfan quoted the definition by the American scholar Theodore Whitefield Hunt (1844-1930) as: "[literature] is ... the expression of mind and heart and will and conscience and taste; of the sum total of a man's being" (Chen 5). Chen was also influenced by Western learning, specifically by the British scholar Caleb Thomas Winchester's (1847-1920) four qualities of literature. These notions are expressed in Winchester's *Some Principles of Literary Criticism* (Chinese translation: Commercial Press, 1923), where Winchester also argued that "As thus defined it includes all attempts to discover what are the qualities that constitutes literature, whether qualities of matter—as imagination, emotion, or qualities of manner—as melody and all virtues of form" (Chen 5-6). It can be seen here that Chen's definition of literature originated from Western ideas. Zhu Ziqing (朱自清, 1898-1984), in the preface to *Poems Expressing Aspirations* (诗言志辨), writes: "The input of Western culture has changed our ideas of 'history' and 'literature.' ... [Through learning Western literature and culture] we established our own literary history" (Zhu, *Complete Works vol. VI* 127).

Under the influence of Western literary concepts, these pioneering Chinese scholars also understood the difference between the meanings of "literary criticism" in China and in the West. Specifically, they drew lessons from the Western definition of "literary criticism" in order to redefine the meaning of "literary criticism" (文学批评) in classical Chinese literature. With reference to Western literary criticism since Aristotle, together with Chinese works of literary criticism, like Liu Xie's (刘勰, about 465-521) *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (文心雕龙), Chen Zhongfan divided the meaning of literary criticism into five aspects: correction (指正), praise (赞美), judgment (判断), classification (分类), and appreciation (鉴赏). When Zhu Dongrun defined "literary criticism" in his *History of Chinese Literary Criticism Handout* (中国文学批评史讲义), he included the textbooks of the Sui and Tang dynasties and the categories of poetry and prose criticism in *Complete Library of the Four Treasuries* (四库全书). However, Zhu pointed out that "although contemporary scholars think that the classification of Chinese books was quite exquisite in ancient China, the establishment of all the so-called literary criticism should be extended to the contact with Western literature" (Zhu 465).

In 1947, Zhu Ziqing, one of the leading intellectuals and scholars of Chinese literature, claimed that Guo Shaoyu's *History of Chinese Literary Criticism* was a paradigmatic work of meta-critical significance. Zhu argued that "the notion of 'literary criticism' is undoubtedly imported" (Zhu *Complete Works vol. VIII*, 197). I.A. Richards (1893-1979), a major twentieth century American critic of the New Criticism school, taught at Tsinghua University from 1929 to 1930. Richards left a powerful imprint on Chinese academic studies of literature. In his diary, Zhu Zhiqing often mentioned his readings of I.A. Richards, as Zhu himself was also teaching at Tsinghua University at the time. From 1937 to 1939, William Empson (1906-1984), a student of Richards, came to Peking University and later taught at the Southwest Associated University. Empson more widely promoted Western literary and critical ideas in China; Chinese scholars were greatly influenced by him. The above shows that Western literary criticism has had a profound impact on its Chinese counterpart. In the first chapter of *History of Chinese Literary Criticism* (中国文学批评史), Luo Genze (罗根泽, 1900-1960) gives a clear definition of the history of literary criticism. Inspired by Western literary criticism theories, Luo advocated that literary criticism should include three parts: literary judgment (文学裁判), critical theory (批评理论), and literary theory (文学理论), which in turn he divided into seven stages: premise (前提), conduct (进行), standard (标准), method (方法), error (错误), criticism (批评), and construction (建设) (Luo, *History Zhou, Qin, and Han Dynasties* 6).

The Western influence on the critical study of Chinese literary history can be seen in the use of Western concepts to interpret Chinese literary works, and to write history of literary criticism. In his review of the first volume of Guo Shaoyu's *History of Chinese Literary Criticism*, Zhu Ziqing mentioned that Chinese scholars would then often "select Chinese questions" through the framework of western literary criticism. (Zhu, *Complete Works vol. VIII* 197). Zhu also addressed the two major difficulties in writing the history of Chinese literary criticism: first "how to do gold-mining among myriad of books," and then "how to build a new system" (Zhu, *Complete Works vol. VIII* 195-196). This "new system" clearly draws on Western scientific methods and theories to interpret Chinese literary ideas and sources. Guo Shaoyu, in turn, used systematic methods to compare and cross-reference Chinese literary criticism with Western literary criticism. For example, he used the Western epistemology and notion of "intuition" (直觉) to discuss Zhuangzi's Daoist aesthetic ideas. Luo Genze's

*History of Chinese Literary Criticism* combined both Chinese and Western ways of classification. His "theory of creation" (创作论) and "theory of appreciation" (鉴赏论) derive from the West, while the naming of "theory of tonality and melody" (音律说) and "category of style and genre" (文体类) come from China.

