

The Moscow-Yan'an-Beijing Mode of Chinese Literary Theory

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Song Li and Ping Liu,

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Abstract: This paper examines the genealogy of Chinese literary theory under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), in terms of Moscow-Yan'an-Beijing Modes from the inception of the CCP to the present. The focus of this paper is the state-sanctioned textbooks of literary theory and criticism from the beginning of the PRC to the present. The story of these textbooks tells us as much about the complex entanglement of Chinese Marxism or Maoism with Soviet Marxism, i.e. Leninism and Stalinism in the Mao era as about the powerful, on-going impact of that ideological lineage today.

Song LI and Ping LIU

The Moscow-Yan'an-Beijing Mode of Chinese Literary Theory

Introduction

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), nearly 100 state-sanctioned textbooks of literary theory and criticism have been published, and then adopted by Chinese universities. These textbooks explicate the basic issues of literary theory, showcasing the ideological norms and assumptions during different historical periods. The textbooks of literary theory play an authoritative role in the establishment of the discipline of literary studies. The compilation of these textbooks shows evolvement of the PRC's literary theories and criticism. Their underlying assumptions derive from Chinese Marxism, or Sinicized Marxism in arts and literature. Their theoretical premises can be traced to the Moscow-Yan'an-Beijing Mode. This concept was first proposed by Liu Kang, who states:

Until today, western scholarship has not paid sufficient attention to Chinese Marxism, especially to the aesthetic and cultural theories of Chinese Marxism. This is undoubtedly a flaw in western studies on China. I explored the question of 'Yan'an - Beijing Mode' of Chinese Marxism, for I believe that it is indeed an 'epistemological rupture' from the classical Marxism and Soviet Bolshevism (Leninism and Stalinism). This modern Chinese thought undoubtedly originated from the west and the Soviet Union, but the epistemological rupture and transformation that China has undergone is the key to understanding Chinese modernity. Unfortunately, western Chinese studies and postcolonial criticism have little to say in this regard and often obfuscate the issue (Liu, *China's World*).

In what follows, we examine the epistemological and ideological assumptions underlying Chinese textbooks of literary theories and criticism, hoping to further probe into issues of Chinese alternatives or Chinese exceptionalism, as a central "China question" of western critical theories.

Ideology, Hegemony, and Cultural Revolution

According to Althusser, ideological state apparatuses (ISA) include educational institutions (e.g. schools), media outlets, churches, social and sports clubs and the family to serve the interests of the ruling class. Althusser believes that only when a social class simultaneously exercises hegemony over and through ISA can it hold state power. Unlike repressive state apparatuses (RSA), which express and impose order through violent repression, an ISA disseminates ideologies which help reinforce the control of a dominant class. It employs an "ideological way" to influence and shape the values of the people so that they accept the existing political and social order and thus voluntarily comply with its rule and administration. As the product of power struggle and interest distribution, the state has acquired political legitimacy (Althusser 170-86).

Although Althusser's concept of ISA largely derived from his experience of France as an advanced capitalist state (with a past legacy of highly centralized political hierarchy as well as revolutionary radicalism), its theoretical potency and viability far exceeds the French experience. It is actually highly relevant to non-capitalist, socialist states such as China and the Soviet Union (which was a major subject of Althusser's critique of Stalinism). Given the fact that Marxism has been the common ground for Althusser and for China and the Soviet Union, such an affinity and proximity is certainly reflected in Althusser's thinking of culture, ideology, and the polity of the state. In order to consolidate its authority, the ruling political party needs to strengthen it via various means. The state is a conceptual aggregation of ideology, which has specific values, and conceptually represents economic and political relations. It is also an authoritative aggregation, which seems to integrate the collective will of the political party, the government, and the people. While all this is based on the legitimacy of ideology, the compilation of literary theory and criticism textbooks after the founding of the PRC showcases how political party legitimacy is established by state ideology in the field of literary criticism. The ISAs in the PRC, namely the propaganda departments of the CCP overseeing all cultural and ideological affairs of the party-state, regards literary creation and criticism as a kind of organized production, serving varying objectives of the CCP in different periods of time (for a perceptive analysis see Yang Jiangang's paper in this special issue). In the PRC, literary criticism has become an integral part of the dominant ideology, indispensable for the political legitimacy of the CCP (Li).

