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A HISTORY OF STYLE:
LITERARY CRITICISM IN COLD WAR CHINA

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation studies the history and methodology of Chinese literary criticism with the aim of understanding the concept of style in literature. Style is an elusive concept in literary studies. Undeniably, readers perceive stylistic differences when they look at different literary texts, to the extent that the author of a text may be identified by those differences alone, which indicates that style is a fundamental property of writing. However, scholars of literature have so far been unable to determine what specific characteristics of a text constitute its style, and therefore cannot reach a consensus on the definition of style. My study aims to relieve the conceptual difficulties surrounding the idea of style and re-introduce style into literary studies.

To this end, rather than directly proposing a new definition of style, this dissertation identifies and examines the ways in which the concept has been used in the history of literary criticism. This dissertation identifies four approaches through which prominent Chinese literary critics of the twentieth century have formulated their opinions about the styles of canonical literary works. The four approaches are named the ideological, the pedagogical, the impressionistic, and the linguistic. Each approach stems from a tradition in the history of literary criticism; each highlights a distinct dimension of the concept of style. Based on case studies of the four approaches, I find that style has primarily been used as a tool for the value judgment of literature, which explains why the concept is indispensable in Chinese literary criticism even without a concrete definition. Style plays an essential role in canon formation.

In addition, this study of style has led to a discovery of the transregional networks that shaped literary criticism in the Cold War era. The first two chapters of the dissertation focus on early Maoist China, and the last two chapters follow a group of intellectuals based in postwar Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the United States. Examining the institutions of literary criticism in

those locations and the networks between them, this dissertation illustrates the Soviet influence on Chinese socialist literary theory, on the one hand, and the impact of US public diplomacy on literary studies in Hong Kong and Taiwan, on the other hand. In this period of frequent ideological disagreements, literary critics took advantage of the vagueness of style to criticize the literary works that did not align with their ideology, presenting their judgment of the ideas expressed in a work as if it were an objective description of the inherent quality of that work. In this way, the study of style sheds light on how the Cold War shaped intellectual history globally.

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INTRODUCTION

The beginning of modern Chinese literary studies in the United States is a history inseparable from the biography of two brothers, T. A. and C. T. Hsia¹ (1916-1965; 1921-2013), who received their early education in Shanghai and Beijing before the civil war, moved to the US, and wrote English-language studies of modern Chinese literature that are now considered the foundation of the discipline.² In 1962, T. A. Hsia, then a research associate at Berkeley, wrote to his younger brother C. T., who had just published *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, about an upcoming conference presentation. The presentation was a part of T. A.'s ongoing research on Lu Xun (1881-1936), who, for numerous readers then and now, notwithstanding some dissenting opinions, was the greatest writer of twentieth-century China. In a letter to C. T., T. A. described his conference paper: "My emphasis, after all, is on Lu Xun's fiction and style."³ His work on Lu Xun materialized as two articles in which he uses a rich vocabulary to characterize the style of the author's prose. For example, in the article "Lu Xun and the Dissolution of the League of the Leftist Writers," T. A. Hsia opens by suggesting that Lu Xun's primary contribution to modern Chinese literature is a stylistic one:

He introduced in his essays and stories a new style of Chinese prose—**terse**, **forceful**, and **condensed** in thought but capable of flights of fancy, and **stirring** in a **dry** and **sardonic** way—a solid proof that the *baihua* was not necessarily

¹ In Pinyin romanization, Xia Ji'an 夏济安 and Xia Zhiqing 夏志清; also romanized as Tsi-an Hsia and Chih-ting Hsia.

² Biographical information on the Hsia brothers is abundant in Chinese. The most useful to date is the recent publication of their letters, in a total of five volumes, Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, eds., *Xia Zhiqing Xia Ji'an shuxin ji* 夏志清夏济安书信集 [Collected letters between C. T. Hsia and T. A. Hsia], vol. 1, 5 vols. (Taipei: Linking 联经, 2015). Also see the prefaces to the multiple editions of the Chinese translation of the book, included in C. T. Hsia, *Zhongguo xiandai xiaoshuo shi* 中国现代小说史 [A History of Modern Chinese Fiction], trans. Joseph S. M. Lau et al., 2nd ed. (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2015).

³ "我所着重者恐怕还是 L. H. 的小说与 style." Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, eds., *Xia Zhiqing Xia Ji'an shuxin ji* 夏志清夏济安书信集 [Collected letters between C. T. Hsia and T. A. Hsia], vol. 5 (Taipei: Linking 联经, 2019), 104 (Letter 564).

sloppy, loose, or vulgarly sentimental.⁴

C. T. Hsia, meanwhile, held a more reserved opinion about Lu Xun. In *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, he characterizes Lu Xun's essays differently:

These *zawen* essays contain **vivid homespun** imagery and illustration, occasionally brilliant epigrams, much **sardonic humor and venom**. But on the whole they leave the impression of **trivial self-assertion**.⁵

... the overall impression of his fifteen volumes of *zawen* is that of a **quarrelsome garrulity**.⁶

The Hsia brothers' divergent opinions about Lu Xun are by now a familiar story in the field; even better-known is the controversy stirred by the younger brother's disagreement with the mainstream reception of the author. That said, one aspect of these foundational debates of the discipline that has so far been neglected is how much of the Hsia brothers' literary criticism is grounded in an assessment of writing style. But if style is an essential quality of literature that critics eagerly engage themselves with, when two critics say such different things about the style of one author, a number of conceptual problems become compelling. Why are Lu Xun's essays "terse, forceful, and condensed" to one reader but "quarrelsome and garrulous" to another? After all, are those essays "terse" or "quarrelsome"? Or, perhaps, can they be *both* terse and quarrelsome? Intuitively, I feel that a text cannot be both "terse, forceful, and condensed" and "quarrelsome and garrulous," because those two sets of notions contradict each other. How, then, can I determine which set of adjectives more accurately characterize Lu Xun's essays? How do I know the nature of Lu Xun's style?

⁴ This article was written in 1959 but published posthumously. Tsi-An Hsia, *The Gate of Darkness: Studies on the Leftist Literary Movement*, new edition (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2015), 100.

⁵ C. T. Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, 3rd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 48.

⁶ Hsia, 52.

A similar example, demonstrating the centrality as well as the difficulty of style in Chinese literary criticism, can be found in an entirely different context: Mao Zedong's speech to Communist Party writers during the Sino-Japanese war in 1942. In a talk to Party cadres, Mao counted eight indictments against their writing style and called for a stylistic reform. An official English translation from 1971, of a revised edition of Mao's talk, reads:

To develop the revolutionary spirit it is necessary to... adopt the Marxist-Leninist style of writing, which is **vigorous, lively, fresh and forceful**. This style of writing has existed for a long time, but is yet to be enriched and spread widely among us. ...[W]e can enrich our new style of writing and spread it widely, thereby advancing the Party's revolutionary cause.⁷

Pending an answer to the question of what constitutes a "Marxist-Leninist style," it is nonetheless safe to believe that a great number of readers worldwide would find it inconceivable that "Marxist-Leninist writing" had anything to do with "vigorous, lively, fresh and forceful." One place where the latter opinion is manifest, granted that it concerns yet another context and another body of texts, is the preface to Katerina Clark's seminal work, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, when she recalls the reaction of academic colleagues when they learned that she studied socialist realist novels. They would, Clark writes, "mutter words of sympathy and amazement: 'How do you ever manage to get through them!'"⁸ Similar to the example of Hsia brothers' reception of Lu Xun, here is another case of aesthetic judgments in conflict. Is there a way to meaningfully negotiate this conflict? Or, must we conclude now that the concept of style has no universality and its judgments are simply subjective?

These divergent assessments of style point to conceptual difficulties that, especially when they are magnified in a moment of tension such as the Cold War, deprive us of the privilege of

⁷ Mao Zedong, "Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing," in *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tsetung*, 1st ed. (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1971), 242–43.

⁸ Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Indiana University Press, 2000), ix.

not thinking about style, the privilege of treating it as a naturalized category and using it occasionally, leisurely. Our knowledge about the subject is in fact too limited. A sequence of interrelated questions demands answers: First, after all, what is the definition of style? The concept itself is as old as literary criticism itself—in the history of Chinese literary thought, discourse about style began in the Six Dynasties (third to sixth centuries), just as Cicero and Quintilian are cited for the western tradition⁹—but it repeatedly escaped the theoretician who quests for a concrete, universal definition. Second, we also do not know much about the mechanism through which the judgment of style is made, or how that type of judgment can make sense when it is communicated from one person to another. Third, a methodological difficulty: Even when I feel certain that I have perceived a style, I may not have a sufficient vocabulary to speak about it; style is hard to talk about. Nevertheless, the history of Chinese literary criticism has produced an ocean of archives on style. Despite the lack of a universal definition, discourses about style pervaded literary theory and criticism and wielded lasting, transhistorical influences. Till this day, critics constantly fall back on style when they express their opinions about literature, especially at moments where the more methodical modes of analysis feel inadequate. That said, in this ocean of archives, despite the uncertainty of style’s definition, one thing is clear: Discourses of style reflect value judgments. In the case of the Hsia brothers, although we will never know how they would define the categories of “terse” or “quarrelsome” and which specific textual characteristics led them to associate those categories with Lu Xun’s writing, it is clear that one critic liked Lu Xun, and the other, not so much.

⁹ For example, see Willibald Sauerländer, “From Stylus to Style: Reflections on the Fate of a Notion,” *Art History* 6, no. 3 (1983): 254–55.

This dissertation is about Chinese literary style. Its direct object of study is twentieth-century Chinese literary criticism, such as the works of the Hsia brothers and Mao. This choice of object is a strategy to navigate the difficulties inherent to the topic. Before proposing this dissertation, I had wanted to study the styles of specific authors and works, but then realized that such a study must be preceded by an effort in defining style and establishing a suitable method of analysis. That work of definition, it turned out, is itself an immense literature, for it has troubled philosophers, literary theorists, and linguists for more than half a century.¹⁰ Yet granted that style is elusive and that the styles of specific authors and work are hard to speak about, it is much more immediately feasible to outline a set of discourses and practices that have existed surrounding the notion of “style.” In particular, I found that, in those discourses and practices, although the definition of the concept is uncertain, it can usually be determined with quite a lot of certainty why the concept is brought up every time it is brought up—in other words, what it affords, what functions it serves in the criticism of literature. The dissertation hence follows such an approach. The “history of style” in its title entails an intellectual history of modern Chinese literary criticism focusing on the discourses and practices surrounding style. I identify, and then analyze, some of the most influential opinions on literature in which style plays a part; I extract a number of approaches to style that have been employed by literary critics when they verbalize their opinions. In doing so, I aim, nonetheless, to attain a better understanding of how style can or cannot be defined, and get closer to developing a methodological framework for the stylistic analysis of modern Chinese writing.

¹⁰ The analysis of style has a much longer history, but I am thinking here about a self-reflexive effort in literary theory of Euro-American academia to treat the problem of style’s definition, which dates to the mid twentieth century. For a more thorough review and bibliography, see footnote 26 of this introduction.

Since the object of this study is identified to be “Chinese literary criticism,” the problem that immediately follows is how to draw the boundary of “criticism” for my purposes. One possible way to do so would be to invoke the methodological debates in contemporary literary studies, which distinguish the work of a literary “critic” from that of a literary “scholar.”¹¹ In that context, a critic is concerned with the task of appraising and ranking literary works. In doing so, the critic does not shy away from making aesthetic judgments which may never be universally accepted. On the other hand, the scholar’s goal is to identify historical or textual facts, and the nature of this work is that it can aspire to objectivity. This distinction will loom large in the latter part of Chapter 3, when C. T. Hsia debated Czech sinologist Jaroslav Průšek (1906-1980) and Taiwan-based scholar Yan Yuanshu (1933-2012), but only in that part. Concerning the entirety of the dissertation, in the contexts I study, “scholarship” was not separated from “criticism.” In the mid-twentieth century, writing about modern Chinese literature from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan or the United States, an intellectual could pursue the tasks of “scholarship” and “criticism” concurrently, and they often did. Accordingly, this dissertation also does not make an effort to distinguish them. Moreover, even the combination of “critic” plus “scholar” did not exhaust the expertise of these multiskilled literati: In the contexts of this dissertation, the “critics” were themselves literary authors and translators, who were often employed by a university and taught classes. Some of them also taught Chinese at a middle or high school. The most exceptional case still, among the figures that drive the narratives of this dissertation’s chapters, is Mao Zedong, who was a poet of classical regulated verse, a theorist of socialist

¹¹ For example, see Joseph North, *Literary Criticism: A Concise Political History* (Harvard University Press, 2017). For a discussion in Chinese studies, see Chen Guoqi 陈国球 (Kwok Kou Leonard Chan), “‘Literary Science’ and ‘Literary Criticism’: The Průšek-Hsia Debate,” in *Crossing between Tradition and Modernity: Essays in Commemoration of Milena Doleželová-Velingerová (1932–2012)*, ed. Kirk A. Denton (Karolinum Press, Charles University, 2016), 25–44.

literature, and a man with actual power to reinforce rules of writing or a ranking of literary works. In sum, this study upholds a broad definition of “the literary critic.” A critic, for my purposes here, is simply someone who expresses opinions about literature and disseminates them from a position of authority. This includes professional critics publishing in various outlets, teachers of a university class, middle school teachers, and does not exclude politicians.

Since the main motivation of the project was to devise conceptual and methodological tools to deal with an elusive notion, it did not set out to argue for or against something. Nonetheless, the project has observed a few salient characteristics of Chinese discourses on style, which can then be isolated and presented as my basic claims. The first and most fundamental claim is the observation of a fact: Chinese literary criticism, classical and modern, has always been preoccupied with style. The intelligentsia read and write with style in mind, constantly ready to judge it. The second claim builds on the first claim and provides an interpretation of it: The main function of style in Chinese literary criticism, I suggest, is to facilitate a convincing expression of one’s value judgments about literature. It is not quite to dissect the constituent elements of style or to theorize on its nature, which explains why an interest in style persists and discourses about style circulate without an explicit definition of the term. Chinese critics turn to style whenever they evaluate literary works; they build intricate models of stylistic hierarchy and place authors and works into the systems of hierarchy; in short, style plays a principal role in canon formation. The third and last claim is methodological. This dissertation proposes a categorization of four approaches to style, extracted from the work of influential modern Chinese literary critics. The four approaches are called the *ideological*, the *pedagogical*, the *impressionistic*, and the *linguistic*. Each approach addresses a certain dimension of the multifaceted concept and points to a possible definition of it. In each chapter of the dissertation, I

track the origin of an approach in the history of literary thought and analyze its main functions as well as disadvantages. These four approaches can become a useful tool to current students, scholars, or any readers of literature who wish to speak about the styles of specific authors and works.

Although the main claim of the dissertation is that the function of style lies in value judgment and canon formation, it is not my intention to settle with the analysis of function and let go of the question of whether and how style can be defined. The analysis of function is a means to an end. The questions that motivate the study are after all the ones raised at the beginning of this introduction: If one calls it “terse” and another calls it “quarrelsome,” then what? Is it possible to discuss the validity of a stylistic judgment, to provide evidential justifications for it, and if this is possible, how? Concerning the historical context I study, the Cold War, conflictual aesthetic judgments of this kind are just ordinary. It is out of a desire to seek a meaningful next step to these aesthetic conflicts that I am still attached to the otherwise uninspiring argument of whether Lu Xun is terse or not. It is when the same object elicits contradictory judgments of its style that we must admit that the lack of definition of style is a problem; the lack of definition is partly what makes it impossible to have a further degree of intersubjective communication on aesthetic judgments. Whether we agree or disagree, we have to settle, because there is no framework, no vocabulary, to investigate and understand the agreement or disagreement. This project therefore aims to attain a better understanding of the abstract concept of style through an examination of its surrounding discourses, but its goal is not to define style for the sake of definition. If a heuristic definition is necessary, it is for the practical end of allowing a wider public to speak about aesthetic judgments, to debate them, beyond the mere declaration of “terse.”

The Cultural Cold War

This dissertation could not have become what it is without the recent publication of the letters of the Hsia brothers, written between 1947 when C. T. boarded a transpacific ship to study at Kenyon College, and 1965, at T. A.'s untimely death. The personal correspondence substantially complements their published scholarship, illustrating in detail their institutional backgrounds, sources of funding, and social connections which helped bring their scholarly work into fruition. Moreover, the mutual influences between the two brothers' work are now confirmed with direct evidence.

Biographical material of this kind, including not only letters but also diaries and memoirs by the critics and their colleagues, constitutes an important half of the archive on which this study is based. The other half is their published works of literary criticism. In this sense, methodologically, this dissertation rearranges the conventional relationship between primary and secondary sources in literary studies and hence departs from the methods typically adopted. I "close read" the works of literary critics as my primary sources; I analyze their authorial intent and rhetoric as I would analyze a work of literature; I then supplement that with biographical material on the critics. By reconstructing the life and work of a few prominent critics of modern Chinese literature, active between the 1940s and the 1970s in socialist China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the US, this dissertation brings new evidence to Chinese intellectual history of the Cold War era.

The context of the Cold War, as mentioned earlier, is essential to this study, without which some of the crucial problems of style could not be so easily discerned. In this period of frequent ideological disagreements, elusive categories such as style were subject to volatile

reformulations by critical and political authorities. Artistic terminologies were commonly deployed to serve non-artistic ends. The most typical case is when literary critics took advantage of the vagueness of the idea of style to criticize the literary works that did not align with their ideology, presenting their disagreement with the ideas expressed in a work as if it were an objective description of the inherent quality of a work. The role of style in value judgment and canon formation was magnified in the ideological division of the Cold War.

However, the Cold War is not only a context in which the study of style finds its place. It is also direct object of the study, as the history of style in turn sheds light on the history of the intellectual institutions and transregional networks which the critics I study were a part of. The intellectual history documented in the dissertation can further be separated into two interconnected parts, corresponding to the two sides of the story of China's Cold War. The first half of the dissertation looks at one side. Materials in Chapters 1 and 2 will show how Soviet theories and scholarship spread to early socialist China. For example, Chapter 2 touches on the introduction of Soviet pedagogy of literacy and literature, in the 1950s, into Chinese middle schools. The reception was mixed. Whereas it was undeniable that the new pedagogy spread widely and prompted Chinese school teachers to change their lesson plans, the traditional pedagogy, through which scholars of imperial times learned Classical Chinese, was surprisingly resilient, and Soviet modifications were accepted only to the extent that the core structure of the traditional pedagogy was untouched. This example is indicative of how Soviet cultural influences played out in Maoist China in a broader sense. In Chapter 1 too, which revisits Mao Zedong's talk on style in the Yan'an Rectifications of 1942, we can see that he relied on a concept from Classical Chinese poetics to sinicize Stalinist political writing. Granted that the

Soviet influence was concrete and widespread, it is precisely at those moments of external impact that the firm hold of traditional Chinese thought was pressingly felt.

This dissertation hence proposes an addition to the comparative, transnational studies of twentieth-century culture, an additional temporal aspect, which is, the endurance of premodern literature and thought in modern times. In this dissertation, the transhistorical lens is clarifying not only for an understanding of Sino-Soviet relations, but also for the study of the opposite side of the Cold War divide. Chinese literary critics of the mid-twentieth century, regardless of their political affiliation and geographical location, benefited from a reservoir of concepts and methods from classical literary thought. Under the climate of the Cold War, the classical reservoir was often invisible when the intellectuals first chose to affiliate themselves with an international power, but the availability of those resources became instantly clear whenever their relationship to that power was distressed, which was not uncommon.

The second half of the dissertation, Chapters 3 and 4, turns to the impact of United States diplomacy on Chinese literary studies, especially in post-war Hong Kong and Taiwan. Chapter 3 shows that, within the United States, research institutions were established, and funding was made available to study the communist bloc, which entirely reshaped the careers of Chinese intellectuals overseas such as the Hsia brothers. Both trained as a scholar of English initially, C. T. Hsia began to study modern Chinese literature in a contracted position at Yale to write an information manual about China for American soldiers in the Korean War,¹² and T. A. Hsia turned to study Chinese leftist writers because his visa in the US was secured by the Far Eastern and Russian Institute at the University of Washington.¹³ Chapter 4 brings up the history of the

¹² Hsia, *Zhongguo xiandai xiaoshuo shi* 中国现代小说史 [A History of Modern Chinese Fiction], xxi–xxiii.

¹³ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, eds., *Xia Zhiqing Xia Ji'an shuxin ji* 夏志清夏济安书信集 [Collected letters between C. T. Hsia and T. A. Hsia], vol. 4 (Taipei: Linking 联经, 2019), 100, 108 (Letters 412 & 414).

United States Information Services (or Agency; acronym either USIS or USIA), an overseas propaganda branch of the State Department established by Dwight Eisenhower, which employed more than 5000 people globally and administered a budget up to \$6.8 million per country per year in the 1950s.¹⁴ Hong Kong had the fourteenth largest office with over 100 staff members; Taipei had another office. Renowned Chinese writers, translators, and editors worked for USIS-funded projects, or relied on its mediation to gain opportunities to study in the US.

The latter side of the Cold War story is by now well-documented by scholarship in Hong Kong and Taiwan.¹⁵ A good part of this scholarship has sought to account for, through archival research and in-person interviews, the instrumental role played by USIS in the growth of post-war modernism in Taiwan,¹⁶ which, as Chapter 4 will show, has been posed as a main challenger

¹⁴ Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 92–93.

¹⁵ Shan Dexing 单德兴 (Shan Te-Hsing), *Cong wenhua lengzhan dao lengzhan wenhua: Jinri shijie de wenxue chuanbo yu wenhua zhengzhi* 从文化冷战到冷战文化：《今日世界》的文学传播与文化政治 [From the cultural Cold War to the Cold War culture: the literary communication and cultural politics of *World Today*] (Taipei: Shu lin shu lin, 2022); Lai Ciyun 赖慈芸 (Lai Tzu-Yun), ed., *Taiwan fanyi shi* 台湾翻译史 [History of translation in Taiwan] (Taipei: Lian jing 联经 [Linking], 2019); You Shengguan 游胜冠 (Sheng-kuan Yu), ed., *Meijie xiandai: lengzhan zhong de tai gang wenyi guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 媒介现代：冷战中的台港文艺国际学术研讨会论文集 [Media modern: proceedings from international conference on Taiwan and Hong Kong arts and literature in the Cold War era] (Taipei: Liren shuju 里仁书局, 2016); Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, “Taiwan lengzhan niandai de ‘fei changtai’ wenxue shengchan 台湾冷战年代的‘非常态’文学生产 [‘Non-normative’ literary production in Cold War Taiwan],” in *Dangdai Taiwan wenxue changyu* 当代台湾文学场域 [Contemporary Taiwan Literary Field] (Zhenjiang: Jiangsu daxue chubanshe 江苏大学出版社, 2015), 283–301.

¹⁶ Chen Jianzhong 陈建忠 (Chen Chien-Chung), “‘Meixinchu’ (USIS) yu Taiwan wenxueshi chong xie: yi meiyuan wenyi tizhi xia de tai gang zazhi chuban wei kaocha zhongxin ‘美新处’ (USIS) 与台湾文学史重写：以美援文艺体制下的台、港杂志出版为考察中心 [United States Information Services and the rewriting of Taiwan literary history: Focusing on magazine publication in Taiwan and Hong Kong under the US aid of arts and literature],” *Guowen xue bao* 国文学报, no. 52 (December 2012): 211–42; Wang Meixiang 王梅香 (Mei-Hsiang Wang), “Meiyuan wenyi tizhi xia de Wenxue zazhi yu Xiandai wenxue 美援文艺体制下的《文学杂志》与《现代文学》 [Literary Review and Modern Literature under the U.S. Aid Literary Institution],” *Taiwan Wenxue Xuebao* 台湾文学学报, no. 25 (December 2014): 69–100; Wang Meixiang 王梅香 (Mei-Hsiang Wang), “Lengzhan shidai de Taiwan wenxue wai yi: Meiguo xinwenchu yi shu jihua de yunzuo (1952-1962) 冷战时代的台湾文学外译：美国新闻处译书计划的运作 (1952-1962) [Outward translation of Taiwan literature in the Cold era: the operation of the translation projects of the United States Information Services (1952-1962)],” in *Taiwan fanyi shi* 台湾翻译史 [History of translation in Taiwan], ed. Lai Ciyun 赖慈芸 (Lai Tzu-Yun) (Taipei: Lian jing 联经 [Linking], 2019), 515–52.

of authors such as Lu Xun and Hu Shi (1891-1962) who are conventionally considered the canon of modern Chinese writing. But more directly relevant to this dissertation's focus on the history of criticism is another recent contribution by literary historians. This is the global expansion of American New Criticism, specifically, the introduction of New Criticism into Chinese literary studies through the interconnected channels of US aid. In English literary studies of the last decade, scholars have paid ample attention to the globalization of New Criticism through infrastructures such as the International Writing Program at Iowa;¹⁷ furthermore, a recent study by Paul Nadal details the arrival of New Criticism in the Philippines, through a network comprising the Rockefeller Foundation, Iowa Writers' Workshop, and the USIS.¹⁸ The history that Nadal uncovered for the Filipino writers can be retold almost verbatim for the modernists in Taiwan in the 1950s-70s. Novelist Ouyang Zi (also romanized as Ouyang Tzu, 1939-), for example, said that her "literary criticism papers generally align with the theory and methodology of New Criticism," due to her studies at the Iowa Writers' Workshop;¹⁹ in a recent memoir essay, she wrote that "no one knows how different our life paths would have been" had she and her fellow writers not known the director of USIS.²⁰ Under these channels of influence, in the late

¹⁷ Eric Bennett, *Workshops of Empire: Stegner, Engle, and American Creative Writing During the Cold War* (University of Iowa Press, 2015); Mark McGurl, *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

¹⁸ Paul Nadal, "Cold War Remittance Economy: US Creative Writing and the Importation of New Criticism into the Philippines," *American Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (2021): 557-95.

¹⁹ Xia Zuli 夏祖丽, "Yizhi de yinghua: Ouyang Zi fangwen ji 移植的樱花——欧阳子访问记 [Replanted cherry blossom: interview with Ouyang Zi]," in *Wo bi de ren: dangdai zuojia caifang ji* 握笔的人——当代作家采访记 [The person holding a pen: interviews with contemporary writers] (Taipei: Chun wenxue chubanshe 纯文学出版社, 1977), 179.

²⁰ Ouyang Zi 欧阳子 (Ouyang Tzu), "Guanyu Xiandai wenxue chuangan shiqi de caiwu he zongwu 关于《现代文学》创办时期的财务及总务 [On the finance and administration of *Modern Literature* at the time of its founding]," in *Xian wen yin yuan* 现文因缘 (Taipei: Lian jing 联经 [Linking], 2016), 295.

1960s to the 1970s, “close reading” emerged in Chinese literary criticism in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Chinese literary studies in the United States, with the exception of Richard So’s work on Eileen Chang,²¹ has not yet made an attempt to recognize the historical relationship between its object of study and US diplomacy. In particular, as the field is weighing into the discovery and study of valuable literary works produced in a range of global Sinophone regions, it would be a costly omission to disregard the historical role of agents such as the USIS in the regions of US influence. One of the long-term goals of the project is to relate modern Chinese literary criticism to the history of criticism globally, in conversation with recent studies such as Galin Tihanov’s transnational account of Russian Formalism²² and the revisionist approaches to New Criticism,²³ while introducing valuable results on the topic from Hong Kong and Taiwan into Anglophone scholarship.

Chinese Terminology of Style

When T. A. Hsia wrote to his brother in 1962, “my emphasis, after all, is on Lu Xun’s fiction and style,”²⁴ he was writing the letter in Chinese, but used the word “style” in English. This was not because he had no Chinese terms for it; a few years earlier in Taipei, when T. A.

²¹ Richard Jean So, “Literary Information Warfare: Eileen Chang, the US State Department, and Cold War Media Aesthetics,” *American Literature* 85, no. 4 (January 1, 2013): 719–44.

²² Galin Tihanov, *The Birth and Death of Literary Theory: Regimes of Relevance in Russia and Beyond* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019).

²³ North, *Literary Criticism: A Concise Political History*; Yohei Igarashi, “Statistical Analysis at the Birth of Close Reading,” *New Literary History* 46, no. 3 (2015): 485–504, <https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2015.0023>; Rachel Sagner Buurma and Laura Heffernan, *The Teaching Archive: A New History for Literary Study* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2021).