The Western historical tradition of literary criticism as an independent subject of study provides points of reference for the Chinese pioneers of the historical study of classical Chinese literary criticism. Luo Genze, in his *History of Chinese Literary Criticism*, quoted the French critic Remy de Gourmont (1858 -1915), and argued that "the history of literary criticism is no longer the portrait of a series of critics, but the history of criticism" (Luo, *History* 5). Luo further posited that, due to the influence of historical and natural conditions, "Most criticism in China is practiced by writers. Since there are not many experts in criticism, the writers' roles as critics should focus on the establishment of theory rather than the criticism of literature" (Luo, *History* 15). Based on reviewing Chinese and Western literary criticism and literary theories, Guo's argument expresses the specificity of the history of Chinese literary criticism.

Under the influence of Western literary criticism, the pioneers in the historical study of classical Chinese literary criticism have defined the scope and contents of literary criticism as well as expanded its breadth. In his *History of Chinese Literary Criticism*, in the first chapter of the "Yuan and Ming dynasties," Chen Zhongfan devoted a section specifically to "the criticism of *ci* and *qu* poetry" (词曲评), and introduced the thoughts of Shen Defu (沈德符, 1578-1642), Lu Tiancheng (吕天成, 1580-1618), and Wang Jide (王骥德, 1540-1623), among others. In his analysis, Chen went beyond the scope of traditional "poetry and prose criticism" (诗文评) in China. Fang Xiaoyue's *Chinese Literary Criticism* (中国文学批评) also contains a special section on the criticism of fiction and drama. Fang used the Western philosophical terms "subjectivization" (主观化) and "objectification" (客观化) to evaluate fiction and drama. In the book, Fang discussed Jin Shengtan (金圣叹, 1608-1661) and Li Yu (李渔, 1661-1680), praising their writings which "showed that there is 'heart and spirit in writing *fu* prose' (赋家之心) by drama and fiction writers" (Fang 283). Fang concluded this work with the following lines: "Both Jin Shengtan and Li Liweng have made groundbreaking achievements. In terms of the historical methods, they both learn from the experience of the writers of *ci* and *fu*, breaking away from the credo of Confucian poetics cherished by Chinese literati for ages" (Fang 294-295). Compared with the previous works on the history of Chinese literary criticism, Fang's *History of Chinese Literary Criticism* broke down the earlier limitations of Chinese poetry and prose criticism, giving due attention to fiction, drama, and their commentary reviews and comments, which were traditionally ignored. All these achievements were obviously influenced by Western literary criticism, and Fang himself admitted that this was the case (Fang 300) and that he put forward a Chinese and Western academic vision. Zhu Dongrun's *An Outline of the History of Chinese Literary Criticism* (中国文学批评史大纲) also discusses the theory of drama and fiction criticism, including drama criticism of Guan Yunshi (贯云石, 1286-1324), Zhou Deqing (周德清, 1277-1365), and Wang Jide, among others. In his 1933 *Lecture Notes* (讲义), Zhu put forward the following argument:

Alexandre Dumas is a great French dramatist. One day Dumas' son asked him about the secrets of writing drama, to which he replied: very easy. The success of a drama depends on the first fold being clear, the last part being short, and the middle part being interesting. Dumas' words are similar to the Chinese saying about having a start like a phoenix's head, a middle part like a pig's belly, and a last part like a leopard's tail, the two kinds of expressions can prove each other (Zhu 231).

All these fragments indicate the influence of Western literary criticism on Chinese pioneers in the field and the achievements they have made.