Gramsci, on the other hand, believes that the ideology of mass culture is a battle field for all kinds of cultural power. To be specific, the field of ideology is a site of negotiation, consultation, dialogue, and struggle. In order to seize cultural hegemony, it is vital to occupy the field of "common sense"

and "mass culture." In order to establish socialist cultural hegemony, therefore, the revolutionary party does not suppress by force and coercion, but gains the consent of the broad populace through reinventing and monitoring a revolutionary mass culture. Gramsci considers schools and education systems to be important institutions that cultural hegemony must construct. The ruling class sets up schools to produce specialized intellectuals who can maintain or seize power. The prevailing mainstream thought in schools is supposed to be that only the ruler is superior, and its purpose is to drive the educated to learn consciously and voluntarily, and to accept and practice the ruler's will by developing a firm and unwavering sense of moral and social responsibility (Gramsci).

Liu Kang compares Gramsci's theory of hegemony with that of Qu Qiubai, the precursor of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) cultural and ideological revolution, and then Mao Zedong's theories and practice of Chinese Revolution premised on the cultural revolution and peasant uprising as two essential pillars. Liu convincingly shows us that Mao's cultural revolution aims at transforming the vast Chinese peasantry into revolutionary subjects, who in turn rise up in armed struggles—first as the Chinese Red Army, then the People's Liberation Army (PLA), to fulfill Mao's ultimate goal of seizing political power (Liu, *Qu Qiubai; Hegemony; Aesthetics*). What Gramsci could not possibly do in the Fascist prison in the 1930s had been realized in the CCP's revolution that began at roughly the same time in the 1930s, was declared victorious in 1949, and has continued till today. Mao launched incessant ideological and cultural campaigns during his reign as CCP's supreme leader, before and after the PRC was established, in Yan'an and in Beijing. It should be noted that revolution was not only Mao's trademark but also his ultimate obsession. As Liu points out, Mao's revolution is both cultural and military, and ideological revolution for Mao is both means (mobilizing the masses) and ends (creating a utopian society) (Liu, *Ideology*). Such an obsession with revolution, and, in particular, cultural revolution, is truly exceptional amongst communist leaders across the world. No Soviet leaders, from Lenin, to Stalin, to Khrushchev and Brezhnev, were ever so obsessed with cultural revolution, which may probably be construed as a quintessential feature of Chinese exceptionalism under Mao. Gramsci was another communist leader who prioritized culture and ideology, and his theoretical asset has been touted by a great many western Marxists, who seem to have been fascinated by Mao in one way or another. The lineage or genealogical connection of Mao (via Qu Qiubai), Gramsci, and Althusser, a crucial link of twentieth century Marxism, has been grossly undervalued, and needs to be scrutinized.

The Moscow Mode: Leninism-Stalinism in Chinese Literary Studies

The Moscow Mode refers first to the political, ideological, and organizational domination of the Soviet Communist Party (CPSU) over the CCP from its inception (1921) to the early Yan'an period (circa 1942), when Mao, in a series of political purges and ideological cleansings, dissolved Stalin's paternalistic reign via the Comintern in 1943. The so-called Yan'an 整风运动 "Rectification Campaign" (1941-43) eventually canonized Mao as the mastermind of Chinese Marxism or the Sinicization of Marxism (making Marxism Chinese), later enshrined in the CCP's 1945 Constitution as Mao Zedong Thought or the canon of Mao. Mao's ideas of communist revolution differed from the Soviet model in significant ways, particularly in the two pillars of cultural revolution and peasant uprising, mentioned earlier in this paper.