²⁴ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, *Xia Zhiqing Xia Ji’an shuxin ji* 夏志清夏济安书信集 [Collected letters between C. T. Hsia and T. A. Hsia], 2019, 5:104 (Letter 562).

was mentoring young writers at National Taiwan University, he was already writing about style, using a Chinese word whose etymological origin is “wind,”²⁵ which was also how Mao Zedong spoke of it. Nonetheless, in Berkeley, 1962 and traversing two languages—Chinese when he wrote to his family and English for scholarship—it seems that he felt an easier connection to the English term. This preference is significant. Whether T. A. was conscious about it or not, there is a unique difficulty of translating basic concepts like style from one language to another, a difficulty that stems from and exacerbates the vagueness that is often inherent to those basic concepts. The Chinese “wind” is not semantically equivalent to the English “style,” although translators may resort to treating them as a pair. I will now clarify my use of the terminology in this dissertation and introduce two of the most common Chinese terms for style.

To begin with, the word “style” in the title of this dissertation should not be taken as the term “style” (stile, stilus, etc.) in the European tradition. Nor is it equivalent to any of the many Chinese terms I will shortly explain. The topic of this dissertation is conceived to be an abstract concept that exists independently of specific languages or cultural traditions; it is that quality of writing even an untrained reader can intuitively perceive, but even a professional critic will have difficulty analyzing. This quality is what makes it possible to speculate the identity of the author of a text by their writing alone. This quality exists irrespective of whether a theory has been put forward about it, irrespective of whether a terminology exists. When I refer to style without quotation marks in this dissertation, it is this abstract notion that I am concerned with, although, since this dissertation is written in the English language, I have no better option than to refer to it using the English word, “style.”

²⁵ “我们所提倡的是朴素、理智、冷静的作风。” Tsi-An Hsia, “Zhi duzhe 致读者 [To readers],” *Wenxue zazhi* 文学杂志 [Literary Review] 1, no. 1 (September 20, 1956): 70.

The nominal dependence on the English term may create a substantial confusion, because there is an existing theoretical tradition in European languages about “style/stile/stilus,” etc. That tradition has come to interpret “style” in certain ways, associating it with certain methods and contexts, with certain ramifications; tremendous efforts have been made to define “style” within the boundaries of that tradition.²⁶ Although this body of work proves extremely informative for my study, it must be clarified that their “style(s)” is not my object. The topic of the study is not the conceptualization or terminology of style in the European tradition, and therefore it is not the task of this dissertation to use a concept from the European tradition to explain the history of Chinese literary criticism.

Meanwhile, neither can Chinese literary criticism offer a singular term that encapsulates the abstract concept of style in its multidimensionality. However, it has been particularly productive to search the history of Chinese literary criticism for the candidates of that singular term, due to what is ostensibly an obstacle: A main characteristic of Classical Chinese literary thought is that it has a large collection of words that can refer to what we now think of as style. A survey of that broad system of terminology will prove that the numerous Chinese words for style are not a redundancy. Every word appears to highlight a distinct aspect of the concept. Consequently, the work of generating a list of Chinese terms is in fact the work to segregate the different components of the concept of style. It is then particularly productive to compare the Chinese terminology to the various attempted definitions of “style” in the European tradition; the shape of the abstract concept is better discerned in the clashing and merging of diverse terms.

²⁶ This literature is enormous; a small selection of works that have influenced this dissertation are, Thomas Albert Sebeok and John W. Ashton, eds., *Style in Language* (MIT Press, 1966); Seymour Benjamin Chatman, ed., *Literary Style: A Symposium* (Oxford University Press, 1971); Nelson Goodman, “The Status of Style,” *Critical Inquiry* 1, no. 4 (1975): 799–811; Sauerländer, “From Stilus to Style: Reflections on the Fate of a Notion”; Berel Lang, ed., *The Concept of Style*, Revised and Expanded edition (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987); Richard Neer, “Connoisseurship and the Stakes of Style,” *Critical Inquiry* 32, no. 1 (2005): 1.

A better description of the Chinese terminology of style can be found in the middle section of Chapter 1. Here, I restrict my introduction to two chief concepts in Chinese literary thought:

First, “body” (*ti* 体). The “body” is the most conventional Chinese term for style; it can be extended into several disyllabic compound words, most commonly “the body of writing” (*wenti* 文体). As early as in the Six Dynasties, when critics used aesthetic categories to generate taxonomies of style, they would name the taxonomy “eight bodies,” “twenty-four bodies,” etc. Yet the major drawback of the “body” is that it does not just mean style. The term can refer to all formal aspects of writing. For example, genre is also “body.” When the compound word “the body of writing” is used, one can only deduce from context whether it means style or genre. However, regardless of this complication, the unique implication of “body” is that it is a static external object. When a critic refers to literary form as “the X body,” they imply that they are perceiving a fixed pattern X that can be isolated and described. This also clarifies one possible confusion of the term, because, even though the word “body” nominally invokes the physiological body, when used as a term for style, “body” only refers to textual style and is not used to indicate the styles of social manners or personality traits. Stephen Owen translates “body” into English as “normative form.”²⁷

Second, “wind” (*feng* 风): The “wind” is one of the oldest concepts in Chinese literary thought, its history preceding the “body,” but it only became a term for style around the same time that “body” appeared. Originally, in the “Great Preface” to the *Classic of Poetry*, the “wind” entails moral education; as a term for style, the “wind” emphasizes that style is the result of

²⁷ Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992), 592.

social influence. It can either be that a group of socially connected writers share the same style, or that a writer's style is a result of having been influenced by other writers before them.²⁸

These are the two main resources from Classical Chinese literary thought. In the twentieth century, however, the introduction of the European term “style” could not be neglected. My earliest example in the four chapters of the dissertation is Mao Zedong's speeches in the late 1930s and the early 1940s, when he and his circle within the Chinese Communist Party adapted Soviet, including Stalin's, writing about “style in work”—in this case, they are directly adapting the Russian *stil'* into Chinese, using the Chinese term “wind.” In the case of the Hsia brothers, too, they studied Anglo-American New Criticism; their use of the word “style” would have been directly influenced by sources such as the “Style and Stylistics” chapter in René Wellek and Austin Warren's *Theory of Literature*.²⁹ In sum, the Chinese terminology of style in the twentieth century can no longer be considered separately from the European “style.” When modern critics spoke of “wind” and “body,” it cannot be assumed that they were thinking in strictly classical terms. Their winds and bodies had been stylized.

The majority of my sources are literary criticism that engages with either “wind” or “body,” although they rarely try to define them. However, since the second half of the twentieth century, several groups of scholarly literature have emerged that directly tackle the difficulty of definition. The most valuable of them is for me the study of the original literature from Six Dynasties literary thought where the terminology of style in Chinese first took shape. An interest

²⁸ Donald Gibbs, “Notes on the Wind: The Term ‘Feng’ in Chinese Literary Criticism,” in *Transition and Permanence: Chinese History and Culture*, ed. David Charles Buxbaum and Frederick W. Mote (Hong Kong: Cathay Press, 1972), 285–93; Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, 586–87.

²⁹ The Hsia brothers were involved in a translation project, funded by the USIS, of American literary theory, in which portions of the book were translated. See Chapter 4 for more on this, especially Table 10; Lin Yiliang 林以亮 (Stephen Soong), ed., *Meiguo wenxue pinglun xuan* 美国文学评论选 [Anthology of American literary criticism] (Hong Kong: Jinri shijie chubanshe 今日世界出版社, 1961).

shared by classicists in mainland China including the Maoist period, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and by western sinologists, this topic has a fairly large archive.³⁰ Scholars have made extreme efforts to define the basic terminology, including “wind” and “body” but also others such as “breath” (*qi* 气) and “bone” (*gu* 骨). Despite these efforts, a consensus still has not been reached on the definition of those terms. Besides, much of this scholarship is of a philological nature and, even when a definition is proposed, it does not engage in the application of the definition in literary analysis. More recently, since the 1980s in the People’s Republic of China, a group of scholars have attempted to establish a Chinese field of stylistics with the help of formalist and structuralist literary theory of the west, which belatedly arrived after the end of the Cultural Revolution. Inspired by structuralism and formalism, Chinese theorists worked on their own umbrella term, “the body of writing.”³¹ While every theorist attempted their own definition of the difficult term, due to the broad scope of the “body,” not all their results directly relate to style.

³⁰ There has been a large number of studies of this topic published since the 1950s till now in the literary supplement to the *Guangming ribao* 光明日报, a newspaper affiliated with the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. The supplement is called *Wenxue yichan* 文学遗产 [Literary heritages]; for examples from early People’s Republic of China, see issues 99, 232, 274, 278, 290, 376. For book-length studies, the exemplary ones are Xu Fuguan 徐复观, *Zhongguo wenxue lun ji* 中国文学论集 [Collected papers on Chinese literature] (Taipei: Minzhu pinglun she 民主评论社, 1966); Zhan Ying 詹鏊, *Wen xin diao long de fengge xue* 《文心雕龙》的风格学 [The stylistics of *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*] (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 1982); Fan Shanbiao 樊善标, *Qingzhuo yu fenggu: Jian’an wenxue yanjiu fansi* 清浊与风骨: 建安文学研究反思 [The clear and the muddy, the wind and the bone: reflections from the study of Jian’an literature] (Hong Kong: Huizhi chuban youxian gongsi 汇智出版有限公司, 2017). For scholarship in English, consider, Gibbs, “Notes on the Wind: The Term ‘Feng’ in Chinese Literary Criticism”; David Pollard, “Ch’i in Chinese Literary Theory,” in *Chinese Approaches to Literature from Confucius to Liang Ch’i-Ch’ao*, ed. Adele Austin Rickett (Princeton University Press, 1978), 43–66; Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*.

³¹ Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe wenxue bianji shi 中国社会科学出版社文学编辑室 [China social sciences publishing house literature editing office], ed., *Xiaoshuo wenti yanjiu* 小说文体研究 [Studies in the form of writing in fiction] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe 中国社会科学出版社, 1988); Tong Qingbing 童庆炳, *Wenti yu wenti de chuangzao* 文体与文体的创造 [The form of writing and the creation of the form of writing] (Kunming: Yunnan renmin chubanshe 云南人民出版社, 1994); Shen Dan 申丹, *Xushu xue yu xiaoshuo wenti yanjiu* 叙述学与小说文体学研究 [Studies in narratology and the form of writing in fiction] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe 北京大学出版社, 1998).

For example, a substantial amount of work in this group has made contributions to genre studies and narratology, rather than the study of style.

Meanwhile, English-language academia has produced two small units of discourses on Chinese literary style. Each unit has also attempted to define style from its specific perspective, but unlike the Chinese scholarship on the classical terminology, the English-language scholarship is interested in applications and have extensively analyzed the styles of authors and works. The first unit is marked by its linguistic approach, which was inherited from mid-century Anglo-American formalism. The pioneering work is the collaborative papers by linguist Mei Tsu-lin and literary scholar Kao Yu-kung on the grammar of Classical Chinese poetry (1968-78), which cited William Empson and Noam Chomsky.³² Mei Tsu-lin then influenced Edward Gunn's book-length study on modern Chinese style, *Rewriting Chinese* (1991), where the analysis of style is confined to four constituent aspects: grammar, vocabulary, rhetoric, and cohesion.³³ The second unit of English-language scholarship is a sociological approach demonstrated by Michel Hockx in his *Questions of Style* (2003).³⁴ In this book, style is defined as "social differentiation"³⁵ and described as a continuum from language style to personality traits to social manners, a scope enabled by Hockx' object of study, the literary societies and journals in early Republican China. But in effect this means that *Questions of Style*, similar to the Chinese formalist-structuralist scholarship since the 1980s, is a study of the multiple topics that happen to cluster under the English word "style." If style is defined sociologically as differentiation and

³² Tsu-lin Mei and Yu-kung Kao, "Tu Fu's 'Autumn Meditations': An Exercise in Linguistic Criticism," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 28 (1968): 44.

³³ Edward Gunn, *Rewriting Chinese: Style and Innovation in Twentieth-Century Chinese Prose*, 1st ed. (Stanford University Press, 1991).

³⁴ Michel Hockx, *Questions of Style: Literary Societies and Literary Journals in Modern China, 1911-1937* (Brill, 2003).

³⁵ Hockx, 13.

applicable in a variety of practices, textual or non-textual, then it remains unclear, in each type of practice of style, what characteristics can generate differences that are of a stylistic nature, and what not. The difficulty of the sociological definition is further reflected in the book's attempt to link "style" to the term "body."³⁶ "Body" in Chinese, unlike the English word "style," does not refer to personality traits and social manners.³⁷ Whereas the English "style" can sustain the conceptual continuum of language style to personality traits and social manners, it is difficult to hold the continuum together in Chinese using "body."

The literature on style repeatedly attests to a strange character of our shared object of study: Every time a study of style must begin with a new definition, one that sets itself apart from every other definition that has been produced before. I began a proposal for this dissertation thinking that we lack an understanding of style because it is rarely studied. I later understood that this is not the case. Even though there has not been a definition of style that satisfies all, it is certainly not because style is rarely studied. Many have studied it and have attempted to define it, but no consensus has been reached. Every time, a study begins anew, rejecting its precursors.

At this point, it would be tempting to just conclude that style does not exist; it is merely an empty signifier. This dissertation does not take this position either, because it is still attached

³⁶ Hockx, 13. Also see the Chinese translation of the book, Michel Hockx, *Wenti wenti: xiandai zhongguo de wenzue shetuan he wenzue zazhi (1911-1937)* 文体问题: 现代中国的文学社团和文学杂志 (1911-1937) [Questions of Style: Literary Societies and Literary Journals in Modern China, 1911-1937], trans. Chen Taisheng 陈太胜 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe 北京大学出版社, 2016).

³⁷ Very recently, Chinese literary theorists have been discussing the terminological confusion in the Chinese contexts. They demand the separation of *wenti* from *fengge*. See Zhao Yiheng 赵毅衡 and Lu Zhenglan 陆正兰, "Fengge, wenti, qinggan, xiuci: yong fuhaoxue jie kai jige jiuchan 风格、文体、情感、修辞: 用符号学解开几个纠缠 [Style, Genre, Emotion, and Rhetoric: Disentangled through Semiotics]," *Xueshujie* 学术界, no. 236 (January 2018): 87–95; Ding Jinguo 丁金国, "'Ti' de kunhuo '体'的困惑 [Comments on Perplexities of Ti]," *Yantai Daxue Xuebao (Zhaxue Shehui kexue Ban)* 烟台大学学报 (哲学社会科学版) 33, no. 4 (July 2020): 111–20; Liu Na 刘娜, "'Wenti xue' haishi 'fengge xue': yige xueshu gainian de kaocha '文体学'还是'风格学': 一个学术概念的考察 [The study of the body of writing, or 'stylistics'? Investigations on an academic concept]," *Zhongguo Yuyan Wenxue Yanjiu* 中国语言文学研究 2022, no. 01 (2022): 127–37.

to one assumption about the nature of style, which is that the location of style is in the text, not in the personality traits or social manners of the author, nor the subjective emotional reaction of the reader (more on this in the Conclusion). This assumption aligns with how we use the word “style” in English as well as in its various Chinese counterparts, because we say that “the text is of a terse style,” not “I feel terse.” (We do say “he is terse,” but for literary style, this should be interpreted as a shorthand for “his writing is terse,” because not all aesthetic categories describe style can be used as adjectives for personality traits. In Chapter 3, we will see that the “graceful” (*wanyue* 婉约) style of the classical *ci* poetry is defined by Qin Guan’s work, but this does not mean that Qin Guan’s personality is graceful.) On this premise of the text-centeredness of style, the dissertation maintains that style is not by its nature equivalent to the adjectives we use to make judgments about it, and that social differentiation is not the nature of style intrinsically but its effect, even though, as we will see in the following chapters, literary critics may write about style as though style were one of those things.

However, this assumption alone is not sufficient for a redefinition of style. So, in the end, this study follows the doctrine of the mean. It does not argue that style is an empty signifier, nor does it attempt to redefine it. Instead, it is a study of the history of literary criticism, focusing on the discourses and practices about style. Each of the four chapters will be a narrative in intellectual history where style emerges as a matter of significant concern, and each narrative will follow a main figure (or figures) who was a prominent literary critic in mid-twentieth century China. Though a definition remains absent, this study seeks to demonstrate that a “history of the analysis of style,”³⁸ as Berel Lang phrased it in 1986, can lead to the discovery of a better way to speak about it.

³⁸ Lang, *The Concept of Style*, 14.

A Literature for Literacy

The critical and scholarly works chosen to be the objects of this study all focus on a singular set of literary texts: the so-called “New Literature” written in the first few decades of Republican China (approximately 1910s-30s). In this sense, although the main object of my study is the history and methodology of literary criticism, it is also my task to address questions and concerns central to New Literature itself and expand our knowledge on it. In particular, a good part of the dissertation is concerned with the role of New Literature in the education of literacy.

“New Literature” is a problematic shorthand, but I resort to it over the even more contested term, “May Fourth Literature.”³⁹ Conventionally, both terms refer to a body of literary works which marked the transition away from Classical Chinese writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, using—or in fact, leading to—the language now considered Standard Modern Chinese. In reality, a much larger variety of vernacular writings existed at the time, but only a specific group of them came to be known as the “new” literature. The authors behind this group of valued texts can at times be identified by their “new” upbringing (having received a western-style education, often abroad) or “new” political ideas (left-wing, anti-monarchy and pro-Republic, sometimes sympathetic toward Marxism and the Soviet Union). That said, I find that a more convenient, and arguably more fundamental, way to draw the relative boundary of New Literature is a sociological one, as demonstrated by Hockx’s studies. In light of the sociological approach, New Literature can be differentiated as the writings that came out of some specific

³⁹ Michel Hockx, “Is There a May Fourth Literature? A Reply to Wang Xiaoming,” *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 11, no. 2 (1999): 40–52.

literary societies or journals, notably the *New Youth*, the *Yusi*, the Literary Association, and so on. In 1935, prominent figures from those societies and journals edited a multi-volume anthology called *Zhongguo xin wenxue dadian* 中国新文学大系 [The compendium of Chinese new literature].⁴⁰ *The Compendium* was a milestone, marking the beginning of the canonization of New Literature as the center of modern Chinese writing. Today, wherever modern Chinese literature is taught, New Literature often accounts for at least half of the readings on the syllabus. Therefore, the topic of this dissertation can also be said to be the style of the modern Chinese literary canon.

While it would be false to assume an internal homogeneity for New Literature, either at a formal or an ideological level, New Literature writers can typically be distinguished by a vocal support for the linguistic ideology they shared. This ideology means, first and foremost, using Mandarin as the language for writing. However, those writers themselves had difficulty with the language, for Mandarin was neither their native spoken tongue (they spoke a topolect with their family), nor their first writing system (they went through traditional scholarly training and were proficient in Classical Chinese). Ye Shengtao (1894-1988), for example, the author of the first novel in the New Literature oeuvre, had to consult his colleagues on Mandarin grammar, and wrote his own diaries and letters in Classical Chinese, an evident proof that he felt more at ease with the language he ostensibly called to abolish (see Chapter 2). One of this dissertation's tasks is to show how linguistic difficulty impacted the form of the literary canon. Nevertheless, however difficult, the linguistic choice was necessary, because it was undergirded by a political agenda. The vernacularization of writing was, as in many other parts of the world, a crucial step

⁴⁰ For a history of the making of this compendium, see Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity--China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 214–38.

toward a broader social reform. The reform-minded intellectuals wanted to invent a unified national language for a new, democratic citizenship, who would seize linguistic capital from the hands of the feudal elites and use it to rejuvenate old China. In a few decades' time, the writings produced by those intellectuals, in that non-native, under-standardized language, became the literary canon of the language.

The style of writing was naturally a major concern. It manifested in two ways, the first of which was rather obvious: The work of vernacularization led to certain specific stylistic criteria, upheld by New Literature authors in their writing, criticism, and teaching. Hu Shi, for example, the foundational theorist of the literary reform, prescribed first eight and then four principles to vernacular writing in the late 1910s, such as, “do not use cliches,” “do not use the couplet structure,” and, “say whatever you have to say; say it however you'd say it.”⁴¹ Both Lu Xun and Ye Shengtao wanted literary writing to sound smooth to the ear (see Chapter 2). To this end, they recommended writers to read their work aloud after writing it. They also both wanted writing to be succinct. Ye Shengtao, commenting on an essay by fellow writer Zhu Ziqing (1898-1948), praised that it is “of a clean shape, without any redundant words or characters”; even for the grammatical particles, “they only appear when absolutely needed.”⁴² In sum, the creation and reception of New Literature must be seen as the execution of these criteria.

The second way will require some effort to explain, but I think it is more consequential than the first. It has to do with the question of how social reform was implemented on the ground level, which prompts us to look at the schools and classrooms where literacy was taught. Modern

⁴¹ Hu Shi 胡适, *Hu Shi wencun* 胡适文存 [Collected works of Hu Shi], vol. 1 (Taipei: Yuandong tushu gongsi 远东图书公司, 1953), 55–56.

⁴² Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, *Wenzhang li hua* 文章例话 [Commentaries on writing with examples], 11th ed. (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian 开明书店, 1949), 9.

Chinese literacy education was founded on New Literature. To this day, in most parts of the Sinophone world, the pedagogy of literacy still relies on New Literature as a pedagogical text.

It has been estimated that, at the end of the nineteenth century, 30-45% of the male population and 2-10% of the female population in China were literate.⁴³ At the time of the 1949 divide, that number was about 20% for the entire population; literacy rate eventually rose to more than 93% in 2000.⁴⁴ Throughout the early and mid-twentieth century, for Chinese intellectuals writing in the modern language, their literary efforts were profoundly intertwined with the hope that a greater number of Chinese people could learn to read and write.

Vernacularization was meant to serve this end. Specifically, Hu Shi argued that literary writing could and should begin before the language itself came to be standardized; literature would make the language, no need to wait for the other way around.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, the colleagues of Hu Shi and Lu Xun at *New Youth* drew up even more radical proposals for literacy: some said, for example, Chinese characters are difficult to learn to write, so Chinese language should be thoroughly romanized; or, let's forget Chinese and speak Esperanto.⁴⁶

⁴³ Evelyn Sakakida Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China* (University of Michigan Press, 1979), 140.

⁴⁴ Heidi Ross et al., "China Country Study," Paper Commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006, Literacy for Life (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2006), <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000146108>.

Conventionally, Chinese literacy is assessed by the number of Chinese characters an individual can recognize. For example, in 1953, peasants must know at least 1,000 to not be categorized as illiterate, whereas cadres and workers are asked to recognize 2,000 characters and other urban residents are asked to recognize 1,500. This, however, may not reflect functional linguistic proficiency of the individual. Zhongyang saochu wenmang gongzuo weiyuanhui 中央扫除文盲工作委员会 [Central committee of the elimination of illiteracy], "Guanyu saomang biao zhun, biye kaoshi deng zan xing banfa 关于扫盲标准、毕业考试等暂行办法 [Temporary measures on the standards of literacy education, the graduation examination, etc.],” *Renmin jiaoyu* 人民教育 [People's education], no. 2 (February 1954): 60.

⁴⁵ Hu Shi 胡适, *Hu Shi wencun* 胡适文存 [Collected works of Hu Shi], 1:59–61.

⁴⁶ For a summary, see Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), "Lun Zhongwen zhi xihua 论中文之西化 [On the westernization of the Chinese language],” *Zhongwai wenxue* 中外文学 [Chung Wai Literary Monthly] 8, no. 4 (September 1, 1979): 66–79.

This preoccupation with literacy was not just theoretical, because some of the New Literature writers were professional pedagogues, the two most prominent examples being Ye Shengtao and Zhu Ziqing. Both had a career teaching in middle schools and editing textbooks. Moreover, their literary writing was blended with their professional role in education. Some of Ye Shengtao's celebrated short stories were first published in a magazine targeting middle school students (see Chapter 2).

The literary writings by Ye Shengtao, Zhu Ziqing, Lu Xun, Hu Shi, and others soon became the standard pedagogical material to teach modern Chinese literacy. Historically, there had been only one way to teach Classical Chinese literacy—through an intensive reading of canonical texts. A grammar-based language pedagogy was late to arrive in China, but even after it became possible to teach grammar directly, frontline teachers in Chinese schools always preferred the traditional pedagogy where literacy was acquired by reading a lot of texts. In short, since the 1920s-30s, modern Chinese literacy has been taught via reading modern Chinese literature, and New Literature has been one of the main things to read. It is not just the New Literature writers that wanted the Chinese public to become literate; en route to becoming literate, a member of that public has to read New Literature.

The stylistic criteria inherent to New Literature also became an integral part of the literacy curriculum. By the 1950s, if not even earlier, the stylistic criteria upheld by New Literature writers had been made the stylistic norms of the modern Chinese language. In the 1950s, when the works of canonical authors were reprinted in the textbooks, they were thoroughly edited for a further degree of linguistic accuracy. This editing process was headed by Ye Shengtao, by now the Deputy Minister of Education. As Chapter 2 will also show, the editing process deeply planted his stylistic criteria into the literacy curriculum.

In sum, in twentieth-century China, a group of intellectuals preoccupied with specific stylistic criteria produced writings that came to be considered the standard of the language they wrote in; at the same time, those writings also formed an inseparable part of the literacy curriculum of that language. Therefore, the centrality of style in Chinese literature cannot be fully accounted for by literary critics' intense interest alone, because the critics were after all not more than a fraction of the population. The centrality of style, we can see once we zoom out to a wider perspective, lies in the fact that the modern Chinese written language originated from the discourses and practices of style by a certain cohort of writers. As long as this language is in use, their ideas of style will continue to structure Chinese writing.

This relationship between literature and literacy in modern China parallels the case of English, which John Guillory studies in detail in *Cultural Capital: The Problem of the Literary Canon Formation*.⁴⁷ Guillory shows that the literary canon materializes as a syllabus of texts that allow some members of the public to learn to read and write in a language used by the ruling class; in the Chinese case, whereas texts such as *The Analects* served this function for Classical Chinese in imperial times, New Literature has been one of the textual corpuses responsible for this function in the modernized state. Moreover, another parallel between Guillory's case and Chinese New Literature is the canon debate in Chinese literary studies: In 1993, Guillory's book was a response to the canon debate that challenged the university syllabus of "western literature"; since the mid-twentieth century, scholars of modern Chinese literature from different political affiliations and geographical locations have expressed their distaste for literary history's unchanging concentration on a handful of New Literature authors. C. T. Hsia's *A History of*

⁴⁷ John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

Chinese Fiction, with its dissident opinion on canonical writers such as Lu Xun, was one influential strand of this canon debate. However, today, New Literature is still the main content on the syllabus when modern Chinese literature is taught. I think that New Literature is hard to be destabilized by canon debates of this kind, because its canonicity is rooted in the role it continues to play in literacy education. The day when New Literature is de-canonized will come after it ceases to be a passage to literacy. This could mean either that language changes and the language that New Literature helped to invent is no longer in use, or that pedagogy changes and students no longer learn literacy by reading canonical texts.

The Methodology of Literary Criticism

I have said that one goal of the project is to connect Chinese literary criticism to the global history of criticism; style proves to be a useful topic to discuss for this purpose, because the complexity of the concept makes it a sharp lens under which general methodological difficulties in literary criticism are exposed, difficulties that are shared by critics today regardless of the language they work in. The history of the analysis of Chinese literary style is hence a resourceful archive that helps us formulate self-reflexive questions about the nature of our work as well as identify solutions.

In particular, three methodological questions recur throughout the dissertation, and therefore deserve to be previewed here. They are: First, does literary criticism require textual evidence, and what constitutes literary evidence? Second, how do aesthetic categories work as literary judgment? And lastly, a question about the pedagogy: Can criticism be taught?

The question of evidence arises naturally when the same author or text triggers contradictory evaluations of its style. In this case, it seems that one obvious way to resolve the

contradiction would be to ask: What are the constituent elements of a “terse” style? And then: Can you identify those elements in Lu Xun’s essays? In practice, however, these questions simply open up one can of worms after another, because for literary style as much as for style in other artistic media, a consensus has not been formed on what the constituent elements of “style” are. Where does one even begin to identify textual evidence for stylistic judgments? What counts as evidence of style, what does not? In the last century, many have attempted to establish a framework that can help readers link the perception of a specific style to concrete textual evidence. This would be to determine that style is reflected in certain specific aspects of the text (or, possibly, not only textual but also extra-textual aspects); on each of these aspects, a certain set of features can constitute a specific style. For the study of literary style, such efforts often rely on linguistic tools, as is the case for the strand of stylistics developed in Euro-American academia in the mid-twentieth century, with the support of prominent members of Russian Formalism and Anglo-American New Criticism.⁴⁸

The elusiveness of style may be the reason why the urge for evidence is so salient in this particular branch of literary studies. And if we consider the history of literary studies generally, even though this history did not always speak explicitly about evidence, the problem of evidence was still salient at every major turn. Methodological developments in literary studies paralleled the evolving notions of “what constitutes literary evidence”: “practical criticism” is one example, and digital humanities is another. Literary studies has always been reflective of its own

⁴⁸ Sebeok and Ashton, *Style in Language*; Chatman, *Literary Style*. For work by linguists, see for example, Geoffrey N. Leech and Mick Short, *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose*, English Language Series (London ; New York: Longman, 1981).