### III

The so-called scientific method referred to "the Western academic method" in modern China. Calling the Western method the "scientific method" is certainly complimentary. Being "systematic" was considered a paramount merit. At that time, Chinese scholars generally advocated studying the history of Chinese literary criticism by using the scientific method of Western literary criticism theory. Chen Zhongfan suggests in *History of Chinese Literary Criticism* "using Western scholarship to compare to ancient Chinese learning" (Chen 5) as a way to expound the specific characteristics of Chinese literature and to cross-reference Chinese and Western works of literature. Afterward, works such as Guo Shaoyu's *History of Chinese Literary Criticism*, Fang Xiaoyue's *Chinese Literary Criticism*, Zhu

Dongrun's *An Outline of the History of Chinese Literary Criticism*, and Luo Genze's *History of Chinese Literary Criticism*, all highly value exchanges between Chinese and Western scholarship, and application of scientific and systematic methods to the historical study of classical Chinese literary criticism. As a result, the discipline began to take shape. Specifically, Chinese scholars like Guo Shaoyu benefited by learning about Western scholarship and reading Chen Zhongfan's writings about Chinese literary criticism. Guo compiled the textbook *History of Chinese Literary Criticism* at Yenching University, a missionary university based on Western learning. Guo paid tribute to Chen Zhongfan, who was the first to teach and publish a textbook on the history of Chinese literary criticism: "I am just Chen's follower, walking in his footsteps" (Guo, *Miscellaneous Works* 405). In "How I study the history of Chinese literary criticism," Guo recalls that "most people's attitudes towards scholarship was influenced by Western learning...I knew some scientific methods and could systematize the old learning, which was of great help to my research" (Guo, *Miscellaneous Works* 435). It is evident from this quote that the scientific methods borrowed by Chen and others from Western scholarship have deeply influenced the writing of Guo's *History of Chinese Literary Criticism*. Fang Xiaoyue's *Chinese Literary Criticism* also draws on the ideas of Western literary criticism and research methods. In this book, Fang emphasizes that the exchanges between Chinese and Western ideas at the time were inevitable (Guo, *History* 324). In sum, learning from the Western approach to the study of classical Chinese literature was mainstream in Chinese academic circles of the time.

Such influence is also clear when viewing the history of classical Chinese literary criticism from an evolutionist perspective. Since antiquity, China has had no lack of literary criticism. Liu Xie's *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* and Cao Pi's (曹丕, 187-226) *On Classics-On Literature* (典论-论文) are classics of literary criticism. However, the Chinese cared little about theorizing criticism. Critical reflections were mixed up with literary theories and literary thoughts, which were scattered around the text rather than organized systematically. Western literary criticism, conversely, has had a unique status since Aristotle in ancient Greece, characterized by diachronic and systematic features. It was under the influence of European evolutionism and systemic studies that the pioneers of Chinese literary criticism began to reflect on the historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism. R.G. Moulton's *The Modern Study of Literature* was very influential to Chen Zhongfan's article "The Trend of the Evolution of Chinese literature" (中国文学演进之趋势) of 1922. Further, it influenced Chen's historical consciousness in his *History of Chinese Literary Criticism*. In his *History of Chinese Literary Criticism*, Guo Shaoyu endorsed an evolutionary view of literature, obviously derived from Western concepts. In the first chapter of the book, Guo put forward the idea that "Chinese literary criticism is different from that of the West because the latter has a different idea in a different era...However, it cannot be said that the conceptual framework of Chinese literary criticism did not come from the West" (Guo, *History* 2). Guo, in fact, proposed three development stages of Chinese literary criticism. Along similar lines, Fang Xiaoyue's *Chinese Literary Criticism* provides a unique interpretation of the development of literary criticism.

Regarding specific methods in criticism, several pioneers of Chinese literary criticism have shown in their writings a distinct Western influence. Primarily, the critical methods proposed by the British scholar George Saintsbury (1845-1933) in *History of Literary Criticism* have had a great influence on several of these pioneers. This includes Chen Zhongfan's writing of his *History of Chinese Literary Criticism*. Chen, in the preface of the book, divided Saintsbury's literary criticism methods into twelve parts, arguing that "The three methods of induction, deduction, and judgment are the foundation of all criticism, historical criticism is the best tool for research... in this book, I will use the other four methods to study different styles of literature and art in both ancient and modern times of China" (Chen 8). Although Chen did not read the original works of Saintsbury and only quoted the secondary sources, this did not affect his understanding and reception of Western academic methods. Saintsbury's methods of criticism also influenced Chen's choice of objects and sources of critique and made his work into an example of the foundation of the historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism. Another author who was inspired by Saintsbury is Luo Genze, who in the preface of his *History of Chinese Literary Criticism* combined a variety of Western theories (Luo, *History* 4).