Nevertheless, the CCP's guiding ideology and professed goals were deeply steeped in Leninist vanguardism, and Marxism-Leninism of the Soviet brand remained sacrosanct for the CCP. The love-hate story of the Chinese and Soviet communists is a major thread of the following narrative, especially in literary studies in particular, and cultural and ideological terrains at large. After the PRC was established in 1949, the CCP immediately installed its ideological state apparatus (ISAs), reinforcing at the national level what it had practiced ever since its inception in 1921. The CCP has always accorded high priority to propaganda and ideology. From the very beginning, the CCP's core leaders were responsible for propaganda work. In 1923's 3rd CCP Congress, the Central Education and Propaganda Committee was established following the Soviet Communist Party's model. And in May 1924, the CCP formally established the Central Committee Propaganda Department, the name and function of which has remained ever since (Wang). In the 1950s, the CCP copied Soviet institutions profusely, setting up party organizations in literary and artistic domains, from the central government to the provincial, municipal, and county levels, such as the Chinese Writers Associations, Painters Associations, Cinema Associations, Performing Arts Associations, and so on and so forth, and the umbrella organization of the China Federation of Literature and Arts. Of course, one of the most important tasks was to transform, and, in many measures, completely reinvent the knowledge regime in the New China, particularly the higher education and academic research institutions. The

metamorphoses were staggering. Social sciences and humanities were almost completely revamped in the major 1953 "reform and adjustment campaign" of China's higher education (Liu, *Social*).

Apart from institution-building, a primary task of the CCP's ISAs was to install a theoretical credo of Marxism-Leninism for all cultural and ideological work, including literary theory and criticism, drawing extensively on Soviet resources.

The concepts of literature were copied verbatim from the Soviet Union, and the textbooks of literary theory and criticism were most directly influenced. In the early years of the PRC, Soviet textbooks were translated and adopted en masse, erecting the norms of literary studies, dictating the basic forms of academic research. At the same time, Soviet experts came to China to lecture on their doctrines, providing examples to Chinese literary theory textbooks in concept and style. From the beginning, Marxist-Leninist literary theory became the dominant paradigm in the PRC, primarily based on the Leninist-Stalinist notion of literature and arts being reflections of social reality, or the doctrine of socialist realism. Views of Marx and Engels on literature and arts, fragmented and dispersed in their writings, were also edited and translated as new canon. More often than not these Marxian classes were re-translations of Soviet editions and translations. In the early PRC periods, several Soviet textbooks were widely adopted in China.

Leonid Timofeev's *Principles of Literature* (1948) was the first general textbook of literary theory in the Soviet Union. It aimed to inculcate the Soviet people with the political ideology of communism: "Soviet literature should educate the people with ideals of communism, and to offer spiritual and intellectual sustenance as broad as possible to the masses through the power of literature" (Timofeev). It consists of three parts: the first part deals with the basic principles of literature: the nature, characteristics, and functions of literature; the second elaborates how to analyze literary works, and expounds the content and form, thought and theme, structure and plot, of literature, as well as the characteristics of literary language; the third describes the process of literature development, including style, genre, method of writers and literary type analysis. This was a benchmark textbook that Chinese colleges and universities adopted widely, signaling the transition from non-Marxist, discrete views of literature to a monolithic view of literature under the rubrics of Soviet Marxism-Leninism. The book was suffused with quotations from Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, rigidly delineating the orbit of literary and aesthetic studies based on principles of socialist realism.

Ivanov S. Pidakov's *An Introduction to Literary Theory* was published by the China Higher Education Press based on the lectures he gave to the graduate students of literature and art theory in the Chinese Department of Peking University from the spring of 1954 to the summer of 1955. "Art and science have the same object of study—the real reality in all their forms and relations," declared Pidakov in this introduction. Here art and science are equated with epistemology, a way of knowing the world, thus neglecting the aesthetic function of art. Pidakov states: "To understand life artistically also follows the laws of cognition. On this Lenin provided a remarkable and profound formula, which explained the essence and phases of cognition" (Pidakov). Here, he equates the mental process of literary creation with philosophical epistemology. In addition, in order to adhere to proletarian literary principles, he vehemently attacks impressionism, symbolism, scholasticism, and futurism as works of decadence, and of "reactionary bourgeois art." The style of the book is similar to Timofeev's *Principles of Literature*, which takes the theory of reflection as the philosophical basis of literary theory, and explains the literary phenomena and problems in socialist society with Marxist historical materialism. It mainly includes three parts: the general theory of literature, the composition of literary works and the development process of literature.