Chinese linguists have also made this attempt. See, for example, Cheng Xianghui 程祥徽 and Li Yunhan 黎运汉, eds., *Yuyan fengge lun ji* 语言风格论集 [Collected papers on language style] (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe 南京大学出版社, 1994); Cheng Xianghui 程祥徽, Deng Junjie 邓骏捷, and Zhang Jianhua 张剑桦, *Yuyan fengge* 语言风格 [Language style] (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian 三联书店, 2002).

methodology, but not much has been said explicitly on the role of evidence in this methodology. “Style,” therefore, can provide a productive analytical angle. The history of the discourses on style is a convenient place to identify a documented history of how the notion of literary evidence evolved.

That said, if we look back at the historical discourses on style in a more expanded scope, the kind of stylistics that eagerly searches for a framework of evidence was far from a mainstream or a historical norm. The norm in the long history of Chinese literary criticism was quite the opposite: Stylistic judgment was, by default, made without explicit evidential justification. That is to say, literary critics lavishly threw out judgments of style, be it “terse” or “in the style of the period of the Jian’an reign,” without needing to define the constituent elements of a stylistic category, and without presenting textual evidence to justify the linkage of such a style to an author or a text. This trend continued into the modern period and is still prevalent in Chinese literary criticism today. It would, therefore, be valuable to ask: What historical conceptual factors led to the domination of such an approach to style? What made it possible for literary theory and criticism to not require evidence in the first place? Since this study focuses on twentieth century sources, it can only answer these questions to a very limited degree; scholarship on classical poetics could take on these questions much more effectively, and it would be worthwhile to do so. Nonetheless, within the scope of modern and contemporary literary criticism, this dissertation asks: If no evidence is being articulated to justify a stylistic claim, especially given the slipperiness of the topic of style itself, how do stylistic judgments “make sense” to an interlocutor? How can we ever feel convinced that someone else’s judgment is valid? How can a community of people ever come together and talk about style?

This dissertation addresses the problem of the lack of evidence by considering the relationship between literary style and aesthetic categories (more on this in Chapter 3).⁴⁹ In all languages and cultural traditions, adjectives are commonly employed to characterize style. (As T. A. Hsia wrote, “cold, cutting, brilliant essays”⁵⁰; “the style we promote is straightforward, reasoned, and composed.”⁵¹) Each language/tradition has its own set of adjectives; not all of them are translatable, although some translate fairly easily. This dissertation is premised on the understanding that the adjectives used to describe style are aesthetic categories. This is not to say that the nature of style is aesthetic categories, or that aesthetic categories are styles in themselves; my point is rather that we habitually use aesthetic categories to speak about style. Aesthetic categories are not a system based on textual evidence. It would be futile to try to enumerate all the textual characteristics that constitute the beautiful or the sublime, but those notions circulate widely, nevertheless. It is the quality of the aesthetic categories that allow stylistic judgments—when they are expressed by way of those adjectives—to be made and disseminated without textual evidence.

Needless to say, different or even antithetical aesthetic categories can be applied to the same text. What is “terse” to one may just be “quarrelsome” to another. But on the relationship between aesthetic categories and stylistic judgments, I am more interested in a different problem, to me a more fundamental one. I am less concerned with

- This is beautiful!

⁴⁹ Studies of aesthetic categories are numerous, but I have in particular been helped by Michael Dango, “Camp’s Distribution: ‘Our’ Aesthetic Category,” *Social Text* 35, no. 2 131 (June 2017): 39–67; Sianne Ngai, *Our Aesthetic Categories: Zany, Cute, Interesting*, first paperback (Harvard University Press, 2015). For a study of aesthetic categories in Chinese, see François Jullien, *In Praise of Blandness: Proceeding from Chinese Thought and Aesthetics* (New York: Zone Books, 2004).

⁵⁰ Hsia, *The Gate of Darkness: Studies on the Leftist Literary Movement*, 103.

⁵¹ Hsia, “Zhi duzhe 致读者 [To readers],” September 20, 1956, 70.

- Not to me...

than with

- This is camp!
- I don't understand "camp." What does that mean?
- It's not possible to define...

There are a few common scenarios where the latter type of problem manifests. The first is translation. For example, "potent and undifferentiated"⁵² is a Classical Chinese aesthetic category for poetic style. While I feel I intuitively understand what a "potent and undifferentiated style" means in Chinese, I struggle to explain it, which then warns me of the inadequacies of the aesthetic categories as a system of knowledge; meanwhile, I also struggle to understand aesthetic categories from languages that I am unfamiliar with, like the sublime, the camp, the zany... Second, even when translation of the aesthetic category is possible, the value judgment inherent to the aesthetic category is often not translated. When T. A. Hsia dubbed Lu Xun's style "cold"⁵³ and "hard and lean,"⁵⁴ he was not only describing Lu Xun's style, but at once elevating Lu Xun to the same status in literary history as medieval poets Meng Jiao and Jia Dao, on whom that particular pair of words, "cold" and "lean," was first used.⁵⁵ American readers of T. A. Hsia certainly can conceive of their own kind of cold-lean style, but they could not automatically conceive of the conventional implications of an aesthetic judgment that circulated historically in Classical Chinese poetics. This reveals that the problem of those infelicitous exchanges of

⁵² "Xiong hun" 雄浑, or, literally, "male and muddy." See Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, 299–357.

⁵³ Hsia, *The Gate of Darkness: Studies on the Leftist Literary Movement*, 103.

⁵⁴ "其文硬瘦," Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, *Xia Zhiqing Xia Ji'an shuxin ji* 夏志清夏济安书信集 [Collected letters between C. T. Hsia and T. A. Hsia], 2019, 5:105 (Letter 562).

⁵⁵ "元轻白俗, 郊寒岛瘦" is from Su Shi 苏轼, "Ji Liu Ziyu wen 祭柳子玉文 [In memory of Liu Ziyu]." Su Shi 苏轼, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu* 苏轼全集校注 [The annotated complete works of Su Shi], vol. 18 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe 河北人民出版社, 2010), 6971–74. In this edition, the phrase "郊寒岛瘦" is glossed as "清峭硬瘦."

aesthetic categories does not lie in the translingual practice itself, which then points us to see the third and last scenario. To any interlocutor who has not been sufficiently exposed to the contexts in which the aesthetic category has been used, including native speakers, either because they are from a different social group, or because they have not received that specific type of education, stylistic judgments based on aesthetic categories cannot come through. What the “cold and lean” style demands from its audience is not linguistic proficiency in Classical Chinese, but a knowledge of the Classical Chinese literary canon and the surrounding discourses. Aesthetic categories are not accessible to all interlocutors in an equal manner. They are coded speech used by and for those who have been trained in a particular system of knowledge.

If I do not already possess the knowledge about a specific aesthetic category, can I learn it, and how? This question is to me a variant of a bigger question: Can criticism be taught? Here, by “criticism,” I am not referring to my earlier definition of “the critic,” that is, I certainly do not mean that readers should learn to disseminate opinions from a position of authority. I am thinking about how any reader of literature can be trained to speak about literature in some systematic way that can make sense to others. This learning takes place in university classrooms, in middle and high schools, but in less professionalized settings too, for instance, when one leisure reader comes across a review of a book on the mass media and learns to reproduce the claims made in that review. In this context, if we ask the question of how a reader can learn to speak about the elusive topic of style, which we assume is not something that an untrained reader can intuitively be well-versed in, we will see that this learning experience depends on which approach to style the reader is pursuing. To learn “stylistics,” which emphasizes the collection of textual evidence, a student needs to acquire linguistic knowledge, a framework for the identification of textual evidence, and the ability to execute the evidence-collection process. On

the other hand, if the goal is to speak about style through aesthetic categories, the learning experience is extraordinarily different. That reader needs first to become familiar with a sufficient amount of literary works, as well as to accumulate a sufficient number of aesthetic categories, i.e. to know that lexicon. Then, because aesthetic categories have no explicit definition, they will need to remember which aesthetic categories have been associated with which authors/texts in the prior history of criticism. Only in this way can they learn to reproduce the usage of those aesthetic categories in the idiomatic manner. When they do use those aesthetic categories in the idiomatic manner, associating them with the conventional type of authors/texts, it can finally be said that those readers are “in the know,” that is, they have learned to talk about style through aesthetic categories.

Comparing the two learning processes, I think that the second one requires a greater amount of work and a longer time. For those who do not speak the language, who have not consumed the necessary amount of literary works, who have not been sufficiently exposed to the conventional linkage between an aesthetic category and a specific type of literary work, to learn to speak through aesthetic categories is an arduous task, and a particularly untransparent one, for it is difficult even to measure one’s progress. Of course, it is entirely possible to accomplish the task. Everybody who knows it learned it that way.

What is reflected by the contrast of pedagogy is that style has been a regime of literary criticism that assigns discursive power in an exclusive manner. The interpretive community consists of a group of people who have learned to speak about something in a conventional manner and have no immediate way of opening it up to people who have not learned to do so, whereas the learning curve is long and bumpy. I have said that “critic” is someone who produces

opinions about literature from a position of authority; we can now see how that authority is attained and maintained in practice.

Yet, at the same time, there is something about style that is intuitive. Untrained, non-academic readers still perceive stylistic differences when they look at different literary works, to the extent that they use it as a criterion to choose which volume to buy in a bookstore, or which thread to click open on a forum of internet fiction. Style is not by its nature the judgment of critical authorities, even though it has been equated with the judgment of critical authorities. This dissertation is a quest for a better understanding of a vague concept in aesthetics, and the reason why this understanding is necessary is because it will allow a wider readership to articulate their reaction to literature without having to complete the long learning curve and to reproduce the aesthetic judgments of the authorities who spoke before them. If this can be done, we can then begin to envision a democratization of criticism.

The Principle of Economy

In the rest of the dissertation, each chapter will introduce one methodological approach to style through which prominent critics of the twentieth century formulated their opinions about the style of modern Chinese writing. Meanwhile, each chapter is also a case study of the importance of the concept of style in intellectual history, situated in its own geopolitical and institutional context. Surprisingly, what was not in the original planning of the dissertation but emerged from the case studies is that all of the four cases reveal a recurring stylistic principle, which, this dissertation will propose, is one preeminent aesthetic category prevailing over the general value system of Chinese literary criticism. Therefore, while by convention I will now

turn to an outline of the ensuing four chapters, I will do so by way of a preliminary discussion of the principle of stylistic economy in Chinese writing.

Stylistic economy was an important principle for Classical Chinese writing at various important periods of literary production, although it was not always the case. For example, the metered prose of the Six Dynasties, although an established and influential genre, grew infamous in its reception history for wordiness. Nonetheless, after several impactful waves of literary reform, such as the work by Han Yu in the High Tang and the Tongcheng School in the Qing, by the end of imperial history, economy was established as a virtue in writing. When Chinese writing transitioned to vernacular at the turn of the twentieth century, the economy principle was not relaxed. In the body chapters of the dissertation, although every chapter centers around intellectuals based in different parts of the world and holding entirely different ideological convictions, these intellectuals shared at least one thing, that is, the desire for economy:

Chapter 1, “The Ideological Approach,” studies Mao Zedong’s conceptualization of style in the Yan’an Rectifications of 1942 and its ramifications in the 1950s. The “ideological approach” refers to the cases where a commentary on the formal characteristics of a text is in fact primarily intended to judge the ideas and beliefs of the author of that text. In a speech in 1942, Mao Zedong listed eight common problems in the style of writers in Yan’an, the first one being wordiness. His goal, however, was to reform the ideology of the intellectuals working in war time for the Communist Party, a project that was resumed in the political campaigns in the PRC. Mao imagined a new style of communist writing, short but condensed in substance, using an accessible colloquial language, which was what he dubbed “Marxist-Leninist.”

Chapter 2, “The Pedagogical Approach,” focuses on middle-school education in the PRC in the 1950s. In this educational setting, on the one hand, canonical works of New Literature

went through word-by-word stylistic revision when they were reprinted in the textbooks; meanwhile, student writing assignments were given the same kind of editing by their teachers. Based on a close analysis of these two kinds of editing practice, I use “the pedagogical approach” to describe stylistic judgment that is made in and expressed through the act of editing in an educational setting, even when no verbal explanation is given to justify the edits. A main component of the editing process is to delete excessive sentence parts, or, in the words of Lu Xun, “to ruthlessly cut all words, phrases and sections that are not essential.”⁵⁶ When a student’s writing leaves no more room for the teacher to delete/edit words, the student can be said to know how to write. This chapter argues that the pedagogical approach to style is a widespread and most rigid regime of literary criticism, although it is rarely thought of as a form of literary criticism.

Chapter 3, “The Impressionistic Approach” analyzes the use of aesthetic categories in the literary criticism of T. A. and C. T. Hsia. In addition, it offers a brief survey of the history of aesthetic categories in Chinese literary criticism; it also evaluates two other scholars’ disagreement with C. T. Hsia’s work, namely Průšek and Yan Yuanshu, the latter of whom borrowed the term “impressionistic criticism” from American literary theory to contest the tradition of using aesthetic categories in Chinese literary criticism. Between the two brothers, T. A. Hsia is the one who first showed an interest in style. He used a similar set of aesthetic categories, first to prescribe a style to emerging writers in post-war Taiwan, and a decade later, to characterize the canonical works of Lu Xun. This set of aesthetic categories shows a strong opposition to linguistic and affective excess. He desired the “condensed,” “terse,” “composed,”

⁵⁶ Lu Xun 鲁迅, “A Reply to the Magazine *The Dipper*,” in *Selected Works*, trans. Xianyi Yang and Gladys Yang, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1980), 162.

“lean,” “dry”; he disliked the “loose,” “sloppy,” and the “vulgarly sentimental.” In this way, T. A. Hsia’s literary criticism re-introduced classical aesthetics into modern writing.

Chapter 4, “The Linguistic Approach,” chronicles the emergence of linguistic tools, in particular the analysis of grammar, in Chinese literary criticism of style. This took place in post-war Hong Kong, partly as a result of translation studies that flourished in Hong Kong under the sponsorship of USIS. The translator-critics methodically described a linguistic phenomenon known as “Europeanized grammar” in modern Chinese writing, condemned it, and advocated for a “pure” literary language sourced from the best of both the Classical and the vernacular. They believed that the grammatically Europeanized Chinese language is lengthy and wordy at the sentence level, whereas Chinese has indigenous means of expression that are short and economical. This chapter argues that the main contribution of this group of scholarship is that they were the first attempt to use grammatical analysis to provide textual evidence for Classical Chinese aesthetic categories.

These case studies can help distinguish several different ways in which economy has been considered in Chinese literary criticism. Firstly, it is a matter of the sheer count of words, i.e, the count of Chinese characters. A good writer knows that they should cross out any unnecessary character when they edit their own writing, using as few characters as possible to achieve the communicative end. Secondly, it has to do with the choice of the content of writing. Economy can mean that one only gives necessary information and avoids extraneous. Thirdly, it is an affective criterion, meaning that the author should try to display as little emotion as possible. Hence, “cold” is preferable to “sentimental.”

Without proposing one definition of economy that will rule out the others, we can nevertheless begin to disentangle the confusion of stylistic judgment at the beginning of this

introduction. When T. A. Hsia called Lu Xun's style "terse," he was looking at the first and the third layers of economy. Lu Xun is known to be concise in the basic sense of being frugal with the number of words; meanwhile, even though the man wrote as a compassionate advocate of social reform, in some of his best-known pieces, his expression of emotions is restrained, the tone is ruminative, and the mood is dark. The latter, a kind of aesthetic for affective restraint, is a point that T. A. successfully conveyed in his scholarship, using an impressive array of aesthetic categories, even to an American audience who might not have read anything by Lu Xun. On the other hand, when C. T. Hsia wrote of Lu Xun's "quarrelsome garrulity," this comment cannot be separated from the content of Lu Xun's writing, i.e., what Lu Xun was quarreling about. As a commentator of current affairs, Lu Xun made enemies and pursued them persistently with words. The political position he argued for was unfavorable in Cold War America. The "quarrelsome" was the critic's gesture that the author argued tirelessly on positions that his (the critic's) readership would not welcome. It did not, therefore, contradict the "terse."

CHAPTER 1: THE IDEOLOGICAL APPROACH

In late 1957, amid the “Great Leap Forward” and “Anti-Rightist Struggles” in the PRC, Mao Zedong visited the Soviet Union, where Stalin had died four years before. There, Mao popularized an analogy of “winds” which became a catchphrase in Chinese socialism. On November 18, speaking to members of the communist and workers’ parties in Moscow, he said:

It is my opinion that the international situation has now reached a new turning point. There are two winds in the world today, the east wind and the west wind. There is a Chinese saying, “Either the east wind prevails over the west wind or the west wind prevails over the east wind.” It is characteristic of the situation today, I believe, that the east wind is prevailing over the west wind. That is to say, the forces of socialism are overwhelmingly superior to forces of imperialism.¹

现在我感到国际形势到了一个新的转折点。世界上现在有两股风：东风、西风。中国有句成语：不是东风压倒西风，就是西风压倒东风。我认为目前形势的特点是东风压倒西风，也就是说，社会主义的力量对于帝国主义的力量占了压倒的优势。²

Mao was adapting from the novel, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, which he named in a different speech to the Chinese students in Moscow on November 17. The original is, from Chapter 82:

This was the first time Dai-yu had heard Aroma gossip like this, and she began to suspect what was at the back of it.

“It’s hard to tell,” she said, “In every family affair, one side or the other *has* to win. If it’s not the East Wind it’s the West.”³

¹ English translation from Michael Schoenhals, “Mao Zedong: Speeches at the 1957 ‘Moscow Conference,’” *Journal of Communist Studies* 2, no. 2 (June 1986): 115, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523278608414805>.

² Mao Zedong, “Zai Mosike gongchandang he gongrendang daibiao huiyi shang de jianghua 在莫斯科共产党和工人党代表会议上的讲话 [Speech at a Meeting of the Representatives of Sixty-four Communist and Workers’ Parties],” in *Mao Zedong wenji* 毛泽东文集 [The collected writings of Mao Zedong], vol. 7 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe 人民出版社, 1993), 321.

³ Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹 and Gao E 高鹗, *The Story of the Stone: A Chinese Novel in Five Volumes*, trans. John Minford, vol. 4 (London; New York: Penguin, 1982), 60.

黛玉从不闻袭人背地里说人，今听此话有因，便说道：“这也难说。但凡家庭之事，不是东风压了西风，就是西风压了东风。”⁴

According to sources later released by a publisher of the Chinese Communist Party, Khrushchev did not like Mao's phrasing, because Soviet leader identified the "east wind" with China and "west wind" with Europe.⁵ The confusion about the directions of the winds marked the early signs of Sino-Soviet tension. Mao then had to clarify with Ho Chih Minh in a 1960 meeting that "the west and the west wind refer to imperialism. The east and the east wind refer to the socialist bloc; they refer to countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America."⁶

Mao had a special interest in using the word "wind" metaphorically. He used it in different ways. In the Moscow case, a gust of wind refers to a group of people; the clash of two winds refers to the competition between groups. In another influential case, arguably better known than the Moscow one, he spoke of the wind in its classical literary configuration as style. He used it to translate Stalinist writings about work ethics and formulated a theory that fuses the problem of political work with the problem of writing style. This theory came out of a political campaign he initiated in 1942, now known in English as "the Yan'an Rectifications." The English title of the campaign omits to translate that Mao's rectification is, literally said in Chinese, the "rectification of the winds." At a talk in Yan'an in February 1942, Mao launched the campaign by pledging "to rectify the wind of study, the wind of the Party, and the wind of

⁴ Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹 and Gao E 高鹗, *Hong lou meng* 红楼梦 [Dream of the Red Chamber], vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局, 2009), 563.

⁵ Wu Lengxi 吴冷西, *Shinian lun zhan: 1956-1966 Zhong su guanxi huiyilu* 十年论战: 1956-1966 中苏关系回忆录 [Ten years of debates: Memories of Sino-Soviet relations, 1956-1966], Beijing, vol. 1 (Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe 中央文献出版社, 1999), 281.

⁶ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi 中共中央文献研究室 [Chinese Communist Party central documents research office], ed., *Mao Zedong nianpu* 毛泽东年谱 (一九四九——一九七六) [Annals of Mao Zedong (1949-1976)], vol. 4 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe 中央文献出版社, 2013), 440.

writing.”⁷ In late 1957, just when he was visiting Moscow, domestically, China was immersed in a new wave of rectification that was still using the old terminology. For the writers and intellectuals, this meant that their “wind of writing” needed to go through another reform. Writers across the country identified the problems in their writing styles and looked for new, proletarian styles.

This chapter centers around the word “wind” in Chinese, and its first task is to understand its etymology and relevant discourses. My main context is the 1940s and 50s, when Mao put forward a theory of style using “wind,” which became a fixed terminology in Chinese socialism and impacted both the arts and politics. But there is a long history of saying “wind” for style, and Mao’s borrowings of the term evoked the theories of style in classical literary theory. So, to fully account for the force of the wind, this chapter will move between classical poetics in antiquity and Chinese socialist theories on literature from the 1940s-50s. At the end of the chapter, we will see that the Moscow winds and the Yan’an winds are in fact not so different as they first seemed. “Wind” as a theory of writing style in Chinese literary criticism and “wind” as a metaphor for international politics share the same conceptual origin, which is the implication of “social influence” that was attached to the word wind in ancient Chinese thought. In sum, this chapter argues that “wind” enables a specific interpretation of style, which sees style as the common characteristics shared by a social group as a result of influence. This interpretation of style is by no means invented by Mao or unique to China, but it was Mao who theorized it and popularized

⁷ “整顿学风党风文风.” Mao Zedong, “Zhengdun xuefeng dangfeng wenfeng 整顿学风党风文风 [Rectify the style of study, the style of the party, and the style of writing],” in *Zhengdun san feng wenxian* 整顿三风文献 [Documents of the Rectification Campaign], *Xuexi congshu* 学习丛书, Di 4 zhong 第四种 (Yan’an: Jiefang she 解放社, 1942), 1–17.

it in twentieth century China. The term “the wind of writing,” in the specific way Mao used it, attained discursive dominance in the PRC following the Yan’an talks.

A concurrent task of the chapter is to identify and describe a common way to speak about style in literary criticism; this is what I call “the ideological approach.” The ideological approach, simply put, is to judge the ideas and beliefs of the author through an identification of its style. The premise of this practice is that style is the textual reflection of the author’s beliefs; therefore, if one catches stylistic characteristics, one also catches the ideological beliefs behind them. In the PRC, the ideological criticism of style is closely tied to the word “wind.” A meteorological metaphor for social influence, the wind brings conceptual convenience to Chinese intellectuals to think and speak about style ideologically. Granted, the ideological approach to style is also not unique to the PRC. But its application must rely on certain concrete theoretical vocabulary and mechanism of argumentation, in the same way that, as we will see in later chapters, the impressionistic approach relies on aesthetic categories specific to a cultural convention (Chapter 3), and the linguistic approach cannot take effect before a system of grammar is established for that particular language (Chapter 4). In the PRC, “wind” and its relevant discourses are a main theoretical vocabulary with which the ideological criticism of style is executed.

That said, to be clear, the ideological approach is prevalent in modern Chinese literary criticism as whole, in or outside the PRC, with or without the winds. It is nearly always present whenever a commentary is made on the styles of authors or works, and this is one reason why I discuss the ideological approach in the first of my four chapters. Literary critics may follow this and other approaches concurrently, such as to list a set of aesthetic categories, or to perform a linguistic analysis, but they would then conclude by judging the beliefs of the author. The

prevalence of the ideological approach reveals the Chinese intellectuals' dominant motivation for literary criticism: Their goal is not to study the technical aspects of writing, but to perform social criticism via the discussion of a literary work. This may in turn explain the prevalence of the term "wind," as no other term better fulfills the desire of simultaneous aesthetic and social commentary.

Ideology is a loaded term and requires clarification. In this study, I use "ideology" in a sense similar to the first of the three definitions of the term by Raymond Williams, that is, "a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group."⁸ More specifically, in many but not all of my examples, ideology refers to the conflicting political beliefs upheld by the two sides of the Cold War divide—the "east and the west winds." Some of the ideological conflicts I will examine were the results of class conflict, but some others were not of a class nature and instead reflected divergent opinions between groups in the same class. That being said, it is not my intention to argue that any of the beliefs I cover in this chapter is, as Williams phrases in his second definition of ideology, "illusory," "false ideas or false consciousness," or "can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge."⁹ In other words, when I say that a certain author's style reflects a certain ideology, I do not imply that the ideology is false, i.e. it is "merely an ideology." It could be true or false, but the problem I treat here is not the truthfulness of the ideology, but the validity of the analytical process through which a reader derives an ideology from a text and makes claims about it. It is not productive for literary scholars to debate the former unless we first establish an understanding of the latter. This is the overall position of the present dissertation.

⁸ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1977), 55.

⁹ Williams, 55.

This definition of “ideology” implies that, in fact, the ideological approach to style is a theory of authorial intent. It posits that the author’s ideas are reflected in not only *what* the text says but also *how* it is said, including formal characteristics such as average sentence length, which would otherwise be considered apolitical or value neutral. (To the ideological critic, nothing is value neutral.) Hence, to follow the ideological approach means that the reader should always be thinking about the author in the process of reading. This author-centeredness may not immediately appear to merit a lot of consideration, since authorship is always a weighty notion for literature, but it is not as commonplace as it seems, because the discourses and practices of literary style do not always center around authorship. For example, in the pedagogical approach (Chapter 2), style is a concept that upholds linguistic norms and prescribes writing rules, which leads to line-by-line textual revision, either by the editor for the author, or by the teacher for the student. In both cases, linguistic norms prevail over the author’s original linguistic choices, to the extent that little emphasis is put on the preservation of the authenticity of authorship. But unlike the pedagogical critic who keeps an eye on textual errors, the ideological critic hunts for traces of the author in the text and is eager to judge the author. In doing so, they postulate that the location of the production of style, its source and origin, fundamentally lies in authorship, and not in the reader’s subjective reaction to a text (Chapter 3), nor in a set of objective textual characteristics which exist independently of who employs them.

Historically, author-centered approaches to style were common and broadly influential, with variations in Classical Chinese poetics as well as in the European aesthetic tradition; in this chapter, merely for the purpose of convenience, I refer to them all as “author theories of style.” Later in the chapter, I will sample some prominent author theories in Classical Chinese literary thought. Furthermore, I will show that author theories can be divided into two types. The first

type, premised on the individuality of artistic creativity, either rejects or neglects the idea that one author can learn a style from another author; the second type, on the contrary, emphasizes that a group of authors can share the same style, which is particularly useful for periodization or the categorization of artistic trends and schools. The tension between the two types of author theory has been captured by art historian Willibald Sauerländer's 1983 essay, "From Stylus to Style: Reflections on The Fate of a Notion."¹⁰ Situated in the European aesthetic tradition, Sauerländer's essay identifies a process of historical conceptual change in which the term "style" was sometimes a concept of individual creativity but in other times referred to the practice of classifying groups of artists or objects. The ideological approach to style, generally speaking, belongs to the second type of author theory, because ideology, by definition (per Williams), is not something of a singular mind. An ideology is a shared belief by a group of people; the power of the ideological criticism of style lies in its ability to link the textual characteristics of a piece of writing to the social relations of the author. In contrast, one person's extraordinary ideas, be it talent or madness, cannot be called an ideology. Isolated, idiosyncratic formal features of an author cannot give rise to ideological criticism. An example of this would be when an author habitually misspells a specific word; this trait is meaningful as far as the first type of author theory concerns, and it can serve the important function in the identification of authorship, but it does not attract the ideological critic.

The word "wind" in modern Chinese imparts an author theory of the second type. It constantly seeks to establish a causal relationship between the formal characteristics of writing and the author's social relations; it is not usable in contexts where matters of grouping and influence are inapplicable. This way, it should be clear by now that the Chinese "wind" is

¹⁰ Sauerländer, "From Stylus to Style: Reflections on the Fate of a Notion."

semantically not equivalent to the English or European word “style,” even though I think it is correct to translate Mao’s Yan’an talks using “style.” “Wind” carries its own historical baggage, which enables it to speak to certain aspects of the abstract concept of style, but it remains detached from some other aspects.