#### IV

For the historical study of classical Chinese literary criticism, modern Chinese scholars have drawn lessons from Western academic methods via intermediary Japanese academic circles. Japanese academic circles has been instrumental as a scholarly bridge. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in the context of the enduring impoverishment and long-standing debility of the late Qing dynasty and the foreign discrimination towards Chinese people, the Japanese scholars Kozyo

Satakichi (古城贞吉), Toyohachi Fujita (藤田丰八), and Shionoya On (盐谷温) objectively recognized the historical influence of Chinese literature on Japan and its cultural value. These Japanese scholars also realized that Japanese culture is rooted in and connected to Chinese culture. Drawing on Western academic methods, these Japanese scholars made various attempts to formulate research principles regarding the historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism, accumulating in the process valuable experiences, and playing a leading role as models for the research of modern Chinese scholars.

From 1894 to 1895, the Hanwen Academy (汉文书院) in Japan published a book series, *The Study of Chinese Literature* (支那学). Of the series in the fourth volume, two bore the influence of Western learning. After visiting China, Japanese scholar Kozyo Satakichi published *History of Chinese Literature* (支那文学史) in 1897. This is not only the first book that dealt with the history of Chinese literature in the modern sense, but also the first time that the Western concept of "literature" was applied in interpreting classical Chinese literature. Although in the book the study of specific literary history was not completed, it had a profound influence on the historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism. Another of these Japanese scholars is Suzuki Torao (铃木虎雄), who graduated in Chinese studies from the Tokyo Imperial University in 1900. In 1916 Suzuki Torao went to study in China for two years. From the end of 1908, Torao had also served as an assistant professor at Kyoto Imperial University. This university had taken the lead in separating the subjects of literature, philosophy, and history. This combination of events led Suzuki Torao to break away from traditional Sinology and directed him to the historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism using Western literary ideas and methods.

If the historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism in modern Japan has, on the one hand, learned from traditional Chinese literary research methods, on the other hand it has applied modern Western literary research methods. Before and after the Meiji restoration in Japan (1868), many scholars were deeply influenced by European and American scholars in terms of literary ideas and literary criticism. This led to the study of Chinese literature in Japan taking a new turn; it aroused the interest of Chinese literary scholars, both directly and indirectly influenced Chinese scholars who were good at Japanese, and influenced Chinese literary scholars through the Chinese translations of Japanese scholarly works.

Suzuki Torao's *History of Chinese Poetics* (支那诗论史) played an important role in the establishment of the historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism as a subject of study. In 1927, Beixin Publishing House (北新书局) published the book in China with a translation by Sun Lianggong (孙俚工, 1894-1962). Several Chinese pioneers in the study were inspired by Suzuki Torao's book. Chinese literary critics in the early period, such as Chen Zhongfan, Guo Shaoyu, Fang Xiaoyue, and Luo Genze, quoted Suzuki Torao's book in their works on Classical Chinese literary criticism. In 1936, Commercial Press published the Chinese version of Aoki Masaru (青木正儿) *An Outline of the Ideological History of Chinese Literature* (中国文学思想史纲), translated by Wang Fuquan (汪馥泉, 1900-1959). Other works, such as Aoki Masaru's *Chinese Criticism on Literature and Arts* (支那文艺论藪), published in 1927, and Shionoya On's *An Introduction to Chinese Literature* (支那文学概论讲话) have also exerted a certain influence on the historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism.

## V

As an attempt of the early Chinese intellectuals to adapt themselves to trends in world literature, the construction of historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism as a subject of study embodies multiple historical values that need to be interpreted dialectically. Having begun more than ninety years ago, the Chinese predecessors of Chinese literary criticism learned from Western academic methods and studied the history of classical Chinese literary criticism, cross-referencing Chinese and Western scholarship. To some extent, the Chinese pioneers of the study paid attention to the reception and application of Western literary theory, which was indeed an important attempt, not only to provide a necessary supplement to the traditional Chinese academic methods but also in laying a theoretical foundation for the establishment of the subject as a topic of study.

During the establishment of the historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism as a subject of study, we should also pay attention to the methods that were learned from Western academia. Although much of the content of Chinese and the Western history of literary criticism is quite different, traditional Chinese academic methods need to be dialectically checked, though not completely discarded. The original ideas from ancient Chinese scholars about issues of literary creation and criticism practice cannot just be molded into Western canons, nor can they simply be incorporated into

Western ideas. Theory of literary criticism should not ignore differences in the characteristics between the intuitive experiences (直觉体验) of ancient China and the cognitive logic of the West.