Pidakov's central tenet is that of "reflection": literature is nothing more than a truthful reflection of social reality. The reflection theory is the foundational premise of socialist realism, the predominant Soviet doctrine of literature and arts to which China had subscribed throughout the entire Mao era, despite the Sino-Soviet ideological split in the 1960s. The reflection theory and socialist realism purportedly derived from Lenin's treatise on materialism. But according to Zhongyi Xia, a leading scholar of Chinese literary studies, Pidakov's reflection theory, and its backbone of Zhdanov's (1896-1948) doctrine of socialist realism, had little if anything at all to do with Lenin's materialist notions. The Chinese, however, dogmatically adhered to the notions of Pidakov and Zhdanov without questioning their dubious claim to Lenin's resource (Xia). It should be noted here that the Sino-Soviet ideological split centered on who is really the ideological loyalist or the revisionist with regard to Marxism-Leninism. The Chinese painted the Soviets as revisionists and insisted that they were the only faithful heirs to Lenin's cause. Hence Pidakov and the other Soviet literary theorists of Stalinist-Zhdanovist socialist realism were not been under assault in China as "revisionist dogs." Rather, their views had been well preserved and disseminated widely throughout China.

Other popular Soviet textbooks include Dmitri Shepilov's *Introduction to Literary Theory*, Vyacheslav Nedoshivin's *Introduction to Art*, and Victor Korzun's *Introduction to Literature and Art*. Shepilov's was a handbook for students in Soviet teachers colleges, useful for Chinese students as a handy reference, too. Nedoshivin did not consider his *Introduction to Art* as "a systematic coursebook in Marxist-Leninist aesthetics," but instead a study guide to art as science, to perform a "scientific," i.e. cognitive function, in precisely the same manner as Pidakov's, treating literature and arts as nothing but cognitive instruments: "science and art are nothing more than the way in which people perceive the world around them" (Nedoshivin). Korzun's *Introduction to Literature and Art* had nothing new to offer, but was also used extensively in Chinese universities' literary studies curriculum, since its reductionist generalization and simplification of literature and arts suited the objectives of ideological indoctrination. In 1952, the Chinese Ministry of Education organized a national translation project of Soviet textbooks.

In short, the Soviet Union played a crucial role in the PRC's literary theory and criticism, in terms of institution-building, academic paradigms, norms and curriculum, with an enduring impact still affecting China's academic scene today. The central catechism of Soviet literary theory is socialist realism, buttressed by the credo of reflection theory with dubious lineage to Lenin. These are the thrust of what Liu Kang calls the Moscow Mode in Chinese revolution, from the CCP's beginning to the present, spanning nearly a century. Literary theory and criticism as front-line foot-soldiers of the CCP's ideological battleground thus bear the brunt of all political and ideological vicissitudes, and the entanglement of the Moscow Mode, Yan'an Mode, and Beijing Mode in literary studies is a fascinating tale of the CCP's cultural and ideological journey.

Chinese Marxism : From Yan'an to Beijing Mode

Mao Zedong waged the "Rectification Campaign" (1941-43) at Yan'an, a remote, impoverished locale on the Northwestern Chinese plateau. This was a decisive moment for the establishment of Chinese Marxism or Sinicized Marxism (also known as Mao Zedong Thought). A centerpiece in the campaign was Mao's *Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art*, later to be canonized as the sacred scripture of Chinese literary and art theory and criticism. The thrust of the *Yan'an Talks* is that literature and arts are the instrument of politics: literature and arts "belong to a certain political line"; "literary and art criticism is one of the main methods of the revolutionary struggle" and "political standards should be the first and artistic standards the second" (Mao, *Talks*, 58). After the founding of the PRC, the purpose and direction of literature and art was further developed into propositions, as literature and art should serve politics, literary and art academic research should serve politics, and so forth. The tendency toward "academic politicization" which replaced academics with politics became more evident. Mao Zedong regarded culture, ideology and education as pragmatic epistemology, providing guidance for political, social, and economic practice.