That said, the aim of the chapter is not to put forward a pure formalist theory of the wind. The two main cases in the chapters are both derived from consequential events in the political history of twentieth-century China: The first, the Yan’an Rectification Movement in 1942, was not only the pivotal moment in CCP history where Mao ascended to power, but has also been considered a conceptual and methodological model for the many more political campaigns he would launch in the next three decades; my revisit to the Rectification Movement will focus on Mao’s use of the term “wind” in comparison to Stalin’s writing on style and Classical Chinese literary theories of style. The second case is a series of discussions about style in Beijing’s literary circles in the spring of 1958, when the Anti-Rightist Struggles was ongoing, and the term “rectification” was re-invoked constantly. Of the two cases, the first one admittedly exceeds the temporal scope of this dissertation as a study of the Cold War era, but it is indispensable to an understanding of “style” in the Maoist framework, so we must begin there. I invite readers interested in Maoism and PRC history to consider: After all, what was style doing in Mao’s political campaigns? That is to say, in what specific way could an aesthetic concept be useful in organizing the internal relations of a political party? Moreover, since one main characteristic of Classical Chinese literary thought is the sheer quantity of words that emerged throughout history to denote what we now think of as style, why “wind”? What was special about this wind, and was there something it could do for Mao that other similar terms could not? Although this chapter only consists of close reading of published works of literary criticism and cannot

incorporate the large number of sources on Yan'an, I hope the ensuing discussion will allow us to begin to consider the connection between formalist aesthetic theory and political theory, to show that some ideological problems can be better explained when we think a little more formalistically.¹¹

1942: The Rectification of the Winds

The beginning of the Rectification Movement is usually dated to February 1, 1942, when Mao delivered a speech at the opening ceremony of the CCP Central Party School in Yan'an. The initial title of the talk was "Rectify the Style of Study, the Style of the Party, and the Style of Writing."¹² In the early 1950s, in the making of the first edition of the *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, all of Mao's speeches and writings underwent revisions, and the title of this talk was updated to "Rectify the Party's Style of Work," which is how this text is currently known.¹³ But the new title was not entirely new, because it was drawn from the opening of the original lecture transcript, where Mao announced that his topic of the day was "the problem of the Party's

¹¹ For English scholarship on the Yan'an Rectification from the perspective of literary history, see Roy Chan, "Formalism," in *Afterlives of Chinese Communism: Political Concepts from Mao to Xi*, ed. Christian Sorace, Ivan Franceschini, and Nicholas Loubere (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2019), 77–80; Kirk A. Denton, "Rectification: Party Discipline, Intellectual Remolding, and the Formation of A Political Community," in *Words and Their Stories*, ed. Ban Wang (Brill, 2010), 51–63; Li Tuo 李陀, "Ding Ling bu jian dan--geming shiqi zhishifenzi zai huayu shengchan zhong de fuza jue 丁玲不简单——革命时期知识分子在话语生产中的复杂角色 [Ding Ling is no simple case: the complicated role of the intellectual in the discourse production of the revolutionary period]," *Jintian wenxue zazhi* 今天文学杂志 [Today], no. 22 (1993): 222–42; Bonnie McDougall, *Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art": A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1980). Also see conference proceedings, Cyril Birch, ed., *Chinese Communist Literature* (New York: Praeger, 1963); Wolfgang Kubin and Rudolf G. Wagner, eds., *Essays in Modern Chinese Literature and Literary Criticism: Papers of the Berlin Conference, 1978*, Chinathemen (Bochum [West Germany]: Studienverlag N. Brockmeyer, 1982).

¹² Mao Zedong, "Zhengdun xuefeng dangfeng wenfeng 整顿学风党风文风 [Rectify the style of study, the style of the party, and the style of writing]," 1942.

¹³ Mao Zedong, "Zhengdun dang de zuofeng 整顿党的作风 [Rectify the Party's Style of Work]," in *Mao Zedong xuanji* 毛泽东选集 [The selected works of Mao Zedong], 1st ed., vol. 3 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe 人民出版社, 1953), 833–50.

style/wind of work.”¹⁴ Using a meteorological analogy and a military joke, he argued that the Party’s style/wind was erroneous, and it manifested in three aspects, as three specific kinds of erroneous winds:

...there is still something wrong with our style of study, with our style in the Party’s internal and external relations and with our style of writing. By something wrong with the style of study we mean the malady of subjectivism. By something wrong with our style in Party relations we mean the malady of sectarianism. By something wrong with the style of writing we mean the malady of stereotyped Party writing. All these are wrong, they are ill winds, but they are not like the wintry north winds that sweep across the whole sky. Subjectivism, sectarianism and the stereotyped Party writing are no longer the dominant styles, but merely gusts of contrary wind, ill winds from the air-raid tunnels. (Laughter.) It is bad, however, that such winds should still be blowing in the Party. We must seal off the passages which produce them. Our whole Party should undertake the job of sealing off these passages, and so should the Party School. These three ill winds, subjectivism, sectarianism and stereotyped Party writing, have their historical origins. Although no longer dominant in the whole Party, they still constantly create trouble and assail us. Therefore, it is necessary to resist them and to study, analyse and elucidate them.

Fight subjectivism in order to rectify the style of study, fight sectarianism in order to rectify the style in Party relations, and fight Party stereotypes in order to rectify the style of writing – such is the task before us.¹⁵

我们的学风还有些不正的地方，我们的党风还有些不正的地方，我们的文风也有些不正的地方。所谓学风有些不正，就是说的主观主义。所谓党风有些不正，就是说的宗派主义。所谓文风有些不正，就是说的党八股。这些作风不正，并不像冬天刮的北风那样，满天都是。主观主义、宗派主义、党八股，现在已不是占统治地位的作风了，这不过是一种逆风，一种歪风，是从防空洞里跑出来的（笑声）。但是我们党内还有这样的一种风，是不好的。我们要把这个洞塞死。我们全党都要来做这个塞洞工作。我们党校也要做这个工作。主观主义、宗派主义、党八股，这三股歪风，有它的历史根源，现在虽然不是全党统治的东西，但是它还经常作怪，还在袭击我们，因此，有整顿之必要，有抵制之必要，有加以分析说明之必要，有研究之必要。

¹⁴ “关于我们党的作风的问题。” Mao Zedong, “Zhengdun xuefeng dangfeng wenfeng 整顿学风党风文风 [Rectify the style of study, the style of the party, and the style of writing],” 1942, 1.

¹⁵ In this chapter, for the English translation of Mao’s speeches, I am using the translation by the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing, which is based on the post-1951 revised version of Mao’s works. The accompany Chinese text is copied from the unrevised, pre-1951 version. See Mao Zedong, “Rectify the Party’s Style of Work,” in *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tsetung*, 1st ed. (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1971), 230–49.

反对主观主义以整顿学风，反对宗派主义以整顿党风，反对党八股以整顿文风，这就是我们的任务。¹⁶

The February 1 lecture focused only on the style of study and the style of the Party, and did not elaborate on the style of writing. But a week later on February 8, 1942, at a meeting with cadres from the Propaganda Department and the Publishing Bureau of the CCP, Mao gave a second speech entirely devoted to writing style. In the next few months, as the Rectification Movement unfolded, the transcripts of the two talks were reprinted and circulated widely as “study materials” for Party members. Notable print editions include their publication in the Communist Party newspaper *Liberation Daily* on April 27 and June 18, 1942, and in the non-Communist zones, on *New China Daily* on May 17 and July 12.¹⁷ The talks were included in a list of 18 or, later 22, documents which were published by the Liberation Press in Yan’an as a volume and which Party cadres were required to study;¹⁸ throughout the 1940s and early 50s, that list of documents was reprinted countless times and was also distributed in Hong Kong¹⁹ and

¹⁶ Mao Zedong, “Zhengdun xuefeng dangfeng wenfeng 整顿学风党风文风 [Rectify the style of study, the style of the party, and the style of writing],” 1942, 2.

¹⁷ Mao Zedong, “Zhengdun xuefeng dangfeng wenfeng 整顿学风党风文风 [Rectify the style of study, the style of the party, and the style of writing],” *Jiefang ribao* 解放日报 [Liberation daily], April 27, 1942; Mao Zedong, “Fandui dang bagu 反对党八股 [Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing],” *Jiefang ribao* 解放日报 [Liberation daily], June 18, 1942; Mao Zedong, “Zhengdun xuefeng dangfeng wenfeng 整顿学风党风文风 [Rectify the style of study, the style of the party, and the style of writing],” *Xin hua ribao* 新华日报 [New China daily], May 17, 1942; Mao Zedong, “Fandui dang bagu 反对党八股 [Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing],” *Xin hua ribao* 新华日报 [New China daily], July 12, 1942.

¹⁸ Jiefang she 解放社 [Liberation Press], ed., “Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu guanyu zai Yan’an taolun zhongyang jue ding ji Mao Zedong tongzhi zhengdun san feng baogao de jue ding 中共中央宣传部关于在延安讨论中央决定及毛泽东同志整顿三风报告的决定 [CCP central propaganda department’s decision on discussions in Yan’an about the decision of the central committee and comrade Mao Zedong’s report of the rectification of the three styles],” in *Zhengfeng wenxian (dingzheng ben) 整风文献（订正本）* [Rectification documents (revised edition)], 3rd ed. (Jiefang she 解放社, 1949), 1–6.

¹⁹ A four-volume “Rectification Writings Collection” was published in the 1940s by a *Hongmian chubanshe* [Red Cotton Press] located on Connaught Road Central. Information on the publisher and the publication date is scant. See, for example, *Jiaqiang duanlian* 加强锻炼 [Reinforce exercise], *Zhengfeng wen cong* 整风文丛 [Rectification writings collection] 2 (Hong Kong: Hongmian chubanshe 红棉出版社, 1948).

studied in Taiwan for intelligence purposes.²⁰ Up to this point, the campaign was referred to as the “rectification of the three winds” (*zhengdun san feng* 整顿三风). After the title change in the 1953 *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, the term “three winds” went defunct. Since then, the campaign has been known as only “rectification” (*zhengfeng* 整风).

Despite the ubiquity of the “winds,” it is not the case that Mao did not have other rhetorical devices handy to criticize his Party. In the February 1 and 8 speeches, he made use of plenty of other figures of speech too. For example, medical analogies. He compared the Party’s errors to physical diseases that needed to be diagnosed and treated:

But our aim in exposing errors and criticizing shortcomings, like that of a doctor curing a sickness, is solely to save the patient and not to doctor him to death. A person with appendicitis is saved when the surgeon removes his appendix.²¹

但是我们揭发错误、批判缺点的目的，好像医生治病一样，完全是为了救人，而不是为了把人诊死。一个人发了盲肠炎，医生把它割了，这个人就救出来了。²²

Does not Dimitrov put his finger on our weak spot? Apparently, stereotyped Party writing exists in foreign countries as well as in China, so you can see it is a common disease. (Laughter.)

... ..

This is the prescription made out for us by the Communist International...²³

这不是把我们的毛病讲得一针见血么？不错，党八股中国有，外国也有，可见是通病。（笑）

.....

这就是共产国际给我们治病的药方.....²⁴

²⁰ *Zhonggong de zhengfeng yudong* 中共的整风运动 [The rectification movement of the CCP], 2nd ed., *Diqing yanjiu cankao ziliao* 敌情研究参考资料 (Taipei: Geming shijian yanjiuyuan 革命实践研究院, 1951).

²¹ Mao Zedong, “Rectify the Party’s Style of Work,” 227.

²² Mao Zedong, “Zhengdun xuefeng dangfeng wenfeng 整顿学风党风文风 [Rectify the style of study, the style of the party, and the style of writing],” 1942, 17.

²³ Mao Zedong, “Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing,” 245–46.

²⁴ Mao Zedong, “Fandui dang bagu 反对党八股 [Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing],” June 18, 1942, 1.

Nonetheless, when it was time for Mao to brand his political campaign, he distinctly avoided theorizing the Party's errors as a "disease" or "sickness," even if that would have offered a convenient rhetoric to justify his campaign as a cure. They were, Mao insisted, "styles."

The word that Mao used as the theme of his talk and its title since 1953, "style/wind of work" (*zuofeng* 作风), was imported from Japanese and Russian. In Classical Chinese, the monosyllabic word "wind" meant style of course, but the disyllabic compound "style of work" did not exist. As far as I have seen, the two-character compound "style of work" (作风) was first used in premodern Japanese writing, meaning artistic style (*saku* 作 in the sense of artistic production),²⁵ and in the early twentieth century, after the linguistic reform, Chinese intellectuals also began to use it to mean literary style. For instance, in 1924 on the journal *Fiction Monthly* (*Xiaoshuo yuebao* 小说月报), Mao Dun (under the name of Shen Yanbing) wrote about the "style of work" of Spanish dramatist, Jacinto Benavente.²⁶ In the 1930s, the meaning of the word in Chinese evolved to also indicate the manner of a person in social interaction. A common

²⁵ In the concise edition of the *Nihon kokugo daijiten* [Great dictionary of the Japanese language], *sakufū* is "style and characteristics appearing in a work" and "the personality and thoughts of the author appearing in an artistic work," with an example from Zeami's theory of drama in "Sandō" [The Three Courses]. For an English translation, see Zeami, *Zeami, Performance Notes*, trans. Thomas Blenman Hare, *Translations from the Asian Classics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008). Specifically, for Zeami's writing on style in the Noh drama, see Hare's glossary on the "wind" in Zeami, 479–80.

²⁶ Mao Dun 茅盾 (Shen Yanbing 沈雁冰), "Beinawende de zuofeng 倍那文德的作风 [The style of Benavente]," *Xiaoshuo yue bao* 小说月报 [Fiction monthly], February 10, 1923.

phrase was “bureaucratic style of work” (*guanliao zuofeng* 官僚作风).²⁷ This new meaning hinges upon the Chinese character “作” meaning both “to produce” and “to work.”²⁸

This semantic migration appears to be the result of translating Soviet Russian sources. In the Soviet Union of the time, phrases such as “style in work” (*stil' v rabote*) and “style of work” (*stil' raboty*) were widely in use to refer to the manner of a person in political action or governmental responsibilities. An early and influential text theorizing the “style of work” as a concept in politics and government was a series of lectures by Stalin in 1924, given shortly after the death of Lenin, at Sverdlov Communist University in Moscow, which was also a school for the training of Party personnel. In Stalin’s lectures, titled *The Foundations of Leninism (Osnovakh leninizma*, hereafter *Foundations*),²⁹ which was serialized in April of that year in *Pravda*, Stalin devoted an entire chapter to “Style”:

²⁷ “Fandui gonghui gongzuo de guanliao zhuyi gongzuo zuofeng 反对工会工作的官僚主义工作作风 [Oppose the bureaucratic style of work in the work of the union],” *Suqu gongren* 苏区工人 [Soviet zone workers], November 15, 1932; Bai Lu 白露, “Sun Zhesheng dui jizhe gaibian zuofeng 孙哲生对记者改变作风 [Sun Zhefeng changed his style to the journalists],” *Jing bao* 晶报 [The Crystal], April 25, 1934.

²⁸ Also see dictionary entry in Luo Zhufeng 罗竹风, Hanyu da cidian bianji weiyuanhui 汉语大词典编辑委员会, and Hanyu da cidian bianzuan chu 汉语大词典编纂处, eds., *Hanyu da cidian* 汉语大词典 [The great dictionary of the Chinese language], vol. 1 (Shanghai: Hanyu da cidian chubanshe 汉语大词典出版社, 2001), 1252.

²⁹ There are various Chinese translations of the title of this book: *Guanyu liening zhuyi di jichu* 关于列宁主义底基础; *Liening zhuyi di jichu* 列宁主义底基础; *Lun liening zhuyi jichu* 论列宁主义基础.

Table 1. Multiple translations of Stalin’s lecture on “Style in Work”			
Russian as published in <i>Pravda</i> (1924) ³⁰	Chinese translation (1939) ³¹	Chinese translation (1973) ³²	English translation by Beijing Foreign Language Press (1971) ³³
IX. Стиль в работе	九 工作作风	IX 工作作风	IX Style in Work
Речь идет не о литературном стиле. Я имею в виду стиль в работе, то особенное и своеобразное в практике ленинизма, которое создает особый тип ленинца-работника. Ленинизм есть теоретическая и практическая школа, вырабатывающая особый тип партийного и государственного работника, создающая особый, ленинский стиль в работе. В чем состоят характерные черты этого стиля? Каковы его особенности?	这里说的不是文学体裁。我所指的是工作体裁，是列宁主义底实际中的这样一种特别的和特殊的东西，这种东西造成特别式样的列宁主义者的工作者。列宁主义是一个理论和实际的学校，这个学校造就着特别式样的党的和国家的工作者，造成特殊的列宁主义的工作体裁，这种体裁底特点在那里呢？它的特点是什么呢？	这里所指的不是文学作风。我指的是工作作风，是列宁主义实践中能够造就特种类型的列宁主义工作者的那种很特殊的要素。列宁主义是理论的和实践的學校，它能培养特种类型的党的工作者和国家工作者，造成特殊的列宁主义的工作作风。 这种作风的特征是什么呢？它的特点是怎样的呢？	I am not referring to literary style. What I have in mind is style in work, that specific and peculiar feature in the practice of Leninism which creates the special type of Leninist worker. Leninism is a school of theory and practice which trains a special type of Party and state worker, creates a special Leninist style in work. What are the characteristic features of this style? What are its peculiarities?
Этих особенностей две: а) русский революционный размах и б) американская деловитость. Стиль ленинизма состоит в соединении этих двух особенностей в партийной и государственной работе.	这样的特点有两个：第一，就是俄国的革命规模。第二，就是美国的求实精神。列宁主义底体裁，就是党的和国家的工作里的这两种特点底结合。	它的特点有两个： （一）俄国人的革命胆略； （二）美国人的求实精神。 列宁主义的作风就是党的工作和国家工作中的这两个特点的结合。	It has two specific features: a) Russian revolutionary sweep and b) American efficiency. The style of Leninism consists in combining these two specific features in Party and state work.

³⁰ Joseph Stalin, “Ob osnovakh leninizma,” *Pravda*, May 18, 1924.

³¹ Joseph Stalin, “Guanyu Liening zhuyi di jichu 关于列宁主义底基础 [The Foundations of Leninism],” in *Sidalin xuan ji* 斯大林选集 [The collected works of Stalin], vol. 1 (Yan’an: Jiefang she 解放社, 1939), 111.

³² Joseph Stalin, *Lun Liening zhuyi jichu* 论列宁主义基础 [The Foundations of Leninism], 2nd ed. (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe 人民出版社, 1973), 95.

³³ Joseph Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism*, 2nd ed. (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1977), 122.

What follows is basically a “national character” argument by Stalin on what is the ideal personality of a Leninist revolutionary. Stalin (a Georgian) suggested that the revolutionary spirit of the Russians are “an antidote to inertia, routine, conservatism, mental stagnation and slavish submission to ancient traditions,” “the life-giving force which stimulates thought, impels things forward, breaks the past and opens up perspectives.”³⁴ However, Russians lack a pragmatic attitude that can ground revolutionary ideas in “plain everyday work,” hence requiring the complement of American practical spirit, “that indomitable force which neither knows nor recognises obstacles; which with its business-like perseverance brushes aside all obstacles; which continues at a task once started until it is finished, even if it is a minor task; and without which serious constructive work is inconceivable.”³⁵ In sum, in Stalin’s words, “style in work” refers to the personality traits of a person when they are engaged in political action. One of the components of being a “Leninist” is to enact a “style” that aligns with Leninist ideology, which should be a combination of “Russian revolutionary strength” and “American practicality.”

The earliest translation I have found of this text in Chinese is in the 1939 *Selected Works of Stalin* by the Liberation Press. The Liberation Press was established in 1938 in Yan’an as the central press of the CCP, and one of its main goals was the translation of writings by Marx, Engels, Stalin, and Lenin. From January to March 1939, five volumes of *Selected Works of Stalin* came out in Chinese, including *Foundation* in the first volume. However, two years earlier, in mid-1937, Mao was already quoting *Foundation* in a lecture which would later become his “On Practice.”³⁶ In the next few years, Mao and his circle continued to discuss

³⁴ Stalin, 122.

³⁵ Stalin, 123–24.

³⁶ See Mao Zedong, “Shijian lun 实践论 [On Practice],” in *Mao Zedong xuanji* 毛泽东选集 [The selected works of Mao Zedong], 1st ed., vol. 1 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe 人民出版社, 1951), 292 n8.

personality and style of work in Stalin's terms. One prominent member of this circle at this time was Liu Shaoqi, who, in July 1939, gave a talk at the Marxist Leninist School of Yan'an, "On the Moral Character of a Communist Party Member" (also translated as "How to Be a Good Communist"), an excerpt of which was collected into the *Documents of the Rectification Campaign*.³⁷ Like Stalin's, Liu Shaoqi's talk was a theory of personality. It covered both the personality of Lenin and Stalin, linking their political work to personal virtues, and the personality of the rank and file of the CCP. "If a Party member," Liu Shaoqi said, "in his thinking and consciousness, only considers the communist interests and goals of the Party," then he would likely possess a number of personality traits or virtues, such as loyalty, honesty, courage, frankness, and so on.³⁸

The term "style of work" (*zuofeng*) appeared sporadically in above mentioned documents from the late 1930s³⁹ and became regularized in the lexicon in a number of talks by Mao and Liu Shaoqi in the summer of 1941, a few months before the official beginning of the Rectification

From April to August, 1937, Mao gave a series of lectures on "Marxist philosophy" at the Kangzhan daxue, a school in Yan'an run by the CCP for the training of its personnel. His lecture notes were partially published in 1938 on a journal affiliated with the school and later reprinted as a monograph. "On Practice" came from what was the second section of the section chapter of this monograph. Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi 中共中央文献研究室 [Chinese Communist Party central documents research office], ed., *Mao Zedong nianpu* 毛泽东年谱 (一八九三—一九四九) [Annals of Mao Zedong (1893-1949)], vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe 中央文献出版社, 1993), 671–72; Mao Zedong, "Bianzhengfa weiwulun (jiangshou tigang) 辩证法唯物论 (讲授提纲) [Dialectics and materialism (teaching notes)]," in *Mō Taku-tō shū* 毛泽东集 [Collected Writings of Mao Tse-tung], ed. Takeuchi Minoru 竹内实, vol. 6, 10 vols. (Tokyo: Hokubōsha 北望社, 1970), 265–305.).

³⁷ Liu Shaoqi 刘少奇, "Lun gongchandangyuan de xiuyang 论共产党员的修养 [How to Be a Good Communist]," in *Zhengdun san feng wenxian* 整顿三风文献 [Documents of the Rectification Campaign], *Xuexi congshu* 学习丛书, Di 4 zhong 第四种 (Yan'an: Jiefang she 解放社, 1942), 67. This collection contains an excerpt and not the full text of the lecture. For full text, see, for example, numbers 81, 82, and 83-84 of the weekly magazine *Jiefang*: Liu Shaoqi 刘少奇, "Lun gongchandangyuan de xiuyang (yi) (weiwan) 论共产党员的修养 (一) (未完) [How to Be a Good Communist]," *Jiefang* 解放 [Liberation], no. 81 (1939): 12–19.

³⁸ Liu Shaoqi 刘少奇, "Lun gongchandangyuan de xiuyang 论共产党员的修养 [How to Be a Good Communist]," 67–70.

³⁹ For example, see Liu Shaoqi 刘少奇, "Lun gongchandangyuan de xiuyang (yi) (weiwan) 论共产党员的修养 (一) (未完) [How to Be a Good Communist]," 17.

Movement in 1942. For example, in Mao's "Reform our Study" of May 1941⁴⁰ and Liu Shaoqi's "On Inner-Party Struggle" of July 1941,⁴¹ the term "style of work" was used frequently.

Additionally, in "Reform our Study," Mao quoted Stalin's "Style in Work" chapter, asking Chinese party members to combine "revolutionary passion with practical spirit," although he omitted the part about American and Russian national characters.⁴² These 1941 talks were the precursors to the Rectification Movement and, after the Movement officially began, were also distributed to Party members as part of the "Rectification study materials."

So the "wind" unveils a specific aspect of the Soviet connection to Mao's thought in the Yan'an Period. The Rectification is generally understood to be an internal conflict of the CCP between Mao's circle and the supporters of the Communist International. The Comintern supporters had been trained and had served positions in Moscow, whereas Mao, who did not study abroad or speak foreign languages, was considered a nascent Chinese strand of the CCP. In the Yan'an period, Mao fought the Comintern supporters by accusing them of not being connected to ground-level reality in China. However, a closer look at the concept of the "style" in Mao's talks of the period confirmed that Mao, in addition to emphasizing the local conditions, also endeavored to base his ideas in the translated Soviet documents he read, and in particular

⁴⁰ Mao Zedong, "Gaizao women de xuexi 改造我们的学习 [Reform our study]," in *Zhengdun san feng wenxian* 整顿三风文献 [Documents of the Rectification Campaign], *Xuexi congshu* 学习丛书, Di 4 zhong 第四种 (Yan'an: Jiefang she 解放社, 1942), 37–44.

⁴¹ Liu Shaoqi 刘少奇, "Lun dangnei douzheng 论党内斗争 [On inner-Party struggles]," in *Zhengfeng wenxian (dingzheng ben)* 整风文献 (订正本) [Rectification documents (revised edition)], ed. Jiefang she 解放社 [Liberation Press], 3rd ed. (Jiefang she 解放社, 1949), 167–210.

⁴² The 1942 transcript of this text does not name Stalin, but contains the phrase "把革命热情与实际精神结合起来" [to combine revolutionary passion with practical spirit]; the 1953 revision specifies that it is a quote from Stalin, "如同斯大林所说的那样" [like Stalin said]. Mao Zedong, "Gaizao women de xuexi 改造我们的学习 [Reform our study]," 1942, 42; Mao Zedong, "Gaizao women de xuexi 改造我们的学习 [Reform our study]," in *Mao Zedong xuanji* 毛泽东选集 [The selected works of Mao Zedong], 1st ed., vol. 3 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe 人民出版社, 1953), 821.

Stalin's speeches. Besides, within Mao's circle, the other key figures behind the Rectification Movement, whose works were distributed to Party members alongside Mao's own talks, namely Liu Shaoqi, Kai Feng, and Kang Sheng, had studied in the Soviet Union. This may explain why Mao had access to Soviet documents before their official Chinese translations by the Liberation Press. Collectively and partly relying on Soviet sources, Mao and his circle built a theoretical basis for the Rectification Movement.

Concerning Mao's relation to Stalin's conceptualization of the "Leninist style," archival sources revealed an additional layer of subtlety, which had to do with translation, and which demonstrated the extent of Mao's engagement with the very idea of style. To start with, the 1939 Chinese translation of *Foundation* by Liberation Press contained a translation error. At the time, Russian-Chinese translation was generally of a mediocre quality. Although the main idea of a text was usually sufficiently reproduced, at the sentence level, errors were not uncommon. On the crucial term, "style in work", which means the manners of a person when they engage in political action, the Yan'an translators made an error, rendering it in Chinese as "genre of work" (*gongzuo tical* 工作体裁).⁴³ Whether in Chinese or in other languages, the meaning of the phrase "genre of work" is unclear, and in any case it could not refer to the manners of someone while they are working. That said, between 1939 and 1942, Mao and his circle always spoke of "wind/style of work," and never "genre." This consistent choice of word is a significant detail. We may try to get a better understanding of it by connecting it to two pieces of contextual information: First, we know that Mao was quoting *Foundation* already in the summer of 1937, so he must have been reading *Foundation* from other unpublished, or lost, sources before the Liberation Press mistranslated it. Second, the *Foundation* was published in Russian in 1924, and

⁴³ See Table 1.

between 1924 and 1939, the phrase “style of work” already entered Chinese through the translation of other Russian texts besides *Foundation* itself. So, regardless of where and how Mao first came in contact with Stalin’s “Style” chapter in *Foundation*, what can be confirmed is that, for a longer period of time leading up to the official beginning of the Rectification Movement in 1942, Mao had been entertaining the idea of “style of work,” and it had been clear to him that the notion overlaps with meaning of the word “wind” in Chinese and could not be replaced with other adjacent concepts such as genre.