There remains, of course, the problem of interpreting sources from ancient Chinese literary criticism with the approach of Western literary theory. In the process of learning from Western academic concepts and methods, historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism has inevitably ended up in a situation of mechanically copying methods from the former. In "The Methods on the Explanation of Scholarship" (学艺史的叙解方法), Luo Genze attached great importance to the unique value and significance of Chinese academics and academic history and opposed the "integration" (糅合) of Chinese and Western thoughts (Luo, *Collection* 44). Wang Yao (王瑶, 1914-1989) also opposed the dismemberment of the history of Chinese literary criticism in an attempt to adapt to the Western theoretical system. In the article "Stylistic Analysis and the Establishment of Literary Collection" (文体辨析与总集的成立), Wang pointed out that a common mistake that modern Chinese researchers in classical Chinese literary criticism have made was to mechanically use ideas from Western literary theory to analyze Chinese literary resources. Wang argued that, in regard to the analysis of Chinese literature, "when one cannot find a set of systemic theories and ideas to analyze an issue among Chinese literature, then one ignored its importance in the development of Chinese literary theory and just mentioned it in passing" (Wang Y. 93).

The pioneers of historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism soon became aware of the disadvantages of copying and automatically applying Western theories and ideas of literature to classical Chinese literary studies and were able to correct and adjust in subsequent studies. In writing the first draft of *An Outline of the History of Chinese Literary Criticism*, Zhu Dongrun referred to the definition of literature from the *English Encyclopedia* by the British literary critic Edmund Gosse (1849-1928). Furthermore, he mentioned Saintsbury's views on the scope and objects of literary criticism in the history of literary criticism. However, Zhu's citations were almost all deleted in the finished version of the book. In the first draft of this book Zhu also cited views about literature by the British scholar Herbert Giles (1845-1935) from *A History of Chinese Literature* to illustrate Si Kongtu 's (司空图, 837-908) poetic theory. The comparisons between Chinese and Western literature were firstly removed from the table of contents and later deleted from the book. The reason for this was that a comparison between Chinese and Western literature would inevitably have appeared ineffectual and containing traces of rigid imitation. Nevertheless, the influence of Western literary criticism on Zhu's book is evident.

In the process of using Western academic resources to interpret Chinese scholarship, we should first make clear the exact meaning of Western literary and art theories, and only then compare them with the original Chinese theories and sources to construct a scientific historical study of classical Chinese literary criticism. Guo Shaoyu praised Ye Jiaying's (叶嘉莹, 1924-) *Collection of Chinese Classical Poetry* (中国古典诗论集) in his written speech "On the Study of Theoretical Criticism of Classical Chinese Literature" (关于中国古典文学理论批评研究的问题) at the 1980 Classical Chinese Literature Research Symposium for its "natural integration of Chinese and Western literary theories" (Guo, *Collection* 539). That is to say, on the one hand we should learn from Western scientific methods to establish the subject of the historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism and modernize the study, and, on the other hand, we should pay attention to Chinese literary criticism which is different from Western literary criticism and has its own value. A comparative study of the methods of the history of literary criticism between China and the West will undoubtedly promote the development of the study of the history of literary criticism between China and the West.

Traditional Chinese views on literature and literary criticism that do not conform to Western scientific concepts still have their specificity and values. Western literary ideas and criticism should only be used as a reference rather than as a criterion to judge the merits and demerits of the historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism. The unique phenomena and characteristics of Chinese literature itself should be read and studied in its specific cultural context, as these are interlinked with traditional Chinese philosophical thought and reflect the specificity of the Chinese language and its social background. Therefore, Chinese scholars of this study should also pay attention to traditional Chinese methods and theories of criticism, such as "the theory of literary style" (文体论), and "textual research" (考据), among other.

In conclusion, Chen Zhongfan, Guo Shaoyu, Luo Genze, Fang Xiaoyue, Zhu Dongrun, and other pioneers in the field have laid the foundation for the establishment of historical studies of classical Chinese literary criticism as an independent subject of study. Crucially, they have made a valuable

contribution by recognizing that literary critics in China can learn from Western scientific methods while inheriting more traditional Chinese academic methods of research.

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