The primary objective of the Rectification Campaign was to complete the political and ideological coup d'état of Stalin's reign of the CCP via the Comintern that began as early as in the Long March (1934-35), when Mao and his supporters sacked the Comintern-appointed CCP leaders and seized military power. During the early Yan'an period (1936-41), Stalin again sent his protégé Wang Ming from Moscow via the Comintern, to be his proxy leader of the CCP, equipped not only with Stalin's political authorization but also "authentic" Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism of the Soviet brand. The Yan'an Rectification, then targeting Wang Ming's political and ideological clout through ruthless political purges and ideological campaigns, culminated in crushing Wang Ming and his cliques politically and ideologically, and, in the meantime, catapulted Chinese Marxism, or Mao Zedong Thought, to the ideological throne of the CCP. Since literature and arts were at the center of Chinese Marxism of the Mao brand, Mao's *Yan'an Talks* codified the CCP's ideological guidelines that fundamentally metamorphosized the May Fourth (1919) Enlightenment legacy into a revolutionary doctrine of peasant rebellion and ideological "thought remolding." (For detailed analyses of Mao's Yan'an ideological campaign see Liu Kang's *Aesthetics and Marxism*, and Li Wei's paper in this special issue.)

After the founding of the PRC, the *Yan'an Talks* as Mao's canonical work on literature and arts became the standard-bearer for literature and arts in the New China. Zhou Yang, the CCP propaganda chief during the Mao era, declared that "there is no other direction for new Chinese literature and art except the direction set out by the *Yan'an Talks*. If there is, it is a wrong direction" (Zhou). He went on to say that:

In 1942, Comrade Mao Zedong's *Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art* ushered in a new historical era for Chinese literature and arts. If we say the May Fourth Movement is the first literary revolution in the

history of modern China, then the *Yan'an Talks* and the literary revolution that followed ought to be seen as the second literary revolution, and the greater and more profound than the May Fourth (Zhou).

What Zhou Yang attempted was, in effect, to set the Yan'an, or Mao's doctrine of literature and arts against the May Fourth legacy, from which Chinese Marxist and revolutionary ideas were born. The dichotomy between the indigenous, rural-based Yan'an legacy and urban, cosmopolitan May Fourth legacy was to become a major site of fierce political and ideological contention throughout the Mao era. Another major site of tensions and contradictions in the ideological and cultural arena, incipient during the Yan'an era, then grown fully during the Mao era of the PRC, is that of the Moscow vis-à-vis Yan'an mode. A salient case is the textual history of the *Yan'an Talks* from its immediate Yan'an context to the subsequent canonization or codification during the PRC period, with extensive revisions and modifications.

In the canonic edition of the *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* Volume II, published in 1962, a serious revision was made in a key statement. In the earliest version, Mao stated: "While both [the work of art in natural forms and that which is refined and processed] are beautiful, the processed work is more organized, more concentrated, more characteristic, more idealistic, and therefore more universal than the literature and art in natural forms" (Mao, *Collections* 155).

This passage was later revised and codified as Mao's authoritative definition of the "essence of art":

While both (life and art) are beautiful, life as reflected in works of literature and art can, and ought to be on a higher plane, more intense, more concentrated, more typical, closer to the ideal, and therefore more universal than actual everyday life. Revolutionary literature and art should create a variety of characters out of real life and help the masses to propel history forward (Mao, *Selected Works* 344).

Liu Kang observes incisively that:

Previous 'forms of art' were substituted by 'life' itself, which works of art must reflect faithfully; and the ideological and political mission of the artwork was clearly spelt out: to 'propel history forward.' A theorization of the formal and semiotic complexities of aesthetic representation was then rendered into a neo-classicist, pro-Soviet "socialist realist" dogma. Mao's earlier argument underwent a substantial, structural transformation (Liu, *Aesthetics* 92).

The fundamental revision occurs at two levels: first, "art in natural forms" is replaced by "life"; second, the "processed work (of art in natural forms)" is substituted by "life as reflected in works of literature and art." When Mao delivered his talks at Yan'an, art in natural forms, or the crude folk art of peasants, was in his mind the basis and origin of artistic creation (or more precisely, re-creation—to be "refined and processed"). During the PRC era when the *Yan'an Talks* was extensively revised by the CCP Editorial Board under the CCP Propaganda Department, which had overseen the massive Sovietization of Chinese academic research and curriculum, Mao's non-reflectionist notion was modified to stay in sync with the Soviet orthodoxy.