That said, Mao’s understanding of style differed from that of Stalin and of his own supporters in Yan’an in one important way: the attention to writing style. Stalin made it clear in his chapter on style in *Foundation*: “I am not referring to literary style. What I have in mind is style in work.” Mao, on the other hand, proved that literary style is also style in work, because there are propagandist, publishing, and artistic workers. Furthermore, in Mao’s version of the revolutionary stylistics, literary style not only forms part of “style in work,” it is the deepest layer of it, the most resilient and intimate. In his February 8, 1942 talk, titled “Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing,” or, in a more literal translation “Oppose the Eight-legged Essay in the Party” (*Fandui dang bagu* 反对党八股), Mao said:

I now want to discuss the ways subjectivism and sectarianism use stereotyped Party writing (or the Party “eight-legged essay”) as their instrument of propaganda or form of expression. We are fighting against subjectivism and sectarianism, but they will still have a hiding-place to lurk in if at the same time we do not get rid of stereotyped Party writing. If we destroy that too, we shall “checkmate” subjectivism and sectarianism and make both these monsters show themselves in their true colors, and then we shall easily be able to annihilate them, like “rats running across the street with everyone yelling: Kill them! Kill them!”⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Mao Zedong, “Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing,” 230.

The “eight-legged essay” is a genre of argumentative essay in Classical Chinese; the genre requires eight steps of exposition, hence called “eight-legged”. The composition of such essays was a main component of the civil-service examinations in late imperial China. The term “eight-legged” hence became a pejorative in the modern Chinese language, meaning something that is rigid and formulaic. A recent study of the eight-legged essay is Alexander Des

我现在想讲的是：主观主义、宗派主义，怎样拿党八股做它的宣传工具或表现形式。我们反对主观主义、宗派主义，如果不连党八股也给反掉，那它就还有一个藏身的地方，它还可以躲起来。如果我们连党八股也打倒了，那就算对于主观主义、宗派主义最后地“将一军”，势必弄得这两个怪物原形毕露，“老鼠过街，人人喊打”，这两个怪物也就容易消灭了。⁴⁵

In this passage Mao claimed that, among the “three winds” which are the objects of rectification, “the wind of writing” is the most fundamental. The rationale is that, for those who possess subjectivist and sectarianist ideas, they may be able to pretend that they are no longer subjectivist and sectarianist in their action, they may stop talking or writing about them, but as long as they still possess these ideas, the ideas will transpire in the style of writing. Notice that this “hiding-place” for erroneous ideas to lurk is not the content of the writing, not what one is writing about, but the style. In other words, if we follow the thesis of this passage, we will need to think that the style of writing can reveal the author’s thoughts more effectively than the claims the author is explicitly making in the writing. After all, one can lie when they talk, but the way they talk will reveal that they are lying.

Although Mao’s primary audience for the talk was journalists and propagandists working for the Party, literature was not separate from his criticism of writing style. There are a few ways to explain this lack of boundary between propagandist-journalist writing and literary writing. In my view, it must first of all be approached by returning to a basic question, that is, what is the nature of literature? In the majority of socialist theories of literature, arts and literature are perceived to be the superstructure upon a material base; as a general rule of thumb, arts and literature reflect and serve the interest of their social group; so, in this sense, it is futile to argue

Forges, *Testing the Literary: Prose and the Aesthetic in Early Modern China*, Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021).

⁴⁵ Mao Zedong, “Fandui dang bagu 反对党八股 [Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing],” June 18, 1942, 1.

for a clear-cut boundary between propagandist, journalist, and literary genres. In addition, and more specific to Mao's February 8 talks to the propagandists, literature was constantly present in the talk because it served as the primary example for him to demonstrate what good writing is. The central figure there was Lu Xun; Mao encouraged the propagandists to read Lu Xun and write like Lu Xun. At the talk, he distributed a handout titled "A Guide to Propaganda" (*Xuanchuan zhinan* 宣传指南). It included quotations from Lenin, Georgi Dimitrov (the Bulgarian leader of the Communist International), and Lu Xun which reflect the rhetorical and stylistic strategies those men employed. The Lu Xun selection was a short letter written in response to an inquiry from a magazine on "what is the secret of good writing."⁴⁶ Lastly, on a larger scale, the Yan'an Rectification as a whole targeted students and intellectual workers, many of whom wrote literature. Although the February 8 talk was only attended by Party employees, as the Rectification Movement unfolded, especially after the "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art" in May of the same year, literary writers who did not work in a Party bureau had to learn to correct their "wind of writing" nonetheless.

In the February 8 talk, Mao brought up "eight indictments" against the writing style of the propagandist and publishing workers. The first six of the eight indictments targeted stylistic issues of various kinds: 1) lengthiness and lack of substance; 2) pretentious and intimidating rhetoric; 3) lack of awareness of audience; 4) tasteless, banal language style; 5) a long list of

⁴⁶ *Zhengdun san feng wenxian* 整顿三风文献 [Documents of the Rectification Campaign], *Xuexi congshu* 学习丛书, Di 4 zhong 第四种 (Yan'an: Jiefang she 解放社, 1942), 128–29. The "Guide" is directly referred to in the text of "Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing." See Mao Zedong, "Fandui dang bagu 反对党八股 [Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing]," June 18, 1942, 1–2; Mao Zedong, "Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing," 246.

For the original text by Lu Xun and its English translation, see Lu Xun 鲁迅, "Da beidou zazhishe wen 答北斗杂志社问 [A Reply to the Magazine *The Dipper*]," in *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 [The complete works of Lu Xun], vol. 3 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 2005), 373–74; Lu Xun 鲁迅, "A Reply to the Magazine *The Dipper*." 鲁迅, "答北斗杂志社问," in *鲁迅全集*, vol. 3 (Beijing: 人民文学出版社, 2005), 373–74. See 《整顿三风文献》, 1942.

bullet points with little logical connection between each point; 6) “irresponsibility,” meaning that writers have not formed the habit of self-editing and revising and instead publish their very first draft.

The stylistic errors are linked to and explained by the ideology of the author’s social background. Stereotyped Party writing, like the other two types of problematic winds, is “anti-Marxist and meet[s] the needs not of the proletariat but of the exploiting classes. They are a reflection of petty-bourgeois ideology in our Party.”⁴⁷ As to why a certain formal characteristic meets the need of or represents a certain class, sometimes there was an explicit explanation, other times not. For example, on lengthiness and redundancy, Mao said that lengthy texts turn away their audience, but did not specify why lengthiness is a unique characteristic of the bourgeois class, and even foresaw his own counterargument that Marx’s *Capital* is also long. On aggressive rhetoric, Mao explained that

[i]t is a tactic which the exploiting classes and the *lumpen*-proletariat habitually practice, but for which the proletariat has no use. For the proletariat the sharpest and most effective weapon is a serious and militant scientific attitude. The Communist Party lives by truths, by seeking truth from facts, by science, and not by intimidating people.⁴⁸

这种吓人战术，是剥削阶级及乃至流氓无产者所惯用的手段，无产阶级不需要这类手段。无产阶级的最尖锐最有效的武器只有一个，那就是严肃的战斗的科学态度。共产党不靠吓人吃饭，而靠真理吃饭，靠实事求是吃饭，靠科学吃饭。⁴⁹

Further, criticizing the lack of consideration for the audience, he raised an example of archaic orthography. Some writers were trained in classical scholarship and hence wrote an archaic

⁴⁷ Mao Zedong, “Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing,” 233.

⁴⁸ Mao Zedong, 236.

⁴⁹ Mao Zedong, “Fandui dang bagu 反对党八股 [Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing],” June 18, 1942, 1.

script, but since the audience in Yan'an in 1942 typically had no classical training, it was counterproductive to use it.

After the eight indictments, Mao envisioned a writing style for the Chinese communist. One can recall Stalin's prescription of the style-in-work of a true Leninist revolutionary, but that was personality traits, whereas Mao's prescription was also about language style:

To develop the revolutionary spirit it is necessary to discard stereotyped Party writing and instead to adopt the Marxist-Leninist style of writing, which is vigorous, lively, fresh and forceful. This style of writing has existed for a long time, but is yet to be enriched and spread widely among us. When we have destroyed foreign stereotyped writing and stereotyped Party writing, we can enrich our new style of writing and spread it widely, thereby advancing the Party's revolutionary cause.⁵⁰

要使革命精神获得发展，必须抛弃党八股，采取生动活泼新鲜有力的语言文字的形式。这种形式，早已产生，但尚未充实，尚未获得普遍的发展。我们破坏了洋八股、党八股之后，新的语言文字的形式就可获得充实，获得普遍发展，党的革命事业，也就可以向前推进了。⁵¹

From here we can identify the main structure of Mao's ideological approach of literary criticism. The key nodes in this structure are: First, he paid attention to and identified the formal characteristics of writing. These characteristics are patterns repeatedly observed across a group of socially connected writers. They are not the unique traits of an individual author. He then established a causal relation, linking the formal patterns to ideological patterns, i.e., to say that the shared formal characteristics are the result of the shared ideas and beliefs of this group of writers. Further, he constructed a reverse causal relation, that is to say, the creation and dissemination of new formal characteristics in writing can engender social change. The specific

⁵⁰ Mao Zedong, "Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing," 242–43.

⁵¹ Mao Zedong, "Fandui dang bagu 反对党八股 [Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing]," June 18, 1942, 1.

In this 1942 transcript, Mao is using the term "*xingshi*" [form]; in post-1953 revision of this lecture, the term "form" is replaced by "*wenfeng*" [writing style/wind of writing], and that style explicitly linked to Marxist Leninism. As a comparison, see the English translation quoted above, which is based on the post-1953 edition.

example of the reverse causal relation is that, in political propagandist work, since a better writing style can make propaganda more attractive and hence more effective, writing style is a contributing factor to the outcome of a political movement. The dialectic is complete.

It is crucial that, in this framework of ideological criticism, writing problems are understood to be problems of a group of people and not of individual authors. All authors exhibit idiosyncrasies in writing, but the unique characteristic of one author is fundamentally uninteresting to the ideological critic and cannot be an object of ideological criticism, unless it reflects some sort of a general tendency, the habit of a group. In fact, it can be said that the Maoist literary critic believes that few idiosyncrasies are truly idiosyncratic in the sense that they stem from the author's natural endowment; everyone is a product of their social environment, so anyone's writing problems are likely the results of their interaction with some social groups, shared by the other members of those social groups, and hence are the problems of the ideologies of those social groups. It is in this sense that this present chapter is named the "ideological approach." The idiosyncrasy of one writer does not form an ideology, but when a group of writers share certain stylistic commonalities (which is often the case), style is a matter of ideology.

To be sure, Mao's literary theory is not formalistic. It ratifies the primacy of content over form, and in particular the primacy of the political message in artistic works. Therefore, there should be no doubt that Maoist literary criticism aimed at putting literature in the service of politics, primarily by determining "what to write." But the Maoist critic believes that the author's ideology is not only reflected in what they write but also in how they write it, so it would be inadequate to only critique the explicit content and not form. In other words, precisely because Maoist literary criticism is extremely concerned with getting the political message right, and

since form is understood to be in an overlapping position with content, this strand of literary criticism becomes highly preoccupied with form.⁵² Along these lines, this chapter, together with Chapter 2 on literacy education, argues that Chinese socialist culture pays much attention to form and theories about form, precisely because it is not formalistic. In the end, as the title of Mao's Rectification Movement blatantly states, it is just a campaign of style, style in various social or aesthetic senses, including style in a narrow definition as a quality of writing, but all of these will serve a political end.

Unlike the foreign origin of the term “style of work” (*zuofeng* 作风) the word “wind of writing” (*wenfeng* 文风) originates from Classical Chinese. That said, in Classical Chinese, while it can mean literary style, it also means the level of education in a geographical region.⁵³ The second meaning continued into the early twentieth century. A region with “plentiful” “winds of writing” is a region that has good infrastructure for education and a high literacy rate.⁵⁴ But by the mid twentieth century, the Classical Chinese meaning went defunct. In the PRC, the semantic area of this word is fully overshadowed by Mao's legacy. For example, in a book titled *A Brief Theory of the Wind of Writing*, published in February 1978, after distinguishing the term from

⁵² On this issue, Michael Schoenhals' assessment in *Doing Things with Words in Chinese Politics* can serve as a reference: “A survey of the history of the PRC suggests that Chinese political discourse is restricted not so much with respect to content as with respect to form. If all the different fora in which it takes place are taken into account, it is probably no more restricted with respect to content than political discourse in the United States or the former Soviet Union. But it is significantly more restricted with respect to form.” Schoenhals' observation is not about literature, but if we compare it to Chinese socialist literary theory, it does shed light on how the content/form divide is considered in literary theory. Michael Schoenhals, *Doing Things with Words in Chinese Politics: Five Studies*, China Research Monographs 41 (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1992), 20–21.

⁵³ Luo Zhufeng 罗竹风, Hanyu da cidian bianji weiyuanhui 汉语大词典编辑委员会, and Hanyu da cidian bianzuan chu 汉语大词典编纂处, eds., *Hanyu da cidian* 汉语大词典 [The great dictionary of the Chinese language], vol. 6 (Shanghai: Hanyu da cidian chubanshe 汉语大词典出版社, 2001), 1528.

⁵⁴ For an example, see Yi wu 亦吾, “Kangxi nianjian taiwan zhi wenfeng 康熙年间台湾之文风 [The wind of literacy in Taiwan during the Kangxi reign],” *Tianjin shangbao huakan* 天津商报画刊 8, no. 1 (1933): 1.

Classical Chinese usage and foreign synonyms, the author wrote: “The wind of writing refers to the phenomena of writing that are of a universal and disposed nature in the literary scene of the society... Therefore, Chairman Mao pointed out: ‘The wind of study and the wind of writing are both the Party’s style of work, i.e. the wind of the Party.’”⁵⁵ In the contemporary Chinese language, while there are many Chinese words describing different aspects of style, whenever “the wind of writing” is used, there is a thick PRC or Maoist undertone. Mao’s Yan’an talks and their lasting impact changed the meaning of a word in the language.

But the question remains: Why the wind? I have so far looked at the history of two words employed in Maoist literary criticism, the “style/wind of work” (*zuofeng* 作风) and the “style/wind of writing” (*wenfeng* 文风). Both rely on the wind, even though there were plenty of other Chinese characters that also mean style. For example, an alternative to “wind” would be “body.” In Michel Hockx’s study *Questions of Style*, the core concept is “the body of writing,” also a traditional Chinese concept for style, which was adopted by the Republican-era literary societies that are the focus of Hockx’ study.⁵⁶ Moreover, in Li Tuo’s reflection on the Yan’an Rectification, post-economic reform, he coined the phrase “the Mao Style” (*Mao wenti* 毛文体), also using the “body,” to theorize how the Rectification resulted in stylistic unity amongst Chinese writers of the subsequent half a century.⁵⁷ But why, for Mao, the wind? What is this wind? Is it cold or hot, dry or wet, where is it coming from, and in which direction is it blowing? Mao pledged to “seal off the passages which produce the winds.” We will dig again.

⁵⁵ Wang Boxi 王伯熙, *Wenfeng jian lun* 文风简论 [A brief theory of the wind of writing] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe 中国社会科学出版社, 1979), 5–6.

⁵⁶ Hockx, *Questions of Style*, 13.

⁵⁷ See the final section of this chapter.

200 BCE-500 CE: The Individual versus the Group

The word “wind”⁵⁸ entered Chinese literary theory in the *Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing* 诗经, hereafter *Poetry*), the oldest extant collection of Chinese verse. The collection was divided into three sections, the first of which was titled, in a common English translation, “The Airs of the States”—that “air” is the “wind.” This section of *Poetry* consists of poems from various semi-sovereign monarchical states in the Zhou dynasty. Each state had its own culture and customs, hence its own poetry, its love stories, political satire, farmer’s songs, which were collectively dubbed “winds.”

In what would become the most canonical edition of the *Poetry*, a scholar living in the second century BCE, whose surname happened to be none other than Mao, documented the following preface to the collection of verse:

“Airs” are “Influence”; it is “to teach.” By influence it stirs them; by teaching it transforms them.⁵⁹

风。风也。教也。风以动之。教以化之。

By *feng*⁶⁰ those above transform those below; also by *feng*⁶¹ those below criticize those above. When an admonition is given that is governed by patterning, the one who speaks it has no culpability, yet it remains adequate to warn those who hear it. In this we have the *feng*.⁶²

上以风化下。下以风刺上。主文而谏。言之者无罪。闻之者足以戒。故曰风。

⁵⁸ For a study of the etymology and the use in classical thought, see Gibbs, “Notes on the Wind: The Term ‘Feng’ in Chinese Literary Criticism.”

⁵⁹ Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, 38.

In this section of the chapter, all the Chinese texts of classical literary thought as well as their English translations are quoted from Owen’s book. Plenty of scholarship can be found on these texts. Disagreements on the meaning of words and passages are common. For the purpose of this study, I omit to summarize the scholarship on classical literary thought unless necessary. Moreover, in reproducing the translation, I have edited out some glosses that are not directly related to the purpose of this chapter.

⁶⁰ 风/wind.

⁶¹ This is typically interpreted (and sometimes written) as 讽, a variation of the character “wind,” which is pronounced similarly but means criticism or sarcasm.

⁶² Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, 46.

When the royal Way declined, rites and moral principles were abandoned; the power of government to teach failed; the government of the states changed; the customs of the family were altered. And at this point the mutated *feng* and the mutated *ya* were written. The historians of the states understood clearly the marks of success and failure; they were pained by the abandonment of proper human relations and lamented the severity of punishments and governance. They sang their feelings to criticize those above, understanding the changes that had taken place and thinking about former customs. Thus the mutated *feng* emerged from the affections, but they go no further than rites and moral principles. That they should emerge from the affections is human nature; that they go no further than rites and moral principles is the beneficent influence of the former kings.⁶³

至于王道衰。礼义废。政教失。国异政。家殊俗。而变风变雅作矣。国史明乎得失之迹。伤人伦之废。哀刑政之苛。吟咏情性以风其上。达于事变。而怀其旧俗者也。故变风发乎情。止乎礼义。发乎情。民之性也。止乎礼义。先王之泽也。

Thus the affairs of a single state, rooted in [the experience of] a single person are called *Feng*.⁶⁴

是以一国之事。系一人之本。谓之风。

This passage, called the “Great Preface” (*Da xu* 大序), whose author is of a contested identity, was appended as a commentary to the first poem of the *Poetry* in the edition attributed to Mao Chang (毛萇); it was among the earliest extant works of literary criticism in Chinese. In the section title, “The Winds of the States,” the word “wind” is a noun. It can be interpreted as either the culture and customs of a country, or the genre of poetry that reflects the culture and customs. But in the “Great Preface”, the wind acquires the function of a verb and comes to indicate a range of actions in public life: Commenting on the first poem in the *Poetry*, the “Great Preface” suggests that this poem can be used to “wind the world” (*yi feng tianxia* 以风天下), meaning to shape it or influence it. Wind touches people and changes the way they behave. With wind, “those above transform those below; those below criticize those above.” “The one who speaks it

⁶³ Owen, 47.

⁶⁴ Owen, 48–49.

has no culpability, yet it remains adequate to warn those who hear it.” In other words, from this inceptive moment, the literary theoretical conceptualization of “wind” was meant to describe the function of literature in social criticism and social change.

To sum up the multifaceted significance of the word “wind” here, its most basic implication is “influence.” This influence can be identified in two types of social relationship, the first being moral education, the second being social criticism. When “those above transform those below,” wind means moral education; when “those below criticize those above,” wind means social criticism. All of the various meanings come down to the metaphor of the blowing wind. As explained in *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*,

[b]y a dying and constantly revived metaphor of the way in which the wind sways the grass and plants, *feng* also refers to “influence.” *Feng* also applies to the local customs or folkways (perhaps extending “influence” or “currents” to the way in which a particular community exerts social influence or the way in which social influence is exerted by higher authorities on a community). Finally, *feng* 风 is related to and sometimes interchangeable with *feng* 讽, “to criticize,” the attempt to “influence” in a more limited sense.⁶⁵

.....

Feng is used here in the sense of “influence” (social superior to social inferior) and in the sense of “criticism” (social inferior to social superior). In either case the capacity of *feng* to “go far” is here defined as a movement between social classes.⁶⁶

If we may collapse a long history of literary criticism and join its beginning with the end, we can see that the emphasis on influence, moral education, and criticism in the “Great Preface” neatly aligns with Mao’s Rectification Movement, both in terms of the Movement’s alleged goal, and the kind of practices that played out in the campaign.

To return to classical literary thought, it should be clarified that, at least in the extant records, Chinese literary theory had not yet developed a terminology for style in the second

⁶⁵ Owen, 39.

⁶⁶ Owen, 46.

century BCE when the “Great Preface” was documented. The “wind” of the “Great Preface” did not mean style. It was in the Six Dynasties that the vocabulary and theories about literary style proliferated in Chinese in the literary criticism, most notably in Liu Xie’s (刘勰) *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (*Wen xin diao long* 文心雕龙). Like the “wind,” many of the Chinese terms of style developed in this period were metaphors of the natural world; the distinction between one concept and another was always slippery; when two concepts were coupled into a disyllabic compound, which happened often, the meaning became even more elusive. In addition to the wind and the body, there were also breath (*qi* 气), bone (*gu* 骨), brush (*bi* 笔), spirit (*shen* 神), just to name a few, and the character that means literature itself, the written pattern (*wen* 文). Since the focus of the chapter is on Mao Zedong’s theory of style, I will refrain from surveying the entirety of the stylistic terminology in classical literary thought, but will focus on one question: What exactly distinguishes “wind” from other terms? In other words, what makes “wind” the preferred term for the purpose of this political campaign? To resolve this question within the limits of the chapter’s space, I now turn to a modulated comparison between “wind” and two other common terms of style, namely “breath” and “body.”

First, “breath.”⁶⁷ The prototypical literary theory of the “breath” is an article titled “A Discourse on Literature” (*Dian lun: lun wen* 典论·论文) by Cao Pi (曹丕), who, between the years 220 and 226 CE, reigned over the Wei state of the Three Kingdoms. The monarch, who was also a poet and literary theorist, wrote:

In literature *qi* is the dominant factor. *Qi* has its normative forms—clear and murky. It is not to be brought by force. Compare it to music: though melodies be equal and though the rhythms follow the rules, when it comes to an inequality in drawing on a reserve of *qi*, we have grounds to distinguish skill and clumsiness.

⁶⁷ For English scholarship, also see Pollard, “Ch’i in Chinese Literary Theory”; Michael Stanley-Baker, “Qi 氣: A Means for Cohering Natural Knowledge,” in *Routledge Handbook of Chinese Medicine* (Routledge, 2022).

Although it may reside in a father, he cannot transfer it to his son; nor can an elder brother transfer it to the younger.⁶⁸

文以气为主。气之清浊有体。不可力强而致。譬诸音乐。曲度虽均。节奏同检。至于引气不齐。巧拙有素。虽在父兄。不能以移子弟。

The word “breath” can also be translated as gas, steam, the natural air, humor, vitality... But “breath” is a useful translation here because the concept relates to the orality of poetry; it sometimes, though not always, refers to poetic meters and musical rhythms which require actual breathing when the poem is being performed. In addition to this physiological interpretation, there are two main and contending explanations of the “breath”: either “talent” or “personality.” Their difference is a question of nature versus nurture. Generally speaking, talent is understood to be a natural endowment,⁶⁹ whereas personality depends more on social experiences. However, since, by the Chinese tradition, “breath” can be fostered (“to nurture the breath,” *yang qi* 养气), and can be “stored up and depleted in use,”⁷⁰ natural endowment would be a reductive interpretation. This then makes room for the second interpretation, which takes “breath” as a theory of style based on the personality of the author. Especially, since Cao Pi said that every poet has his own breath, but a father’s breath cannot be transferred to his son, “breath” can be understood as an author theory of the first type. It identifies the origin of the style in the personality of the singular author, and not the collective tendencies of a group of authors. To paraphrase, the breath of style is what distinguishes one writer from another. This then limits the applicability of the term in literary criticism. For example, in “A Discourse on Literature,” Cao Pi used a phrase “the breath of *qi*” (*qi qi* or *Qi qi* 齐气), which confused his later commentators,

⁶⁸ Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, 65.

⁶⁹ Guo Shaoyu 郭绍虞, *Zhongguo lidai wenlun xuan* 中国历代文论选 [Anthology of Chinese literary theory of the past dynasties], vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 2001), 163.

⁷⁰ Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, 66.

because *qi* could be either the name of a region (and hence should be capitalized as Qi), or an adjective meaning something close to “solemn.” Yet, if we accept that “breath” typically refers to a single author’s style, then we have to rule out the interpretation that “the breath of *qi*” is the regional style of the Qi area.⁷¹ In sum, “breath” and “wind” are not interchangeable, because only wind describes the style of a group of people based on a social relationship.

Next, there is “body,” which historically functioned as a system of stylistic types. The foundational text of the concept of the body is the chapter “Body and Nature” (Ti xing 体性) in *The Literary Mind*. Liu Xie wrote:

But talent varies between mediocrity and excellence; *qi* varies between the firm and the yielding; learning varies between the shallow and the profound; practice [or “habit”] varies between the crude and the gracious. These all are smelted in the forge by one’s nature and disposition, and fused by how a person has been shaped and influenced. Thus, there are extraordinary cloud shapes in the realm of the writing brush, and in the garden of letters, strange waves.

...

If we can generalize about the paths followed, we find that the number is complete in eight normative forms [bodies]: decorous and dignified; obscure and far-reaching; terse and essential; obvious and consecutive; lush and profuse; vigorous and lovely; novel and unusual; light and delicate.⁷²

然才有庸俊。气有刚柔。学有浅深。习有雅郑。并情性所铄。陶染所凝。是以笔区云譎。文苑波诡者矣。

.....

若总其归途。则数穷八体。一曰典雅。二曰远奥。三曰精约。四曰显附。五曰繁缛。六曰壮丽。七曰新奇。八曰轻靡。

Here, this “body” is translated as “normative form.” The phrase “eight normative forms” had appeared several centuries earlier in another important text, *Shuo wen jie zi* (说文解字), a

⁷¹ Bing Chen 炳宸, “Cao Pi de wenxue lilun--shi ‘ti’ yu ‘qi’ 曹丕的文学理论——释体与气 [Cao Pi’s literary theory: glossing the ‘body’ and the ‘breath’],” *Guangming ribao: wenxue yichan* 光明日报·文学遗产, no. 232 (October 26, 1958); Zhi Yang 志洋, “Shi ‘qi qi’ 释‘齐气’ [Glossing ‘qi qi’],” *Guangming ribao: wenxue yichan* 光明日报·文学遗产, no. 339 (November 20, 1960).

⁷² Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, 212–14.

dictionary of Chinese characters. *Shuo wen jie zi* enumerates eight styles of writing a character—a classification of script or calligraphy styles, giving them names such as “Large Seal Script,” “Small Seal Script,” etc.⁷³ In *The Literary Mind*, Liu Xie reintroduced the eight normative forms as a taxonomy of literary style. In the new taxonomy, while the object of classification was no longer the form of the brushstroke, it was still the form, and not the author, of writing. This is to say, the “body” is not the body of the writer but of their words. While the wind blows and the breath accumulates, the body is a fixed set of features to be observed and described.

The beginning of “wind” as a concept of style is often dated to a chapter of *The Literary Mind*, titled “Wind and Bone” (Feng gu 风骨), where Liu Xie theorized the “wind” in reference to the *Songs*:

The Book of Songs encompasses “Six Principles,” of which “wind” (*feng*, the “Airs” section) is the first. This is the original source of stirring and transformation, and it is the counterpart of intent and *qi*. The transmission of the disconsolate feelings always begins with wind.⁷⁴
诗总六义。风冠其首。斯乃化感之本源。志气之符契也。是以怵怅述情。必始乎风。

One who has attained depth in wind must transmit the affections clearly.⁷⁵
深乎风者。述情必显。

The “wind” here refers to literature’s ability to show emotion and hence generate affective impact on the reader. This is well aligned with the ideas of “transformation” and “change” in the “Great Preface.”

In short, Liu Xie developed the monosyllabic word “wind” into the disyllabic “wind and bone,” which became a weighty concept in classical literary criticism, and is one of the earliest

⁷³ Tang Kejing 汤可敬, *Shuo wen jie zi jin shi* 说文解字今释 [Shuo wen jie zi’s modern glossing], Zeng ding ben 增订本, vol. 4 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 2018), 2201.

⁷⁴ Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, 219.

⁷⁵ Owen, 221.

classical concepts that resemble the modern usage of the character “wind” as style. So, at this point, we cannot but deal with disyllabic compounds in Classical Chinese, even though we have not even fully understood the individual characters. In general, disyllabic compounds are hard to define. Translators often resort to translating them character by character as “X and Y.” However, the meaning of a compound is more than just the addition or combination of two distinct concepts; the meaning often changes, sometimes inclining to the first character, other times to the second, forcing the reader to step back and contemplate the relationship between the notions behind the two characters. On this difficult word “wind and bone,” again in consideration of the limited space, I will omit the countless debates on what it means and focus on a specific usage of it, which became a standard term in the Tang dynasty, that is, the so-called “the wind and bone of Jian’an” (*Jian’an feng gu* 建安风骨).⁷⁶

Jian’an was the era name of the Emperor Xian of Han (196-220 CE). In this period, a particularly robust literary scene was cultivated which exemplified what the social and artistic responsibilities of literature should be—at least, such was the belief of Chinese intellectuals of the later generations. The term “wind and bone of Jian’an” is simply the equivalent of what we may call a “Jian’an style,” meaning, a shared collective style of writers in that particular historical period and location. Representative figures of the style include Cao Pi, the Wei ruler and theorist of the “breath,” his father, younger brother, and a cohort of seven writers whom Cao Pi

⁷⁶ Studies of this term are numerous. For some examples, see Zhan Ying 詹鏊, “Qi Liang wenyi piping zhong de fenggu lun 齐梁文艺批评中的风骨论 [Theories of the wind and bone in the artistic criticism of the Qi and Liang dynasties],” *Guangming ribao: wenxue yichan* 光明日报·文学遗产, no. 392 (December 10, 1961); Tan Jia 谭佳, “Cong ‘feng gu’ yanjiu kan gudai wenlun de kunjing 从‘风骨’研究看古代文论的困境 [Looking at the difficulties of classical literary theory from the perspective of the studies of the ‘wind and bone’],” *Wenxue yichan* 文学遗产, no. 4 (2005): 134–36; Fan Shanbiao 樊善标, “Ways of Literary History Writing and the Discourse of Jian’an Fenggu 文学史写作方式与建安风骨论说,” *Journal of Chinese Studies* 中国文化研究所学报, no. 48 (2008): 281–314.

commented on in “A Discourse on Literature.” Although, according to Cao Pi’s own theory of the breath, a father’s style cannot be transmitted to his son, nor the older brother’s to the younger brother, in contrast, in the theory of “wind and bone” as collective style, the Cao father and sons are viewed as a whole. At a more descriptive level, the common characteristics of the Jian’an writers may be summarized as 1) the use of the five-character poetic meter, 2) the rise of lyricism as the main mode of poetry, in which the expression of emotions prevails over narration, and 3) a thematic concentration on personal afflictions that are the result of social disorder.⁷⁷

That style is a collective trend is an idea hard to object to, since literature is always created in a process of influence. One’s writing is the result of being influenced by the works of those before them, and one’s writing will in turn influence those who write after them. While the Cao father and sons each had their unique characteristics in writing, due to their proximity, naturally, they would have shared a set of characteristics which testified to the personal connections between them. That said, the conceptualization of the Jian’an style historically was not based on an effort in describing the shared characteristics of a group of authors. Literary scholars have identified the various ways in which the Jian’an cohort of writers was a construct of Cao Pi’s, retrospective and reflective of his favoritism—the writers were, after all, either a member of the royal Cao family or its protegee.⁷⁸ This group of writers then became, in the works of later critics, a counterexample against a more verbose, ornate, and less socially sympathetic style of writing that appeared at various historical moments. In this process, the

⁷⁷ This is summarized from Wang Yao’s study of the Jian’an writers. See Wang Yao 王瑶, “Cao shi fuzi yu Jian’an qi zi 曹氏父子与建安七子 [The Cao father and sons and the Jian’an seven],” in *Wang Yao quanji* 王瑶全集 [The complete works of Wang Yao], vol. 1, 8 vols. (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe 河北教育出版社, 1999), 249–67. Wang Yao also uses the aesthetic category, “*kangkai beiliang*” (慷慨悲凉), to encapsulate the Jian’an style.

⁷⁸ Tian Xiaofei 田晓菲, “Feast and Memory: Rethinking Jian’an 宴饮与回忆——重新思考建安,” *Journal of Chinese Literature* 中国文学学报, no. 1 (December 1, 2020): 21–24; Wang Yao 王瑶, “Cao shi fuzi yu Jian’an qi zi 曹氏父子与建安七子 [The Cao father and sons and the Jian’an seven],” 251–54.

meaning of the word “wind and bone” also came to be reversely defined by the perceived style of the Jian’an writers. In a certain sense, Jian’an is made synonymous to “wind and bone”; there is no other style that can be called “wind and bone.”⁷⁹

The “wind and bone of Jian’an” reflects a few key connotations of the word “wind” when it is used as a concept of literary style: First, with “wind,” the object of the stylistic analysis is not one author but a group of authors from the same time and place. Second, the reason why these authors can form a group is because of their social interaction. They are not a number of discrete dots that happen to share the same property; rather, they are the products of one process of interaction, which makes it impossible for them to not share the same property. Third, like the aesthetic categories (Chapter 3), which are also a traditional method of stylistic criticism, “wind” carries a value judgment. When someone calls a style “a wind of X,” they are not offering an objective description of its external characteristics, but are making a judgment of X’s value. Therefore, when “wind” refers to collective styles, a value judgment is placed on that collective of people. The Jian’an style, for example, is by definition a good style, a style of morality, of social responsibility and aesthetic conscientiousness, an example of what literature should be.

To conclude, what distinguishes “wind” from other classical concepts of style is that “wind” is a concept of social relations, highlighting the mechanisms of influence in an authorship circle, and does not always lead to a formal analysis of textual features. As a concept of collective style, “wind” asserts that, firstly, human beings can be influenced, educated, or transformed. Literature is both a document of transformation and a tool of it. Secondly, the object of transformation is a social group, not an individual. Hence, style emerges from social

⁷⁹ On this point, see the scholarship on “wind and bone” as well as Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, 219.

relations, rather than individual authorship as a sort of singular genius mind. Thirdly, the conceptualization of collective or periodic styles carries a moral judgment, which is fundamentally the judgment of a social group. By implication, a writer should socialize with the correct cohort.

The “Marxist-Leninist wind of writing” is a product of this interpretation of “wind.” This Chinese socialist theory of style, while it relied on the translation of Stalinist political writing, reproduced the major implications of the historical formulations of “wind” as style in Chinese literary thought. This understanding of Mao’s “wind” then further helps us rethink Mao’s 1957 speech in Moscow, where he borrowed from *Dream of the Red Chamber*. The theory of literary style and theory of international politics share the same conceptual origin, which is the notion of social influence inherent to the Chinese character “wind.” In this sense of the wind, the conceptual distinction was blurred between the air of an artist and the geopolitical power of a state.

1958: Popularizing the Wind

Writing style reform has been a regular part of public life in PRC history. *People’s Daily*, for example, documents recurrent waves of writing style reform from the 1950 to now. Time and again, writers were asked to work on their style, and not just professional writers, because writing style reform impacted all public sectors of the state and everyone who needed to produce writing in their work, from schoolteachers and academics to lawyers and judges. These campaigns were dubbed in Maoist terminology, “to reform the wind of writing” (*gaizao wenfeng* 改造文风). I am now turning to one early example of this, which took place in the spring of 1958, to further illustrate how the Maoist ideological criticism of style played out in practice.

The 1958 episode of writing style reform followed the end of the “Hundred Flowers” period in 1957 and the outset of the “Anti-Rightist Struggles.” It involved renowned writers who built a career under the banner of New Literature, such as Lao She, Guo Moruo, Mao Dun, and Ye Shengtao. Some of them had just returned from the trip to the Soviet Union with Mao, because, by the 1950s, these men were serving in high-ranking government positions (Guo Moruo was in the Presidium of the National People’s Congress and Ye Shengtao was the Deputy Minister of Education, for example). The campaign was not restricted to the literary circles and an even greater number of records are available from the field of journalism, but here I will only look at the participation by literary writers and critics.

At a formal level, the criteria that prevailed over this wave of the stylistic reform can be condensed to merely two: the first, “short” (*duan* 短), and the second, “understandable” (*dong* 懂). In other words, economy and clarity. Both of these principles were applied to the level of the sentence as well as to structural organization at a larger scale. Concerning economy, for example, critics of the time emphasized that shorter clauses are preferable to longer ones, and that every piece of writing should be as concise as possible. This does not mean that long texts must not be published, but that writers should strive to be brief and should not digress, as long as all the necessary information is included. Meanwhile, writers should also be considerate to their readers and make their writing easily understandable. Avoid linguistic, structural, or conceptual confusions; avoid Europeanized linguistic patterns; avoid quoting Classical Chinese; use colloquial phrasing, and so on.

The discussion in the literary circles was launched at the Fifth Session of the First National Congress in February 1958 with a talk by Lao She; on February 11, *People’s Daily* published a transcript of the talk, under the title of “Down with the Foreign Eight-Legged

Writing” (*Dadao yang bagu* 打倒洋八股).⁸⁰ Nominally and structurally Lao She’s talk reproduced Mao’s “Oppose the Party’s Eight-legged Writing” during the Yan’an Rectification. Lao She’s talk opened in reference to the ongoing anti-rightist campaign and went on to enumerate, like Mao did, eight indictments of rightist literary works, which included lack of substance, lack of clarity, and Europeanized grammar, among others, all attributed to foreign influence. On February 15, *Wenyi bao* (文艺报), a major literary journal affiliated with the National Literary and Artistic Workers Association (now China Federation of Literary and Art Circles), organized a roundtable discussion on the same topic, with Lao She serving as the chair.⁸¹ Twenty esteemed writers and scholars participated, among them Zhao Shuli, Zang Kejia, Bing Xin, and Ye Shengtao.

The *Wenyi bao* roundtable conveyed an explicit and unequivocal message that the formal criteria of the style reform were class-based. Underlying the principles of economy and clarity was a relationship between writers and readers, which, so far, had been equivalent to the relationship between an intelligentsia that was economically adjacent to the exploiting class and the masses. Such an unbalanced relationship was no longer to be tolerated; it was to be rearranged such that power would be assigned to the newly-literate, proletarian readership. Therefore, writers must write in a way that suited the interest and ability of this new readership. The main characteristics of this readership were that they did not have a high level of education, did not know foreign languages or Classical Chinese, and did not have much time reading

⁸⁰ Lao She 老舍, “Dadao yang bagu: Shu Sheyu daibiao de fayan 打到洋八股——舒舍予代表的发言 [Down with foreign eight-legged writing: the speech of Representative Shu Sheyu],” *Renmin ribao* 人民日报 [People’s Daily], February 11, 1958.

⁸¹ “Fandui bagu qiang, wenfeng yao jiefang! 反对八股腔，文风要解放！ [Oppose the eight-legged tone, writing style needs to be liberated!],” *Wenyi bao* 文艺报, no. 4 (February 26, 1958): 2–11.

because they were busy with productive labor. As a reader's letter to *People's Daily* explained on November 26, 1957:

I saw that, in some articles in *People's Daily*, the choices of words and characters are relatively difficult. A small number of articles are still long and hollow. So I thought: The great majority of the population are workers and peasants, and how many of them can understand these articles? Can our newspapers be made in a way that is closer to the workers and the peasants, a way that is more popularized? I hope that, in this rectification of the wind [style], you can pay a lot of attention to rectifying the wind [style] of writing.⁸²

我看到人民日报的一些文章，选词和用字都比较深，有少数文章仍是又长又空洞。我就想：这些文章，占人民多数的工人、农民究竟有多少人看得懂？我们的报纸可否办得更接近工农一些，更通俗一些？希望你们在整风中注意大力整顿文风。

This criticism was aimed at journalistic writings, but it reflects precisely the problem that preoccupied literary writers at the *Wenyi bao* roundtable a few months later. At the beginning of the February 15 roundtable, Lao She set the tone by reaffirming the principle that literature is written to “serve the people”:

Firstly, it is a problem of whom to serve. In order to serve the people, it is necessary to speak the people's language, write something that the people can understand and love to read. If it is just to serve oneself, then however awkwardly written there's no problem. ... We must stop dismissing the masses. Popular and wide-reaching stuff should be able to tell deep ideas. By no means does the “raising of standards” entail strange language. The writings of some of the rightists are indeed very strange. Maybe they think of it as the raising of standards, but in fact this kind of stuff absolutely will not be accepted by the masses. They are dismissive of the masses, and they also display a jesting attitude toward the readership, because they claim: “I just like this kind of tone!”⁸³

首先是一个为谁服务的问题，要为人民服务，就得说人民的话，写出来人民能看懂，爱看；如果说为自己服务呢，那就写得怎么别扭也可以。……我们不能再继续轻视群众了。通俗的普及的东西，应该是能说明很高深的道理的。绝不是文字怪才是提高，有的右派分子的文章的确很怪，也许他们自己

⁸² Zhang Peigen 张培根, “Ye xuyao zhengdun wenfeng 也需要整顿文风 [Also need to rectify the style of writing],” *Renmin ribao* 人民日报 [People's Daily], November 26, 1957.

⁸³ “Fandui bagu qiang, wenfeng yao jiefang! 反对八股腔，文风要解放！ [Oppose the eight-legged tone, writing style needs to be liberated!],” 2.

以为这是提高的东西，事实上这样的东西决不能为群众接受，这是轻视群众，同时还有一种戏弄读者的态度，因为他们会说：“我就是喜欢这个调调儿！”

Lao She's argument drew substantially from Mao's view in "Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art" in 1942. The fundamentality of the question "whom literature serves," as well as the dialectic between "reaching a wide audience" (*puji* 普及, also translated as popularization) and "raising standards" (*tigao* 提高), were the main thesis of the Yan'an talks and now reintroduced by Lao She.

Therefore, professional writers were asked to learn the language of the workers and the peasants. The poet Zang Kejia said: "Some poets wrote prose poetry or poetry with a strong intellectual air. Once they get to factories and the countryside, it is not well received. The workers and peasants read it and feel that it is not right; they hear it and it does not enter their ears."⁸⁴ Zang Kejia concluded his speech with a reference to Mao's borrowing of the "eastern and western winds," calling Mao's style "vigorous, lively, and fresh." Bing Xin similarly touched on the issue of learning and using the peasants' language. The peasant's vocabulary is contextualized in seasons of the year, she mentioned, so "it must be learned deeply. If you pretend to learn it, in the end you won't learn it right."⁸⁵

The problem of the "foreign" was directly addressed by the philosopher Zhu Guangqian, who is known for introducing western aesthetics into China. The masses use a shared language in their everyday life. Using this language, he said, writers can form an emotional bond with readers. But "when readers hear that writers are talking in a foreign way, they feel that the

⁸⁴ "Fandui bagu qiang, wenfeng yao jiefang! 反对八股腔，文风要解放！ [Oppose the eight-legged tone, writing style needs to be liberated!]," 3.

⁸⁵ "Fandui bagu qiang, wenfeng yao jiefang! 反对八股腔，文风要解放！ [Oppose the eight-legged tone, writing style needs to be liberated!]," 8.

writers and themselves are not the same family... What else can be said about evoking emotional resonances?"⁸⁶ Zhu Guangqian then theorized the role of language in the class struggle:

At a linguistic level, the author intentionally wants to show superiority to the ordinary people and masses. This is essentially a reflection of the ideology of the exploiting class. Language itself has no class nature, but the way language is used often manifests a class nature. Do not the misters, who are writing in the foreign eight-legged style, still secretly possess the ideological remnant of the exploiting class of the past? If so, they cannot address the masses of workers and peasants. In other words, they are not qualified to be writers in the socialist era.⁸⁷

作者是有意识地要在语言上显得高于一般人民大众之上。这其实就是剥削阶级意识的表现。语言本来没有阶级性，但是运用语言的方式却往往出阶级性来。写洋八股的先生们是否还有些过去剥削阶级的残余意识在作祟呢？如果有，他们就无法面向工农群众，这也就是说，他们没有资格当社会主义时代的作家。

In April, Guo Moruo, who was not present at the *Wenyi bao* roundtable, gave an interview with a magazine on “the wind of writing”; a summary of the interview was republished in *People’s Daily*. In the interview, reiterating Zhu Guangqian’s view on “the language of the exploiting class,” Guo Moruo approached style through the content/form binary:

Concerning language, it can serve any class. But if your ideas are capitalistic ideas, what is expressed by your language can never fall outside the realm of capitalistic ideas, and vice versa. This sufficiently proves that the question of writing style [wind] is not purely a question of language.

Ideas and language have a certain degree of association. That is the relation between content and form. Content determines form. A language that is chosen by proletarian ideas cannot but be close to the proletariat. From the lively language of the proletariat, we can find tools that can accurately express our ideas. To write well, the main thing is to make an effort to unify content and form harmoniously.

⁸⁶ “Fandui bagu qiang, wenfeng yao jiefang! 反对八股腔，文风要解放！ [Oppose the eight-legged tone, writing style needs to be liberated!],” 10.

⁸⁷ “Fandui bagu qiang, wenfeng yao jiefang! 反对八股腔，文风要解放！ [Oppose the eight-legged tone, writing style needs to be liberated!],” 10.

As time changes, language is also changing, and writing style [wind] is changing subsequently.⁸⁸

……就语言讲，它可以为任何阶级服务，但如果你的思想是资产阶级思想，你的语言所表达出来的东西决脱离不了资产阶级思想的范畴，反之亦是。这就充分证明文风问题不单纯是语言问题。

思想和语言有一定的关联，这是内容和形式的关系。内容决定形式。通过无产阶级思想选用的语言，一定是接近于无产阶级的，我们可以从无产阶级的有生命的语言中，找到能够准确地表达我们思想的工具。要做好文章，主要的要努力把内容和形式和谐地统一起来。随着时代的不同，语言在逐渐的改变，文风也在跟着转变。

The principles of economy and clarity were also reiterated in colloquial terms. Guo Moruo wrote in the interview:

Nowadays everybody is busy. Short articles are the most suitable. To say what one wants to say simply, clearly, and accurately, and to let the person who reads gain something without spending a lot of time on it—this is the best.⁸⁹

现在大家都很忙，短文章是最适时的。把要说的事情简单、明了、准确的说出话来，让读的人不要花很多时间就有所得，这是最好的。

Chairman Mao said that some comrades write as though they were deliberately trying to not let others understand them. In contrast, when Chairman Mao writes, he does not neglect even punctuation, trying all he can to make others understand. That is why he can write such articles.⁹⁰

毛主席说过，有些同志写文章就存心不要人家懂。而毛主席写文章确实连标点也不放松，存心要人家懂。正因为苦心孤诣为读的人着想，才写出这样的文章。

⁸⁸ Guo Moruo 郭沫若, “Guo Moruo tongzhi guanyu wenfeng wenti da benkan jizhe wen 郭沫若同志关于文风问题答本刊记者问 [Comrade Guo Moruo answers the questions of our journalist on the problem of writing style],” *Xin guan cha* 新观察, no. 182 (April 1, 1958): 4.

⁸⁹ Guo Moruo 郭沫若, 4.

⁹⁰ Guo Moruo 郭沫若, 4.

In sum, the writing style reform in 1958, as well as in 1942, was essentially aimed at reorganizing the relationship between the newly-literate reading public and an intelligentsia that largely consisted of members with middle or upper class background. This is the nature of “popularization” or “reaching a wide audience,” as Lao She put it. This campaign maintained that the problem of style is not only a problem of language, but also revealing of the beliefs of the people who use the language. To be precise, what is problematic in the beliefs of the writers is that the intelligentsia had not yet understood class, they had not understood that literature played a role in the class society. It was repeatedly and forcefully demanded that intellectuals transfer their social privileges to the laboring class. This transfer of privilege entails concrete, visible changes in the external form of writing as much as it demands changes in content. Literary and professional writers need to let go of their prior stylistic criteria and establish new ones that can directly serve the reading needs of the workers and peasants. Economy and clarity are key components of the new criteria.

To borrow the analytical framework from Guillory’s *Cultural Capital*,⁹¹ it can be said that, in the style reform of the early PRC, the kind of linguistic capital that defined the pre-revolution intelligentsia was emptied of value; value was being reassigned to the language used by the workers and peasants. What had been considered a banal or vulgar style was reevaluated and justified by means of aesthetic categories such as economy and clarity. The peasant’s language was also given a degree of sophistication, because, as Bing Xin said, the parlance of peasantry changes from season to season, implying that their language is not simple, not simpler to learn than the sociolect of the bourgeoisie. A new aesthetic hierarchy replaced the preceding one.

⁹¹ For more on *Cultural Capital* and its comparison to modern Chinese literature, see Chapter 2.

That said, even though the definition of the categories of economy and clarity is not objective, it is hard to argue that the pursuit of those principles does not have some degree of universality. That is to say, are not “economy” and “clarity” inherently positive traits? The workers and peasants do not like lengthiness, redundancy, and confusion, but who does? In any case, the pursuit of economy and clarity is not class-dependent. William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White wrote in *The Elements of Style*: “Use definite, specific, concrete language.” “Omit needless words.” “Avoid a succession of loose sentences.”⁹² In Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation, I will show that both Classical Chinese literary criticism and twentieth-century non-left scholars trained in the United States nevertheless advocated for stylistic economy. Yet class was an important factor in 1958, since a majority portion of the population had just received minimal literacy education. The literacy problem was then merged with aesthetic questions such as which sociolect is more “vigorous, lively, fresh, and forceful.”

In the end, while the principles of the short and the understandable gained ground, it is difficult now to assess how much they actually convinced the intelligentsia to yield their linguistic capital to the proletariat, because similar criteria widely existed in classical and western literary criticism. A section of the intelligentsia was evidently convinced and passionately wanted to create literature for the toiling class, and the rest, I assume, even if they privately dismissed the Maoist ideology, could not hold any real objections to economy and clarity.

Epilogue: Mao’s Style

⁹² William Strunk and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*, Fourth edition (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000).

Chinese intellectuals have said a lot about Mao's theory of style, but they have said much more about Mao's own writing style. In summary, commentaries on Mao's style often fall under one of the following categories: The first is to extract sentences from Mao's writings or the transcripts of his speeches, and to use them as examples in stylistic or grammatical handbooks. An example is the canonical *A Talk on Grammar and Rhetoric*, by linguists Lü Shuxiang and Zhu Dexi in 1951, which I will return to in the next chapter. In this 1951 work, Mao and Lu Xun were the most frequently quoted authors for correct example sentences.⁹³ The second type of remark on Mao's style is explicit praise, often in the form of a passing comment in which Mao's style is used as a positive example of something under discussion. Zang Kejia and Guo Moruo's references to Mao's speeches and writing earlier in this chapter are illustrative of this type of comments. The third type is Li Tuo's critique of "the Mao Style" since the late 1980s⁹⁴. Studying two twentieth-century authors whose writing career covered a long historical span, namely Ding Ling and Wang Zengqi, Li Tuo argues that the dominance of Maoism in China was not just the dominance of a discursive system in the Foucauldian sense, but more concretely at the linguistic level, as the dominance of a writing style:

In the historical process of gradually acquiring a position of absolute authority, the Mao discourse also gradually constructed for itself a material form of the language, which can also be called a wind [style] of writing, a body [style] of

⁹³ The serialization of *Yufa xiuci jianghua* began on June 6, 1951 in *People's Daily* and concluded on December 15 of that year. It was subsequently published as six brochures and later one volume. See Lü Shuxiang 吕叔湘 and Zhu Dexi 朱德熙, *Yufa xiuci jianghua* 语法修辞讲话 [A talk on grammar and rhetoric], 3rd ed., vol. 1, 6 vols. (Beijing: Kaiming shudian 开明书店, 1951).

⁹⁴ Most of his argument has been outlined in three essays written in the 1990s: Li Tuo 李陀, "Ding Ling bu jiandan--geming shiqi zhishifenzi zai huayu shengchan zhong de fuza juese 丁玲不简单——革命时期知识分子在话语生产中的复杂角色 [Ding Ling is no simple case: the complicated role of the intellectual in the discourse production of the revolutionary period]"; Li Tuo 李陀, "Xiandai hanyu yu dangdai wenxue 现代汉语与当代文学 [Modern Chinese language and contemporary literature]," in *Xuebeng hechu* 雪崩何处 [The Fall of Avalanches] (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2015), 133–48; Li Tuo 李陀, "Wang Zengqi yu xiandai hanyu xiezu--jian tan Mao wenti 汪曾祺与现代汉语写作——兼谈毛文体 [Wang Zengqi and modern Chinese writing: with additional remarks on the Mao style]," *Jintian wenxue zazhi* 今天文学杂志 [Today], no. 39 (December 1997): 1–30.

writing. In other words, this discourse is in a certain sense also a body [style] of writing; the discourse and the body [style] of writing are one and the same, sharing an indissoluble relationship. In the period of Yan'an Rectification, Mao Zedong paid particular emphasis to “the rectification of the wind [style] of writing,” and in both “Oppose Eight-Legged Party Writing” and “Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art” he spent time talking specifically about the problem of the language. These were not accidental.⁹⁵

在逐渐获得一种绝对权威地位的历史过程中，毛话语同时还逐渐为自己建构了一种物质的语言形式，也可以说是一种文风，一种文体。换句话说，这个话语在一定意义上又是一种文体，它和此种文体有一而二，二而一的不能分解的关系。在延安整风时期，毛泽东对“整顿文风”格外重视，《反对党八股》和《在延安文艺座谈会上的讲话》都专门讲语言问题，那绝不是偶然的。

Li Tuo's contribution here is the separation of two interconnected mechanisms of influence. The first is the wide reach of Mao's theories of style, in Li Tuo's words “the Mao discourse,” which has been the main topic of the present chapter. The second is observed at a more closely textual level, which is the mere reproduction of Mao's own writing style by other people who write under Chinese socialism. In Li Tuo's bold polemic, the PRC as a whole acquired Mao's writing style, as a result of the dominance of Mao's theory of style. Mao's writing style is now part of the standard Chinese language. Li Tuo wrote:

There is no doubt that the Mao style is a crucial stage or dimension in the history of the development of the modern Chinese language. In the long duration of several decades, it influenced, manipulated, or completely controlled the speaking and writing of hundreds of millions of people. Likely, there will never be another language movement which can match its impact. It can be said that it gave impetus to the maturation of the modern Chinese language. Many linguists attribute the standardization of modern Chinese to the promotion of “*putonghua*” since the 1950s... But linguists seem to have neglect the function of the Mao style in this standardization. It is the Mao style the provided standardization with plenty of rhetorical rules and vocabulary system, and a unique writing style [wind] that controls and surveils all these—They provided the form and spirit for today's *putonghua*.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Li Tuo 李陀, “Wang Zengqi yu xiandai hanyu xiezuo--jian tan Mao wenti 汪曾祺与现代汉语写作——兼谈毛文体 [Wang Zengqi and modern Chinese writing: with additional remarks on the Mao style],” 9.

⁹⁶ Li Tuo 李陀, 10.

毛文体无疑是现代汉语发展历史上一个非常重要的阶段或方面，它在几十年的长时间里影响、左右或者完全控制了上亿人的言说和写作，大概再也不会再有另一个语言运动能和它的影响相比。可以说，它对现代汉语的成熟起了很大的推动作用。很多语言学家把现代汉语的规范化归功于 1950 年代后开展的推广“普通话”运动……但是语言学家们似乎忽视了毛文体在这一规范化中的作用。是毛文体为这一规范化提供了一套套修辞法则和词语系统，以及统摄这这些东西的一种特殊的文风——它们为今天的普通话提供了形和神。

There is a contradiction between the intended breadth of Li Tuo's theory of the Mao Style (“hundreds of millions of people”; “never another to match its impact”) and the manner in which it was put forward, which is not at all evidentiary. Li Tuo does not raise textual examples for the Mao Style that he so successfully theorizes. But on this topic Chinese readers do not seem to need textual evidence anyways. They are quick and enthusiastic to respond to it, agreeing passionately. For example, in a conversation between Li Tuo and two other Chinese critics, published in article form under the title of “The Rebellion of Language” in 1989, his interlocutors instantly agree to the extreme breadth of the polemic (“It has infiltrated our entire ideology.”) and begin using it to label texts (“[This book] is a typical work in the Mao Style.”).⁹⁷

It is very feasible to collect and analyze textual evidence for Mao Zedong's personal writing style, but, nonetheless, I think, the better way to understand Li Tuo's concept is not through textual evidence, but through the lens of the ideological approach that is the topic of this chapter. The concept of “the Mao style,” although it is intended to challenge the very dominance of Mao's style, is an example of ideological criticism just like Mao's theory of style, where the critic's goal is the criticism of influence. The ideological approach to style imparts social

⁹⁷ Li Tuo 李陀, Wang Bin 王斌, and Zhang Ling 张陵, “‘Yuyan’ de fanpan--jin liangnian xiaoshuo xianxiang ‘语言’的反叛——近两年小说现象 [The rebel of ‘language’: the phenomenon of fiction in the past two years],” *Wenyi yanjiu* 文艺研究 1989, no. 02 (1989): 79.

criticism through an ostensibly formalist argument, and the formalist part of it is often not evidentiary.