Mao, however, apparently approved such fundamental revision—his ideological and political aides such as Chen Boda and Hu Qiaomu meticulously went over each sentence and phrase with Mao himself during the revision. Although Leninist-Stalinist reflection theory on which socialist realism had been premised was not compatible with his voluntarism, Mao accepted the Soviet dogma in the revision out of expediency, at the moment when the PRC state ideological orthodoxy had to rely on Stalinist Soviet models. From the founding of the PRC to the mid-1960s, the dominant view of literary criticism was the Marxist materialist view of history. The understanding and application of Marxist historical materialism mainly focused on two aspects: first, the historical view of class struggle and class analysis, believing that the history of a class society is the history of class struggle and that class and class warfare are the cores of historical materialism. Second, the view of people's history, which held that the working people are the masters of history and people are the creators of history. Marxist historical materialism and dialectical materialism, as the philosophical basis of literature research, were gradually established after the founding of the PRC. Mao's Chinese Marxism of the Yan'an mode relied on these fundamental principles, and when the CCP finally moved to Beijing after 1949, the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism of the Moscow brand was by and large accepted, and meshed well with Chinese Marxism of the Mao brand. Over time, however, the fissures, ruptures, and disparities between the Yan'an and Moscow modes accelerated rapidly, culminating in the ideological showdown and ultimate split of the two communist giants in the thicket of the Cold War during the 1960s and 1970s. The seeds of dissent had been sown almost at the inception of the CCP in the early 1920s. And

literary theory and criticism had borne the brunt of, and were witness to, the contentions inherent in Soviet Marxism and Chinese Marxism.

After the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956 when Khrushchev denounced the Stalinist legacy, the Moscow-Beijing honeymoon went sour as Mao saw the opportunity arise for him to seize leadership of the international communist movement. In 1958, Zhou Yang proposed a plan "to establish China's own Marxist literary theory and criticism," trying to get rid of the Soviet influence on literary theory. He opposed the tendency to "recite Marxist-Leninist doctrines and transfer foreign experience without considering China's realities," and emphasized that the Marxist theory of literature and art must be closely combined with China's literary and artistic tradition and creation practice" (*Journal of Literature and Art, To Develop*). In the early 1960s, when Zhou Yang took charge of the task to compile textbooks for the national liberal arts, he proposed that literary studies should cover the nature, development, creation, appreciation, and the future of socialist literature.

Zhou Yang's directives underpinned the Chinese textbooks, *The Basic Principles of Literature* (1963) edited by Ye Yiqun, and *The Introduction to Literature* (1979) edited by Cai Yi. Ye's textbook consists of five parts, respectively about the nature, creation, works, appreciation, and criticism of literature. It set up basic guidelines for the teaching and research of literature and arts. Cai Yi's textbook was composed during 1961-63, but not published until 1979 after the Cultural Revolution, during which Zhou Yang and his ideological cohorts including Ye and Cai had been denounced as "Soviet revisionist running dogs" promoting a "bourgeois counter-revolutionary ideological line." As a matter of fact, Cai's textbook elevated Mao's views on literature and art to the guiding principles, and extensively criticized the Soviet doctrine as dogmatic and revisionist.

However, the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) denounced practically everything in China's cultural and educational terrain, shutting down all universities, and discarding all textbooks in social sciences and humanities, including literary studies, compiled and published in the early Mao era from 1949 to 1966. Literary criticism was weaponized as a political assault rifle, as it were, firing the first shot of the Cultural Revolution. In 1965, Yao Wenyuan, one of the notorious members of the Gang of Four headed by none other than Mao's wife Jiang Qing, wrote a review essay "On the New Historical Peking Opera *Hairui Dismissed from Office*," which unfurled the catastrophic Mao version of "theatre of cruelty" across the whole country for more than a decade.