One question to ask now is why Li Tuo uses the term “body” to thematize his critique. Why is Li Tuo’s “Mao Style” a “body” and not a “wind”? I think there is no semantic explanation to it, because Li Tuo himself uses the body and the wind simultaneously: “a material form of the language, which can also be called a wind [style] of writing, a body [style] of writing.”⁹⁸ What is crucial, however, is that the concept of wind as style is already entrenched in Maoism. When Li Tuo, in the late 1980s, attempted a critique of Maoist literary theory, he could not have reused the very concept with which Mao established that theory. He needed a different word for it, hence “body,” otherwise his critique would have been a discursive defeat to the object of his criticism from the very beginning. This “body” was also contemporaneous to him, because the new wave of formalist-structuralist interest in the “body” was growing in the Chinese academia. In any case, “body” means normative form, a fitting representation of Li Tuo’s argument that Mao’s personal style has become the linguistic standard for the PRC.

There is yet a different way to evaluate Li Tuo’s Mao Style, which will return me to the beginning of this chapter, when I mentioned that *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* underwent revision in the early 1950s. This revision modified the content of the works to some extent, but it was also a thorough proofreading of cosmetic linguistic issues. Compare two versions of his February 1, 1942 talk:

⁹⁸ Li Tuo 李陀, “Wang Zengqi yu xiandai hanyu xiezuo--jian tan Mao wenti 汪曾祺与现代汉语写作——兼谈毛文体 [Wang Zengqi and modern Chinese writing: with additional remarks on the Mao style],” 9.

Table 2. Textual changes in “Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing” after the early 1950s revision	
1942 ⁹⁹	1953 ¹⁰⁰
我现在想讲的是：主观主义、宗派主义，怎样拿党八股做它们的宣传工具或表现形式。我们反对主观主义、宗派主义，如果不连党八股也 给反掉 ，那它就还有一个藏身的地方，它还可以躲起来。如果我们连党八股也打倒了，那就算对于主观主义、宗派主义最后地“将一军”， 势必 弄得这两个怪物原形毕露，“老鼠过街，人人喊打”，这两个怪物也就容易消灭了。	我现在想讲的是：主观主义 和 宗派主义[...]怎样拿党八股做它们的宣传工具， 或 表现形式。我们反对主观主义 和 宗派主义，如果不连党八股也 给以清算 ，那它们就还有一个藏身的地方，它们还可以躲起来。如果我们连党八股也打倒了，那就算对于主观主义 和 宗派主义最后地“将一军”，[...]弄得这两个怪物原形毕露，“老鼠过街，人人喊打”，这两个怪物也就容易消灭了。

The changes in the paragraph above cannot be said to illustrate any significant stylistic difference, but we have to consider the extreme scale of the revision. For example, in Bonnie McDougall’s study of the “Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art,” McDougall counts 268 instances of revision that survived the translation of the text from Chinese to English, and more did not survive translation.¹⁰¹ The question is, concerning the countless instances of editing being done to Mao’s oeuvre, whether there is any salient stylistic difference between Mao’s original works and the post-1951 revisions.

The next chapter may be a starting point to look for ways to answer this question. Chapter 2 will look at style from the perspective of textual revision. It will show that the linguistic revision of canonical literary works was a main task in the 1950s; this task was accomplished collectively, although a number of people could be said to occupy a position of authority in that collective: The eminent writer and editor Ye Shengtao was the top expert for literary-stylistic matters, while linguists such as Lü Shuxiang managed the hard rules of the

⁹⁹ Mao Zedong, “Fandui dang bagu 反对党八股 [Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing],” June 18, 1942, 1.

¹⁰⁰ Mao Zedong, “Fandui dang bagu 反对党八股 [Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing],” in *Mao Zedong xuanji* 毛泽东选集 [The selected works of Mao Zedong], 1st ed., vol. 3 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe 人民出版社, 1953), 851.

¹⁰¹ McDougall, *Mao Zedong’s “Talks at the Yan’an Conference on Literature and Art”: A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary*, app. 2.

language. In the early 1950s, Ye Shengtao line-edited the new Chinese translation of *The Selected Works of Stalin*.¹⁰²

Could it have been that the revision of Mao's works also relied on the collective efforts of those literary and linguistic specialists, and if this had been the case, should Li Tuo's "Mao Style" refer to the pre-revision or post-revision text? The former, it seems to me, wielded an influence through speeches and internally circulated texts within CCP, whereas the latter wielded a nation-wide influence via print. Ultimately, is the producer of the Mao Style one man, or many unsigned editors? A lot can be reconsidered if we take into consideration the historical textual instability of a text.

¹⁰² Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, *Ye Shengtao ji* 叶圣陶集 [The collected works of Ye Shengtao], vol. 22 (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 1994), 455, 459–64.

CHAPTER 2: THE PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

This chapter is about the pedagogy of literacy. It is set in the middle school classroom, where adolescent students—sometimes native speakers of Mandarin, other times not—learn to read and write in modern Chinese.¹ In the pedagogical setting, the line-editing of written texts is essential. It takes primarily two forms: The first is when textbook editors revise canonical literary works at the sentence level for better grammaticality, before reprinting them as pedagogical materials for literacy; the second is when teachers edit their students' writing assignments, so as to guide the students to improve the accuracy and readability of their prose. In the chapter, I will show how those two types of pedagogical editing played out in the context of early socialist China, in the 1950s, using an archive of textbooks, teacher's manuals, and the diaries, letters, and memoir of the pedagogues. A few arguments will emerge from this archive, the most fundamental of which is that textual revision and the teaching of literacy are both practices of literary criticism. If this claim is not yet evident at this point, it will become obvious as soon as we turn to the problem of style.

The pedagogical approach to style simply means editing for the purpose of stylistic refinement. Editing is an important way for writers to execute their stylistic preferences, but it has so far been insufficiently studied and much undertheorized, with the notable exception of Hannah Sullivan's 2013 study of textual revision in the canonical works of English modernism.² That said, in this chapter, I am not using the term "the editing approach to style" but prefer, instead, "the pedagogical approach." This is not only because my specific case studies all pertain to editing in a pedagogical setting. It is rather that I think of "the pedagogical" in a broader sense,

¹ The discussions in this chapter are restricted to the education of children in a school. Adult literacy classes in the early PRC were organized differently.

² Hannah Sullivan, *The Work of Revision* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

a sense that would allow it to encompass the work of editors who are not employed as teachers, as long as the editor possesses a degree of decision-making power over the original author in determining the final shape of the manuscript. That is to say, the one idea that is salient in the word “pedagogy” but not so much in the word “editing” is an external reviewer’s possession of knowledge and authority vis-a-vis the original author. The pedagogue-editor possesses the privileged knowledge of a system of linguistic standards and administers this knowledge in their work. This is most directly reflected in the grading process that is also inseparable from our academia, as much as it has been inseparable from the mass education program of the PRC: When a teacher applies textual changes to their students’ essays, although they typically do provide an explicit explanation or justification of those changes, and even more rarely are those explanations or justifications collected into a print format for publication, through the act of crossing out and replacing words, the teacher expresses their opinions about what constitutes good writing. Further, these opinions are not just expressed but prescribed. The teacher sees to it that those opinions materialize as words on paper in the final draft. This mundane work of the pedagogue involves a number of unconsciously provocative steps, not the least being that students are expected to accept the validity of the edits without explicit justification from the side of the teacher. Of course, this perception of validity is premised on the perception that the teacher knows better and knows more, which is often true and need not be challenged necessarily, but the goal of this chapter is to shed a new light on these naturalized practices, searching for a vocabulary to reflect consciously about them, with the aim of opening them up to future studies and theorization. This task, I propose, can begin with the understanding of the close affinity between the teaching of literacy and the criticism of literary style.

The pedagogical approach hence points to one specific dimension of the concept of style: linguistic prescription. In this sense, the word “style” means “stylistic norms.” This particular implication of “style” can then be differentiated from the “author theories of style” discussed in the proceeding chapter. In the two types of author theories of style, style is either conceived of as the individual creativity of a unique author, a genius mind that is irreproducible; or as an ideology shared by a social group, a collective practice, learnable by one author from another due to a proximity of some kind. Now, in addition to “individual style” and “collective style,” we may extract a third notion of style, i.e. the “normative style.” In contemporary English, this notion of style is best exemplified by the ubiquity of stylistic manuals and guidebooks: *The Chicago Manual of Style*, *The Elements of Style*, *The Associated Press Stylebook*, to name a few. In Chinese, the corresponding term that encapsulates stylistic standards would be *geshi* 格式 or *yangshi* 样式, relying on the character *shi* 式, which generally means standardized form but whose etymological origin is the idea of law. While these manuals are the instances where stylistic norms are explicitly articulated, in practice, the most common way that stylistic norms are maintained is through the tacit practice of the pedagogical approach, when the editor-pedagogue points their pen at someone’s draft.

If style is understood as linguistic norms, the question that immediately follows is that of the distinction between the concept of style and the concept of grammar. To what extent do they overlap? Where does the boundary lie? In fact, an alternative way to approach the archive and case studies of the chapter is precisely through this question, that is, to measure the distance between stylistic preferences and grammatical rules in the minds of literary critics who also happen to be teachers of literacy. Here, I use the word “grammar” to indicate hard linguistic rules, where an objective distinction of correct versus erroneous can be drawn up without too

much controversy; style, on the other hand, is an aesthetic system in the sense that stylistic preferences ought to be characterized as desirable versus undesirable, but not right or wrong. However, the trap that this chapter is trying to spot is precisely the moments when style is enmeshed in a certain system of linguistic norms and, consequently, the desirable becomes the correct, and the undesirable becomes the erroneous. Thus, and in order to examine the problem of the blurred distinction between style and grammar, in this chapter, I maintain a conceptual distance between the two categories, but I analyze precisely some historical cases where the distance is shrunk or for any reason made hard to measure. One example of such a case is when textbook editors revised canonical literary works for better grammaticality. Every literary author has their linguistic idiosyncrasies, but this problem is particularly thorny for the early works of modern Chinese literature, because the modern Chinese language was not yet standardized at the time those authors were trying to write with it. So, in the 1950s, when the PRC invested extensively in linguistic standardization, in the end it was up to the editors' discretion to decide to what extent the linguistic idiosyncrasies needed to be corrected. In other words, what kind of idiosyncrasy is a grammatical issue that needs to be fixed, and what is a stylistic feature that needs in fact to be preserved? The multiple editions of the textbooks in the history of the PRC provide a valuable opportunity to probe the judgment of the editor-pedagogues. As this chapter will find, the result of this judgment can sometimes—though not always—be predetermined by a preceding judgment on the value of that specific author's work. This is to say that the more valuable that author is perceived to be, the more likely their linguistic idiosyncrasies will be tolerated as stylistic features, whereas the irregularities in the written assignment of a student, for instance, still learning how to read and write, is unlikely to be interpreted in stylistic terms and must be revised to normativity.

This leads to the second general argument of the chapter, pertaining to the relationship between the literacy education and literary canon formation, and can be seen as the Chinese counterpart to what John Guillory examines in his book *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*. My argument, in summary, is that the canonical status of New Literature in modern Chinese writing is rooted in its indispensable role in literacy education in the Sinophone world historically and to a lesser degree currently. Therefore, this canon cannot be effectively contested as long as the pedagogy of literacy in elementary through high schools remains unchanged. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the works of New Literature authors were used as pedagogical materials in schools to teach modern Chinese literacy *before* they were collected into *The Compendium of Chinese New Literature* (Zhongguo xin wenxue daxi 中国新文学大系) in 1935.³ The latter volume is typically understood to be a milestone in the canonization of New Literature, but if we consider literacy education, a syllabus of New Literature was already compiled and used as the linguistic sample of modern Chinese prior to the publication of the *Compendium*. Some of the authors contributing to the 1930s textbooks are still appearing in the textbooks today, such as Lu Xun, Ye Shengtao, Bing Xin, although the selection of text has been updated. They are both the passage to and the standards of literacy.

The chapter will begin with an introduction to the history of literacy education in modern China, focusing on the first decade of the PRC, before moving on to analyze the relationship between style and literacy pedagogy. The first section on the history of literacy education will be

³ For a history of the *Compendium*, see Liu, *Translingual Practice*.

For some examples of early textbooks, see Shen Xingyi 沈星一, ed., *Xin zhongxue jiaokeshu guoyu duben* 新中学教科书初级国语读本 [New middle school textbook national language reader], 1st ed., 3 vols. (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局, 1925); Xia Mianzun 夏丏尊 et al., eds., *Kaiming guowen jiangyi* 开明国文讲义 [Kaiming national language textbook], 3 vols. (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian 开明书店, 1934). The first volume reprinted at least 16 editions by 1932: Shen Xingyi 沈星一, ed., *Xin zhongxue guoyu duben* 新中学国语读本 [New middle school national language reader], 16th ed., 3 vols. (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局, 1932).

long and will include details that do not directly relate to the topic of style, and can be skipped by readers uninterested in the subject. Nonetheless it is necessary as a part of this study, not only because it is the context in which the pedagogical approach to style can be identified, but also because this history is still largely obscure to scholars of Chinese literature. Little has been said about the history of literacy education, even though literacy is the condition of possibility for anybody to begin reading or writing literature.

Reading Literature for Literacy: A Brief Pedagogical History

The following history is organized around one claim: In Chinese literacy education, a singular pedagogy dominated and continues to dominate, which is that literacy is taught via the intensive reading of a selection of canonical texts.⁴ Historically, learned men in China acquired reading and writing skills in Classical Chinese by reading, memorizing, and emulating the classical canon; today, children in the Sinophone world still learn literacy with textbooks that are formatted as an anthology of reading texts, inclusive of the works of the canonical authors of New Literature. This pedagogy, though not unique to China or the Chinese language, stands in contrast to another pedagogy, often adopted today in regions speaking European languages, which instructs literacy with the help of linguistic knowledge and hence separates the language course from the literature course. In the elementary through high schools of modern China, in the great majority of modern history, Chinese language and Chinese literature are taught in one hybrid course. In sum, whereas the details that I will lay out in the following section may not be useful to all my readers, these details culminate in an understanding of the centrality of canonical

⁴ Again, the following discussion is restricted to the education of children in a school, excluding adult literacy education.

literary works in the mass literacy education program. This is the necessary historical context for the discourses and practices of style that the rest of the chapter will discuss.

(1) “String lecture”

Generally speaking, before the twentieth century, the traditional training of the classical scholar involves a teacher who lectures and a syllabus consisting of canonical literary works.⁵ By explaining the vocabulary items in the literary works, translating the sentences from the classical to the vernacular language, and asking the students to read the texts aloud and memorize them, it was expected that students would gradually learn to read and write in Classical Chinese. The writer Ye Shengtao, who was also a veteran textbook editor and served as the Deputy Minister of Education in the early PRC, summarized the traditional pedagogy in a report in 1955. To be sure, his version of the traditional pedagogy must not be taken as a comprehensive representation of education in all of China’s history, but it does characterize certain common practices, or malpractices to be precise, in the traditional education that the intellectuals of his generation personally experienced in childhood:

Before the May Fourth Movement, the national literature course in middle schools used the so-called classical literature as the textbook. The pedagogy of national literature was simple. The teacher lectured a bit, asked the students to read a bit, and then thought up a prompt for the students to write an essay, in which they should say the things that classical writers had already said. And when the teachers “lectured,” all they did was to define words, so as to translate the sentences of Classical Chinese into the modern language. A bit of translation here and there, the class was over. ... After the May Fourth, vernacular writing entered the textbook. Elementary schools only taught vernacular writing, while middle schools taught both. ... The textbook and the pedagogy in middle schools for Classical Chinese were basically the same as before. As for vernacular texts... Many teachers didn’t think that [vernacular writing] needed to be taught. Sometimes they read it aloud from beginning to end; other times they didn’t even read it, but asked students to read on their own, and that was it. Some teachers went beyond the textbook and lectured about all kinds of knowledge, scientific

⁵ For a more detailed study covering premodern Chinese reading and writing pedagogy, see Jiang Chunjiao 蒋纯焦, *The History of Private Tutorship in China* 中国私塾史 [Zhongguo sishu shi] (Taiyuan: Shanxi jiaoyu chubanshe 山西教育出版社, 2017).

knowledge, literary knowledge. The accuracy of the randomly instructed knowledge was entirely up to the teacher.

五四以前，中学校里国文科的教材是所谓古文。教国文的方法很简单，无非讲一讲，读一读，出个题目让学生作一篇文章，说一些古人已经说过的话。所谓“讲”，只是解释字义，把古文语句翻译成现代语，就是这么翻译翻译，也仅够消磨一节又一节的授课时间了。……五四以后，教材里才有白话文。小学全教白话文，中学里白话文和文言文同时教。……中学教文言文，教材和教法基本上跟先前一样。至于白话文……一般教师认为文章本身没有什么讲头，有的念一遍了事，有的念也不念，教学生自己去看看就算了。有些教师就离开课文讲各色各样的科学知识，将各色各样的文学知识。这些离开课文随意讲授的知识，正确不正确，主要看教师。⁶

This teaching method is called “string lecture” (*chuanjiang* 串讲). It means that a text is made of a sequence of words to be defined one after another; after the comprehensive definitions, the teacher “strings” the words together and explains the meaning of a sentence and then of the whole text. In the words of Xin Anting 辛安亭 (1904-1988), the head of the People’s Education Press in the 1950s, string lecture was “the method used by private tutors for thousands of years to teach Classical Chinese.”⁷ The implication of this method, which is also its shortcoming, is the assumption that the only obstacle to language

Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶 (also known as Ye Shaojun 叶绍钧, 1894-1988)

Born into a lower middle-class family in Suzhou, Ye Shengtao received a classical education and taught at local schools. When he began to publish literary writing in *baihua* in the late 1910s, much of his writing was influenced by his teaching career. His works were often intended for children or printed in journals specializing in education, including *Ni Huanzhi*, widely regarded as the first novel written in modern vernacular Chinese, which was serialized in 1928 in *Education Magazine* (*Jiaoyu zazhi* 教育杂志). As an editor of the Kaiming Book Company, he co-edited Chinese textbooks, including *Kaiming’s Reader of the National Language* (*Kaiming guowen jiangyi* 开明国文讲义). After 1949, he served as the Deputy Minister of Education and Editor-in-Chief of the People’s Education Press.

⁶ Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, “Guanyu yuyan wenxue fenke de wenti 关于语言文学分科的问题 [On the issue of the division of the language and literature courses],” *Renmin jiaoyu* 人民教育 [People’s education], no. 8 (August 1955): 27.

⁷ Xin Anting 辛安亭, “Puxijin zhuanjia dui yuwen jiaoxue gaige de yijian dang ruhe lijie 普希金专家对语文教学改革的意见当如何理解 [How to understand Specialist Pushkin’s opinions on *Yuwen* pedagogical reform],” *Renmin jiaoyu* 人民教育 [People’s education], no. 1 (January 1955): 55.

proficiency is word definition. The method assumes that if you could define each word in a text, you would understand the idea of the author and you would then be able to use those words correctly in your own writing.

With the traditional method, writing skills are taught through a lengthy process of reading, memorization, and emulation, without an explicit knowledge of grammar. After all, grammar itself is a concept loaned from the west. The first attempt by a Chinese person to systematize the grammar of a Chinese language was as late as 1898, namely the *Mister Ma's Grammar Guide* (*Ma shi wen tong* 马氏文通), a treatise on Classical Chinese. The first systematic study of modern Chinese grammar emerged two decades later, in 1924, with Li Jinxi's *A New Grammar of the National Language* (*Xin zhu guoyu wenfa* 新著国语文法). In the traditional pedagogy, the absence of grammatical analysis is compensated by reading a lot of texts and memorizing them. Since one does not need to be conscious of a system of rules to abide by these rules, the expectation is that, after extensive memorization of texts that are regarded as correct, by simple emulation, one will reproduce the sentences patterns and phrases in the same, correct manner.

This process is not efficient. To be able to excel, a student undertakes an unimaginable amount of repetitive work. The extreme laboriousness of traditional pedagogy can be observed in the following pedagogical advice by a Confucian scholar-official in the Qing dynasty:

...after teaching a new text, you ask the students to read it aloud 30 times. You also ask them to copy it in writing, so as to cultivate their style [breath]. After the writing exercise, you ask them to read aloud 20 times the text that was taught the previous day. Then you give them a small break. Then you ask them to read aloud 20 times the text that was taught the day before the previous day. Then another small break. Then you ask them to read aloud 20 times the text which was taught two days ago. Then 20 times the text three days ago. This makes a total of 110 times, for five texts, including the new one.

.....

With this pedagogy, they will not forget it for the rest of their life.

教了一首生书，即令读三十遍。令其写字，以养其气。字毕，令将昨日所教生书，读二十遍。又令少息，再读前日所教者二十遍。仍少息，再读前一日所教者二十遍。又读前二日者二十遍，总共一百十遍，连生书共读五十首。……如此教法，自然终身不忘。⁸

(2) The “anthology-type textbook”

If the way to learn is by such mechanical emulation, it is crucial to have a carefully selected sample of texts to serve as the model. That sample is literature. One early and influential compilation of literary texts for pedagogical purposes is the *Wenxuan* 文选, or *Selections of Refined Literature*, by Xiao Tong 萧统 (501-531), Crown Prince of the Liang Dynasty. Xiao Tong’s anthology contains over 700 pieces of writing. It widely circulated as a pedagogical text; the literati of later generations studied, memorized, and emulated them as they trained to write in style—or actually, to pass the imperial examinations. A saying in the Song dynasty goes, “when the *Wenxuan* is chewed to mush, you have halfway passed the entry-level exam.”⁹ In the early twentieth century, when schools transitioned to teaching vernacular modern Chinese instead of the classical language, textbooks were still organized in the traditional format. With the exception of the first few years of elementary school, when the recognition of simple characters was taught with short passages created solely for use in the classroom, very soon the students were given a selection of published writings to read. Functional literacy was obtained through studying a sizable amount of literary works that emblemize the national culture. This format of the textbook is now dubbed the “anthology-type textbook” (*wenxuan xing jiaocai* 文选型教材).

⁸ Chen Hongmou 陈宏谋, *Wu zhong yigui* 五种遗规 [Five types of sourcebooks], vol. 2 (Zhejiang shuju 浙江书局, 1895), 71.

⁹ “文选烂，秀才半。” See Lu You 陆游, *Lu You quanji jiaozhu* 陆游全集校注 [The annotated complete works of Lu You], ed. Qian Zhonglian 钱仲联, vol. 11 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang jiaoyu chubanshe 浙江教育出版社, 2011), 427.

In the PRC, discussions throughout the 1950s concluded that, ideally, the national language did not need to be taught via literary reading, and that Chinese language and literature should be taught in two separate subjects in school, following the Soviet model.¹⁰ But if literacy education is to be separated from the reading of the canonical works of national literature, there must be a system of linguistic knowledge on which the pedagogy of the language can be based. Such a system was lacking in the early 1950s, as academic linguists were still in the process of establishing their scholarly framework to describe and analyze Chinese grammar.

Paradoxically, although the national language was still in the process of standardization and a framework for studying it was yet to be established, the textbooks of that language needed urgently to go into print. Meanwhile, for teachers and scholars charged with the design of the school curriculum, in the absence of a mature strategy to teach grammar, what was left to accomplish literacy education was the kind of pedagogy handed down from centuries of classical education: to have the students read an anthology of literary works. This method was deemed plausible in the early 1950s, even though it was not considered ideal. In 1952, the first independently designed Chinese language and literature textbook of the PRC came out in the old-fashioned anthology format.¹¹

(3) The making of “*Yuwen*”

The Chinese language and literature subject in the schools of the PRC is called “*Yuwen* 语文.” Although schools throughout the Sinophone world have taught language and literature in one hybrid course, different names have been used to title this subject. In the Republican period,

¹⁰ Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, “Guanyu yuyan wenxue fenke de wenti 关于语言文学分科的问题 [On the issue of the division of the language and literature courses].”

¹¹ Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社 [People’s Education Press], ed., *Chuji zhongxue yuwen keben* 初级中学语文课本 [Middle School Yuwen Textbook], 1st revision, vol. 1, 6 vols. (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1953).

typically, the literacy program was named “National Language” (*guoyu* 国语) for lower grades and “National Literature” (*guowen* 国文) for upper grades. These terms are currently used in Taiwan. In the mainland, in 1949, on the eve of the communist takeover, a group of education specialists convened in Beijing to lay out the framework for the mass education program of the new state. The head of the group was Ye Shengtao. In a planning meeting for elementary and middle school curriculum in the summer of 1949, Ye Shengtao and his colleagues proposed to replace the terms “National Language” and “National Literature” with a general term that encompasses both spoken language and written language, that is, “*Yuwen*.”¹² In the contemporary Chinese language, although the word “*yuwen*” has other meanings and is not only used in the PRC,¹³ whenever it refers specifically to a required subject in elementary through high schools, the context is unmistakably PRC.

Despite the continuation of the anthology-type textbook, the *Yuwen* program differentiates itself from the traditional training of Classical Chinese. One of the differences, one that the editor-pedagogues most consciously identify themselves through, is the idea that they are teaching speaking and listening in addition to reading and writing; modern Chinese is not just a matter of writing Chinese characters. In this sense, *Yuwen* is aligned with the literacy programs of the Republican period. Both profoundly understand that the object of their education is a “national language,” in the sense that citizens not speaking Mandarin would need to learn to speak it. Therefore, the mass literacy program cannot just teach the recognition of Chinese

¹² Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, “Da Teng Wanlin 答滕万林 [In response to Teng Wanlin],” in *Ye Shengtao jiaoyu wenji* 叶圣陶教育文集 [The collected writings of Ye Shengtao on education], vol. 3, 5 vols. (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1994), 506–7.

¹³ Already in the early Republican period, the acronym *yuwen* was used to refer to national language education, but the subject in school is not titled in this way. Moreover, in the contemporary Chinese language, *yuwen* also stands for “philology.”

characters but need to teach grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation comprehensively. It is a literacy course that is simultaneously a second language course, both based on the reading of an anthology of texts.

This idea of teaching comprehensive linguistic ability is reflected in the preface to a transitional edition of the *yuwen* textbook, used in 1950 when Ye Shengtao and his colleagues were still working on their new curriculum:

What is spoken is called language. What is written is called writing. Writing follows the spoken language; the two are inseparable. The teaching of *yuwen* includes four dimensions: listening, speaking, reading and writing. For this reason, the present textbook no longer follows the old titles of “National Literature” and “National Language.” It is instead called *Yuwen*.”

说出来的是语言，写出来的是文章，文章依据语言，“语”和“文”是分不开的。语文教学应该包括听话、说话、阅读、写作四项。因此，这套课本不再用“国文”或“国语”的旧名称，改称“语文课本”。¹⁴

Ye Shengtao said similar things in a personal correspondence to a friend, dated February 1, 1964:

...if one neglects listening and speaking, paying no attention to practicing them, the effect of reading and writing [practices] will also be impaired.

.....苟忽于听说，不注意训练，则读写之成效亦将减损。¹⁵

The 1952 middle school *Yuwen* textbook consisted of six volumes, taught over three years. Each volume was an anthology of about twenty pieces of writing, including the works of renowned writers such as Lu Xun, Zhao Shuli, and Zang Kejia. Other pieces were of a less literary nature, such as “A Letter to Chairman Mao Reporting on How the Production was

¹⁴ Song Yunbin 宋云彬 et al., eds., *Chuji zhongxue yuwen keben* 初级中学语文课本 [Middle school *Yuwen* textbook], vol. 6 (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1951), 1.

¹⁵ Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, “Da Teng Wanlin 答滕万林 [In response to Teng Wanlin],” 506.

Increased” or “A Speech at the Paris Peace Conference.”¹⁶ Ye Shengtao explained the function of the textbook anthology:

The *yuwen* textbook simply consists of examples, selected from the types of books that young readers need to read or will need to read in the future. The intention is that if you can comprehend the passages in the *yuwen* textbook, you will then likely be able to read the same types of books on your own.

...

The nature of the textbook is like the sample of a product. If you get familiar with the sample, you will also understand any other product of the same type.

语文教本只是些例子，从青年现在或者将来需要读的同类的书中举出来的例子；其意是说如果你能够了解语文教本里的这些篇章，也就大概能阅读同类的书。

.....

教材的性质等同于样品，熟悉了样品，也就可以理解同类的货品。¹⁷

Meanwhile, it was stated in the preface to the textbook that the teaching of grammar had been deferred to a future date:

The instruction of grammar and rhetoric in the middle school *Yuwen* curriculum will be determined by the curriculum plan that is currently being drafted. The relevant textbooks will be created after the release of the plan. Therefore, in this textbook series, there will not be a textbook that systematically instructs grammar and rhetoric.