The Reform and Opening Up (1978-present) began a new episode of the historical drama in China both figuratively and literally, breaking open an ideological and cultural kaleidoscope, or a Pandora's box, in cultural and ideological terrains, as China began an arduous, tortuous journey towards modernization, integrating itself into globalization. However, as China gradually adopted a market economy and allowed the novel ideas and images from the world to enter its domain, especially during the decades of the 1980s-90s, contentions in ideological and cultural realms oftentimes triggered nation-wide debates and controversies, such as in the case of the Cultural Reflection or Culture Fever of the 1980s. During the past four decades of the Reform and Opening Up, Marxist-Maoist doctrines have still provided ideological legitimacy for the CCP, more often than not serving as somewhat vacuous rhetoric, rather than the rigid political and ideological guidelines of the Mao era. However, there have been ups and downs in cultural and ideological terrain in terms of the CCP's sometimes tightening, sometimes relaxing control over literature, arts and criticism. Textbooks and the academic research agenda during this period can be seen as part of the on-going story of the Beijing mode in literary studies.

A case in point is *Literary Theory: A Coursebook* (2015), the textbook designated by China's Ministry of Education as mandatory college curriculum in literature departments. The textbook is edited by Tong Qingbing. On one hand, its overall structure and arguments bear strong imprints of both Cai Yi's and Ye Yiqun's textbooks of the 1960s and 70s, particularly in its insistence on Marxist-Leninist-Maoist principles of literature and arts as reflections of social reality and powerful instruments for ideological and political struggles. On the other hand, it attempts to incorporate what China had learned from opening to the world over the last four decades, by highlighting, for instance, in its first introductory chapter on the nature of literary theory and criticism, the views of Rene Wellek, differentiating literary theory, literary criticism and literary history; Meyer H. Abrams on the nature of arts, et cetera (Tong 4).

The bulk of the book, however, is a rehearsal of what the Soviet textbooks, *Mao's Yan'an Talks*, and Mao era textbooks had accumulated, concerning Marxist-Leninist-Maoist tenets, under the banner of "Marxist literary theory." What is theoretically novel about the book is Tong Qingbin's view that literature is a kind of social ideology in the superstructure and that its particularity lies in the aesthetic characteristics of literature, and that literature is an aesthetic ideology. The discussion of aesthetic-ideology mentions Marx, Kant, Hegel, and a few Russian and Soviet theories, and completely bypasses

significant western Marxist contributions to the issue from the Frankfurt School to Althusser, let alone the latter's British proselytizer Terry Eagleton's *Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1991). The Chinese translation of Eagleton's book came out in 2001, drawing considerable interest from Chinese academics. Tong, however, completely ignores it. That Tong's authoritative textbook misses those important modern and contemporary discussions is not an odd omission, if one, upon closer scrutiny, sees that the overarching conceptual framework of Tong's textbook is steeped deeply in the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist orthodoxy, or the Moscow-Yan'an-Beijing mode. Despite the years of opening up, banner-holders such as Tong and his cohorts adamantly refuse to allow anything other than the orthodoxy to prevail. Similar textbook includes *The Literary Theory* (2009) compiled by the Project to Study and Develop Marxist Theory under the CCP Propaganda Department. The professed objective of the textbook is to offer authoritative guidance to Marxist theory of literature with Chinese characteristics, and, as one would probably expect, it hardly ever mentions modern and contemporary conversations about literature, arts, and culture in Marxist traditions. Out of its reading list, Fredric Jameson's 1985 Peking University lectures *Postmodernism and Cultural Theory* (which has never been acknowledged by Jameson as his own work and never published in English) and Terry Eagleton's *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983) are the only two works of living international Marxist critics. The powerful misgivings, if not animosity, about modern western Marxist considerations in literary studies are most visible in the CCP-sanctioned textbooks.

The story of the Moscow-Yan'an-Beijing mode, as shown in the textbooks of the PRC in literary theory and criticism, tells us as much about the complex entanglement of Chinese Marxism of Maoism with Soviet Marxism, i.e. Leninism and Stalinism, in the Mao era, as about the powerful, ongoing impact of that ideological lineage today, as the latest textbooks that we analyze in this paper attest. China, now in the New Era of socialism with Chinese characteristics under Xi Jinping's leadership, has stepped up efforts to promote Chinese Marxism of the New Era, namely Xi Jinping Thought. It is therefore imperative to examine the new political and ideological formulations in the realm of literary studies. We hope our paper, by providing some historical context, will encourage further inquiry in this respect.

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