初级中学语文学科语法和修辞的教学，正在起草的教学大纲中另作规定，应俟大纲公布后据以编辑教材。因此，在这套课本里，不附入有系统的语法和修辞的教材。¹⁸

(4) Soviet influence and the “Red Scarf Pedagogy”

¹⁶ Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社 [People’s Education Press], ed., *Chuji zhongxue yuwen keben* 初级中学语文课本 [Middle School Yuwen Textbook], 5th ed., vol. 3, 6 vols. (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1954).

¹⁷ Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, *Ye Shengtao ji* 叶圣陶集 [The collected works of Ye Shengtao], vol. 16 (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe 江苏教育出版社, 1993), 63–64; quoted in Gu Zhenbiao 顾振彪, “叶圣陶关于编写中学语文教材的论述 [Ye Shengtao’s Exposition on Middle School Chinese Textbook Compilation],” *Kecheng jiaocai jiaofa* 课程·教材·教法 [Curriculum, Teaching Material and Method] 38, no. 01 (2018): 27.

¹⁸ Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社 [People’s Education Press], *Chuji zhongxue yuwen keben* 初级中学语文课本 [Middle School Yuwen Textbook], 1953, 1:1.

In May 1953, a specialist of education from Moscow arrived at Number Six Women's Middle School in Beijing and attended a *Yuwen* class of the seventh grade. The teaching demonstration was on a short story titled "The Red Scarf" (*Honglingjin* 红领巾), translated and adapted from a Soviet text of children's literature. The Soviet specialist was astonished: The Beijing Education Bureau determined that the story, rendered in vernacular modern Chinese and printed over seven pages in the textbook, should be taught in seven class hours. Even though the Number Six Women's Middle School reduced it to six, the demo class, being the fourth of the six, only covered one and a half pages. In a 45-minute class, the teacher laboriously explained the meaning of every word and sentence, neglecting the analysis of fictional characters, narrative structure, and the literary language. Nor did the teacher make an explicit attempt to train the students for practical language skills in relation to grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and orthography. As the Soviet guest commented in the discussion session after the teaching demonstration, "linguistic and literary components are severely lacking."¹⁹

The Soviet specialist, whose name happened to be Pushkin (Puxijin 普希金), was on a mission to supervise the scholars of education at the Beijing Normal University. He attended Chinese, history, and geography classes in middle schools that summer and offered a range of advice, but no other opinion was as influential as the four points of feedback he gave to "The Red Scarf." The first point was:

It is unacceptable to teach seven pages of text in six hours. This speed is inconceivable. Even if you were researching advanced philosophy, you would not need so much time... The way the story is divided into sections cannot bring the students to a holistic understanding of the literary work... The text should not be taught as broken pieces. What causes this problem? It is because teachers fail to understand the life experiences of the students and treat them like preschool

¹⁹ Ye Cangcen 叶苍岑, "Cong 'Honglingjin' de jiaoxue tan dao yuwen jiaoxue gaige wenti 从'红领巾'的教学谈到语文教学改革问题 [From the teaching of 'The Red Scarf' to the problem of *Yuwen* pedagogical reform]," *Renmin jiaoyu* 人民教育 [People's education], no. 7 (July 1953): 41.

children. They chew the reading texts into mush and feed the mush to their students.²⁰

The feedback was released to the public when Ye Cangcen 叶苍岑 (1904-1993), professor and long-time textbook editor at Beijing Normal University, wrote a review article of the demo lesson for the journal *People's Education*, in which he summarized Specialist Pushkin's opinions. Ye Cangcen's article was met with immediate enthusiasm. Schoolteachers across the country tossed away their old lesson plans and adopted the Soviet specialist's recommendations. The new pedagogy that emerged from these discussions was named the "Red Scarf Pedagogy" (*Honglingjin jiaoxue fa* 红领巾教学法).²¹ That said, while many teachers across the country followed Specialist Pushkin's lead, some were pushing back. For example, in January 1954, an editorial on the journal *People's Education* criticized the wholesale acceptance of the Soviet lesson plan based on "reading aloud, retelling, analysis."²² It reiterated the necessity to improve the students' grammar and vocabulary, to prevent them from writing with "erroneous syntax and unsuitable words."²³

The disagreement in the Chinese reception to the Soviet pedagogy must be understood in relation to the fact that Specialist Pushkin's advice was based on the teaching of the Literature subject in Soviet schools, which, in the Soviet curriculum, was separated from the Language subject. "Reading aloud, retelling, analysis" was the standard procedure of literary analysis at the middle school level, which would certainly also benefit the students' linguistic development, but

²⁰ Ye Cangcen 叶苍岑, 40–41.

²¹ "Yuwen jiaoxue gaige bitan hui 语文教学改革笔谈会 [Written discussions on *Yuwen* pedagogical reform]," *Renmin jiaoyu* 人民教育 [People's education], no. 3 (March 1954): 37.

²² Ye Cangcen 叶苍岑, "Cong 'Honglingjin' de jiaoxue tan dao yuwen jiaoxue gaige wenti 从'红领巾'的教学谈到语文教学改革问题 [From the teaching of 'The Red Scarf' to the problem of *Yuwen* pedagogical reform]," 41.

²³ "Jiuzheng yuwen jiaoxue gaige zhong de pianxiang 纠正语文教学改革中的偏向 [Correcting the tendencies in *Yuwen* pedagogical reform]," *Renmin jiaoyu* 人民教育 [People's education], no. 1 (January 1954): 12.

it was after all not primarily intended as a pedagogy of grammar or vocabulary. If Chinese instructors, teaching in the hybrid *Yuwen* subject, gave up their traditional method of explaining written texts word-by-word, how else would Chinese students learn vocabulary? In 1954, *People's Education* published a number of articles on the pedagogy of vocabulary.²⁴ The goal was to develop a pedagogy of modern Chinese vocabulary that could be paired with literary reading but would avoid the drawbacks of “string lecture.”

But the deadlock in the *Yuwen* course, between vocabulary exercises and literary analysis, could not be resolved unless the teaching of literacy was separated from the teaching of literature. That separation was finally ordered in 1956, only to be retracted two years later.

(5) The two-track curriculum and its defeat

In the fall of 1956, a two-course curriculum went into effect in middle and high schools of the PRC, replacing the *Yuwen* subject. The reprogramming of the curriculum was referred to as “course division” (*fen ke* 分科). In the new curriculum, students took a course on the official language, depending on the region. In most regions, the language subject would be Chinese, but in the regions of ethnic minorities, students would learn Mongolian, Tibetan, Uighur, etc., with Chinese as an elective course. (In the hybrid single-course curriculum, the *Yuwen* subject itself has ethnic versions, for example, *Mongolian Yuwen*.) At the same time, they took a literature course, which ideally should be taught by the same instructor who teaches the language course.

²⁴ Zhang Lianfeng 章炼烽, “Muqian yuwen jiaoxue gaige zhong de jige wenti 目前语文教学改革中的几个问题 [A few problems in the current *Yuwen* pedagogical reform],” *Renmin jiaoyu* 人民教育 [People's education], no. 1 (January 1954): 54–59; Wang Jiayan 汪嘉言, “Tan wenxue zuopin jiaoxue zhong de cihui wenti 谈文学作品教学中的词汇教学问题 [On the problem of teaching vocabulary in the teaching of literary works],” *Renmin jiaoyu* 人民教育 [People's education], no. 2 (February 1954): 26–27; Tan Lidu 谭丽都, “Wenmen dui chuzhong yuwen ke cihui jiaoxue de tihui 我们对初中语文科词汇教学的体会 [Our experiences in teaching vocabulary in the middle school *Yuwen* course],” *Renmin jiaoyu* 人民教育 [People's education], no. 12 (December 1954): 37–41.

The discussions about course division had been ongoing since the conception of *Yuwen*. A notable early proponent of course division was Hu Qiaomu 胡乔木 (1912-1992), best known as Mao Zedong's secretary, who urged the reform of the *Yuwen* curriculum in 1951. After Specialist Pushkin's visit in 1953, "string lecture" came under all-around attack, and educators felt increasingly pressured to reform. In December 1953, Hu Qiaomu gave a report as the chair of the "Central Committee on the Problem of *Yuwen* Education," reiterating the urgency of course division. The Politburo approved the report in February 1954, and Soviet curriculum standards were quickly translated and published as a guide for Chinese educators. The creation of new curriculum plans, textbooks, and teacher's manuals began.²⁵

The initial plan was to begin course division in select regions and implement it nationwide by 1959, but in the spring of 1958 a decision from the State Council brought the two-course program to a stop. Moreover, published sources only reflected the division of the Chinese Language and Literature courses, with no evidence that the two-course system was ever a reality for regions speaking ethnic minority languages. When the new school year began in autumn 1958, classes reversed to the hybrid format.

The factors leading to the abrupt termination of course division require further research by historians, but judging from a small number of available sources and scholarship in Chinese, one factor might have been the sheer difficulty of the two-course program, for both the teachers and the students. The teachers were far from prepared to teach a long literary history on the one hand, and grammatical knowledge on the other; the students, many of whom were native

²⁵ Liu Yingjie 刘英杰, ed., *Zhongguo jiaoyu dashidian 1949-1990* 中国教育大事典 1949-1990 [Book of major educational events in China, 1949-1990], vol. 1 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang jiaoyu chubanshe 浙江教育出版社, 1993), 423-24; also see Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, "Guanyu yuyan wenxue fenke de wenti 关于语言文学分科的问题 [On the issue of the division of the language and literature courses]," 28.

speakers of a topolect, had a weak background in both Classical Chinese and Mandarin and therefore could not handle the courses.²⁶ The challenge was amplified by the Anti-Rightist Struggles in 1957. The high school Literature syllabus, in particular, was attacked for “favoring the past and disregarding the present,”²⁷ meaning it placed too much emphasis on classical literary works. The syllabus was criticized for “teaching literature for literature’s sake” and did not serve the literacy needs of the masses.²⁸ Under this climate, there was no justification, in the mass education program, to study a large selection of premodern literary works. In this sense, the end of course division does not indicate the general unsuitability of a two-course curriculum to Chinese, but rather the specific difficulty of studying Chinese literary history in the context of the 1950s.

Yuwen returned in the fall of 1958. By this point, the traditional pedagogy, where literacy is taught through the reading of an anthology of literary works written in the official language, was no longer a back-up plan that was expected to be replaced once the educational system developed. It turned out that the traditional pedagogy suited socialist China in ways that the Soviet one did not.

²⁶ Beijing jiaoshi jinxu xueyuan yuwen jiaoyanshi 北京教师进修学院语文教研室 [Beijing Teachers College, Department of *Yuwen*], “Muqian Beijing shi zhongxue yuwen jiaoxue zhong de wenti he gaijin cuoshi 目前北京市中学语文教学中的问题和改进措施 [Current problems and measures for improvements in the teaching of middle school *Yuwen* in the city of Beijing],” *Renmin jiaoyu* 人民教育 [People’s education], no. 3 (March 1957): 17–23; also see Yuan Mei 袁枚, “Wenxue jiaoxue de renwu shi mingque de, wenti zaiyu ruhe zhengque guanche 文学教学的任务是明确的, 问题在于如何正确贯彻 [The goal of teaching literature is clear, the problem is how to implement it],” *Renmin jiaoyu* 人民教育 [People’s education], no. 3 (March 1957): 52–54; Tan Lin 谭林, “Women suo kandao de youguan hanyu jiaoxue de yixie wenti 我们所看到的有关汉语教学的一些问题 [Some problems we see in Chinese language pedagogy],” *Yuwen xuexi* 语文学学习 [Yuwen studies], no. 1 (January 1957): 8–9.

²⁷ Feng Bingyuan 冯炳元, “Fandui wenxue yishu zhong de hou gu bo jin 反对文学艺术中的厚古薄今 [Against the preference of the classical over the contemporary in literature and the arts],” *Yuwen xuexi* 语文学学习 [Yuwen studies], no. 9 (September 1958): 17.

²⁸ Huang Cen 黄岑, “Wenxue jiaocai you wei wenxue er wenxue pianxiang 文学教材有为文学而文学偏向 [The literature textbooks show the tendency of literature for literature’s sake],” *Renmin jiaoyu* 人民教育 [People’s education], no. 8 (August 1958): 19.

However, the reunified *Yuwen* curriculum was more than just a copy of the pre-division one. Textbooks published after 1959 show many signs of their previous incarnation as partly a literary history course. One example of this legacy is the inclusion of Classical Chinese texts in the middle school syllabi. Before 1955, middle schools did not teach Classical Chinese, although there were a minimal number of excerpts from late imperial vernacular novels; in the 1959 and 1960 textbooks, however, both classical poetry and prose were taught. Correspondingly, non-literary genres and works by non-professional writers were reduced.²⁹ The result was a literacy curriculum that was even more dependent on literature.

Editing the Literary Canon: Methodology and Three Cases Studies

In sum, for a number of reasons, the literacy program of early socialist China had to combine the teaching of Chinese language (including teaching Mandarin to students who grew up speaking a topolect) with the teaching of literature, relying on a textbook that is an anthology of written texts. Therefore, the selection and editing of those reading texts became an extremely important task. As it was well understood, those readings would effectively play the role of the linguistic standard of modern Chinese; everyone learning to read and write or learning Mandarin under that mass education system would model their own speech and writing on the readings. Hence, to ensure the linguistic standards of the anthology, Ye Shengtao and his colleagues turned to editing.

²⁹ This trend is evident if we compare pre-division and post-division textbooks on a large scale. To avoid lengthy footnoting, I am only citing the first volume of some of the comparable textbook editions: Song Yunbin 宋云彬 et al., *Chuji zhongxue yuwen keben* 初级中学语文课本 [Middle school *Yuwen* textbook]; Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社 [People's Education Press], *Chuji zhongxue yuwen keben* 初级中学语文课本 [Middle School *Yuwen* Textbook], 1953; Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, ed., *Chuji zhongxue keben: yuwen* 初级中学课本: 语文 [Middle school textbook: *Yuwen*], 1st ed., vol. 1, 6 vols. (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1958); Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, ed., *Chuji zhongxue keben: yuwen* 初级中学课本: 语文 [Middle school textbook: *Yuwen*], 1st ed., vol. 3, 6 vols. (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1960).

To be sure, any text selected for the textbook was already a reputable work, but their language was nonetheless double and triple checked by textbook editors, to eliminate irregularities and potential confusion. Ye Shengtao explained the motivation of the revision in an article from 1962:

The texts selected likely require refinement. We refine the texts not because we are overly demanding and want to embarrass the author. Since we want to show our students the models of writing, which is expected to be beautiful in both form and substance, we naturally should amend and polish the flaws of the texts. A narrow-minded author may feel displeased, but an author who is understanding should certainly be happy to accept it. The work of refinement is indeed not easy. It is necessary to read and recite repeatedly, so as to become very familiar with the author's thinking and to deeply perceive the author's intentions. Then, one will be able to distinguish the strengths and shortcomings [of their writing]. Then, one will be able to approach where there is a shortcoming and refine that spot. Moreover, every author's writing has their style. When we refine other people's writing, it is necessary to adapt to their style. It is not desirable to complement other people's writing with our own style, to the extent that the text loses its overall harmony. In sum, in order to make revisions appropriately, one must deeply understand the difficulty of reading and writing. I hope that we can make an effort together to do so.

选定之文，或不免须与加工。加工者，非过为挑剔，俾作者难堪也。盖欲示学生以文章之范，期于文质兼美，则文中疏漏之处，自当为之修补润色。固陋之作者或将不快，明达之作者宜必乐承。加工之事，良非易为。必反复讽诵，熟谙作者之思路，深味作者之意旨，然后能辨其所长所短，然后能就其所短者而加工焉。他则作者文笔，各有风裁，我人加工，宜适应其风裁，不宜出之以己之风裁，致使全篇失其调谐。总之，欲求加工得当，必深知读书为文之甘苦，愿与诸公共勉之矣。³⁰

I will now describe the history and methodology of textual revision in early socialist China and analyze three distinct case studies, which are works by Ye Shengtao, Qu Qiubai, and Lu Xun.

³⁰ Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, "Kewen de xuanbian: zhi renjiaoshe zhongxue yuwen bianjishi 课文的选编——致人教社中学语文编辑室 [The selection and editing of textbook readings: a letter to the middle-school *Yuwen* editing office at the People's Education Press]," in *Ye Shengtao jiaoyu wenji* 叶圣陶教育文集 [The collected writings of Ye Shengtao on education], vol. 5 (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1994), 719.

The revision of literary works for the purpose of their inclusion into educational materials is not unique to socialist China. An example adjacent to my case is how, in the Republican period, a French short story translated into Chinese by Hu Shi appeared differently in five editions of the National Language or Literature textbook. Recent scholarship on education has compared these editions:³¹

Table 3. Textual changes in “La dernière classe” in Chinese textbooks, 1920s-1940s	
Edition, year	Variants of the example sentence
Alphonse Daudet (1880) ³²	Alors il se tourna vers le tableau, prit un morceau de craie, et, en appuyant de toutes ses forces, il écrivit aussi gros qu’il put : « VIVE LA FRANCE ! »
Chinese translation by Hu Shi (1912) ³³	在黑板上用力写了三个大字“法兰西万岁”
Dai Hongheng 戴洪恒 ed., <i>Jiben jiaokeshu: gaoxiao guoyu jiaoxuefa</i> 基本教科书：高小国语教学法 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan 商务印书馆, 1931)	在黑板上用力写了三个大字，“法兰西”“万”“岁”
Wang Yunwu 王云五 ed., <i>Fuxing guoyu jiaokeshu</i> 复兴国语教科书 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan 商务印书馆, 1933?)	在黑板上用力写了几个大字
Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶 and Xia Mianzun 夏丏尊 ed., <i>Guowen babai ke</i> 国文八百课 (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian 开明书店, 1935)	在黑板上用力写了两个大字
Song Wenhan 宋文翰 ed., <i>Xinbian chuzhong guowen</i> 新编初中国文 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局, 1941)	在黑板上用力写了三个大字 *注：此语在法文原文作 Vive La France，故说是三个大字

³¹ Information in Table 3 is quoted from Li Yunlong 李云龙 and Li Guimei 李桂梅, “Yuwen jiaocai yanjin guocheng zhong de xuanwen xiugai wenti 语文教材演进过程中的选文修改问题 [The problem of the revision of the selected readings in the process of the evolution of the *Yuwen* textbooks],” *Kecheng jiaocai jiaofa* 课程·教材·教法 [Curriculum, Teaching Material and Method] 37, no. 07 (2017): 52. I do not have access to these textbooks.

³² Alphonse Daudet, *Morceaux Choisis d’Alphonse Daudet*, ed. Frank W. Freeborn (Boston: Ginn & company, 1894), 96.

³³ Alphonse Daudet, “Ge di 割地 [La Dernière Classe],” trans. Hu Shi 胡适, *Liu Mei xuesheng jibao* 留美学生季报 [Chinese students’ quarterly] 2, no. 1 (1915): 119–24.

Table 3. Textual changes in “La dernière classe” in Chinese textbooks, 1920s-1940s	
Edition, year	Variants of the example sentence
Fan Wenlan 范文澜 ed., <i>Zhongji guowen xuan</i> 中级国文选 (Xinhua shudian 新华书店, 1942-43)	在黑板上用力大书“法兰西万岁”
Jin Ji Lu Yu bianqu jiaoyuting 晋冀鲁豫边区教育厅 ed. <i>Gaoji guoyu keben</i> 高级国语课本 (Taiyue xinhua shudian 太岳新华书店, 1945?)	在黑板上用力写了五个大字

This example is not yet about linguistic standardization. The text is Alphonse Daudet’s “La dernière classe,” a short story depicting French schoolchildren’s reaction to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. After Hu Shi translated the story into Chinese, it became a constant in Chinese textbooks for the purpose of patriotic education, because educators during war times saw a resonance between Daudet’s France and twentieth-century China. The repeated revisions by textbook editors had to do with a flaw in Hu Shi’s translation: In the story, when the teacher walks into the classroom and writes with white chalk on the blackboard the phrase “Vive la France,” Hu Shi wrote that the phrase consists of “three big characters” - only to confuse his readers, because the Chinese translation of that phrase clearly consists of five characters instead of three. The revisions reflect a variety of attempts by the textbook editors to avoid the confusion.

When “La dernière classe” was selected into the textbooks of socialist China, editors thoroughly restructured the text. The goal this time was not just to avoid confusion in meaning, but also to modify its style. Hu Shi’s translation, first published in 1912, was done in a vernacular style closer to vernacular writing before the twentieth century; editors of the 1955 textbook by People’s Education Press retranslated it with a literary language that aligns with the linguistic expectations of the People’s Republic. Compare the different versions of the following two sentences:

Table 4. Textual changes in “La dernière classe” in the 1955 Literature textbook		
Edition, year	Example Sentence 1	Example Sentence 2
Alphonse Daudet (1880)	Du reste, toute la classe avait quelque chose d’extraordinaire et de solennel. ³⁴	Pendant que je m’étonnais de tout cela, M. Hamel était monté dans sa chaire... ³⁵
Chinese translation by Hu Shi (1912)	更可怪的。今天这全学堂都是肃静无哗的。 ³⁶	心中正在惊疑。只见先生上了座位。 ³⁷
<i>Middle School Textbook: Literature</i> , 3 rd ed., vol. 1, (Beijing: People’s Education Press, 1957) (1 st edition 1955)	而且，整个教室有一种不平常的严肃的气氛。 ³⁸	我看见这些情形，正在诧异，韩麦尔先生已经坐上椅子..... ³⁹

The new translation was not credited to any translator. The 1955 textbook states in a footnote that “La dernière classe” was “translated by editors based on the original.”⁴⁰ In a more recent, 2008 textbook, the footnote reads: “This text is adapted from several versions.”⁴¹

From the memoir of the scholars and pedagogues who participated in textbook editing, we can reconstruct the editing method with which “La dernière classe” and other literary works

³⁴ Daudet, *Morceaux Choisis d’Alphonse Daudet*, 92.

³⁵ Daudet, 93.

³⁶ Daudet, “Ge di 割地 [La Dernière Classe],” 121.

³⁷ Daudet, 121.

³⁸ Zhang Bilai 张毕来, Wang Wei 王微, and Cai Chaochen 蔡超尘, eds., *Chuji zhongxue keben: wenxue 初级中学课本：文学* [Middle school textbook: literature], 3rd ed., vol. 1 (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1957), 119.

³⁹ Zhang Bilai 张毕来, Wang Wei 王微, and Cai Chaochen 蔡超尘, 1:120.

⁴⁰ Zhang Bilai 张毕来, Wang Wei 王微, and Cai Chaochen 蔡超尘, 1:118.

⁴¹ Kecheng jiaocai yanjiusuo 课程教材研究所 [Research institute for curricula and textbooks] and Zhongxue yuwen kecheng jiaocai yanjiu kaifa zhongxin 中学语文课程教材研究开发中心 [Middle and high school yuwen curricula and textbook research development center], eds., *Yuwen 语文*, 3rd ed., vol. qi nianji xia ce 七年级下册 [Year 7 Volume 2] (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 2008), 47.

underwent revision. To begin with, revision was done collectively with a group of experts with distinct areas of specialization:

For example, “La dernière classe”: Mr. Ye [Shengtao] convened three groups of staff to do the revision collectively. The first group was the directors and chief editors in the *yuwen* editing department; the second was old Beijingers, i.e. the comrades who knew the Beijing dialect or Mandarin well; the third was the comrades who knew French. We laid the original French copy and the Chinese translation on the table and discussed them word by word. Mr. Ye made the final decisions.

以《最后一课》为例。叶老召集三方面的人共同修改。一是语文编辑室的负责人和主要编辑，二是老北京，熟悉北京话和普通话的同志，三是通晓法文的同志。把法文的原本和汉语的译本都摆出来，逐字逐句地推敲，最后由叶老裁定。⁴²

The collective work was extremely time-consuming. One editor recalled that “one text in the book would take a few days to revise.”⁴³ The length had to do with the method of the revision, which centered around vocalization, i.e. reading the text aloud. This vocalization of literature as a test for both grammar and style is a crucial component of traditional literacy education, which we will see again in the next section of the chapter on the pedagogy of writing. On the vocalization method in textbook editing in the 1950s, another former editor recalls,

Mr. Shengtao suggested that revision should be done collectively. “For example, five people form a group, one person reads aloud, the other four listen.” “If you are only reading with your eyes, you will likely only pay attention to the meaning of the text. But when you are listening to other people’s reading, you will instantly notice things in the text that are redundant or things that are lacking. Those are exactly the places for revision. This method is much easier than editing alone.” At the People’s Education Press, he often organized collective discussions to edit texts. He personally moderated the discussion sessions, and the relevant deputy editor-in-chief, director of the editorial office, and the editors responsible for the given textbook volume were in attendance. He first read a paragraph or a

⁴² Liu Guozheng 刘国正, “Ye Shengtao guanyu bianxie zhongxue yuwen jiaocai de lunshu 叶圣陶关于编写中学语文教材的论述 [Ye Shengtao’s views on the editing of middle and high school *Yuwen* textbooks],” *Kecheng jiaocai jiaofa* 课程·教材·教法 [Curriculum, Teaching Material and Method], no. 3 (1983): 7.

⁴³ Liu Guozheng 刘国正, 7.

sentence of the text aloud; the group discussed how to edit; if the opinions differed, he would make a decision and make records of the revision.

圣陶先生建议多采用集体修改的方式。“譬如五个人一组，一个人读，四个人听。”“光用眼睛看，往往只注意文章讲的什么，听别人读，会随时发现多了些什么，或者少了些什么，要改的真是这些地方。这个方法比一个人加工容易得多。”他在人民教育出版社经常采用集体讨论的方式修改选文。讨论会由他亲自主持，有关的副总编辑、编辑室主任和本册课文的责任编辑参加。他先念一段或一句选文，大家讨论如何修改，如果意见不一，由他一锤定音，责任编辑负责记录。⁴⁴

Ye Shengtao was also careful to record the reasons why each edit was made. “His suggestions were all written on index cards that were made from the pages of old calendars. There were more than four hundred cards in total.” In each instance of revision, he “copied the original sentence from the article, the revised sentence, and enumerated the reasons for the revision.”⁴⁵

In Tables 5 - 9 below, I compare the editing history of four literary works used in *yuwen* textbooks, by Lu Xun, Qu Qiubai, and Ye Shengtao.

I selected these four pieces for their representativeness. In general, the curricula in Chinese schools are determined by the Ministry of Education and nationally unified. Local education bureaus or schools usually do not have autonomy in determining their own curriculum, although between the 1980s and the early 2010s some provincial education departments were given permission to create localized textbooks under national level guidelines. For the current study, I choose the nationally circulated textbooks published by the People’s Education Press

⁴⁴ Quoted in Gu Zhenbiao 顾振彪, “叶圣陶关于编写中学语文教材的论述 [Ye Shengtao’s Exposition on Middle School Chinese Textbook Compilation].”

⁴⁵ Quoted in Chen Hengshu 陈恒舒, “Yuwen jiaocai xuanwen de gai yu bugai 语文教材选文的改与不改 [Revising and not revising the selected readings in the *Yuwen* textbooks],” *Zhongxiaoxue jiaocai jiaoxue* 中小学教材教学 [Textbooks and pedagogy in schools] 2019, no. 56 (August 2019): 15.

from 1952, 56, and 60. These texts had a wide readership and reflected the large trends of curriculum design in the early socialist period.

Comparing these three editions, I found that only four texts appeared in all of them. They are the two short stories by Lu Xun from *Outcry*, “My Old Home” and “A Minor Incident”; another story by Ye Shengtao, “Duo shou le san wu dou” 多收了三五斗 [A few more bushels of rice]; and a piece of political commentary by Qu Qiubai, “Meiguo de zhenzheng beiju” 美国的真正悲剧 [The real American tragedy]. The following tables show, with highlighting, the editing of the first few paragraphs in each of the texts. I discuss them author by author.

(1) Ye Shengtao, “A Few More Bushels of Rice” (1933)⁴⁶

⁴⁶ In this and the following tables, I have converted all the Chinese characters to the simplified ones. The publication I am citing here were printed in either traditional or simplified characters, because the project of character simplification was ongoing in the 1950s. However, I simplified the traditional texts for the purpose of coherence.

Table 5. Textual changes in Ye Shengtao's "A Few More Bushels of Rice," 1933-1960					
1933; 1952	1952-1955	1954	1955-1957	1958	1960
Journal ⁴⁷ ; Book ⁴⁸	Textbook (citing the 1952 book) ⁴⁹	Book ⁵⁰	Textbook (citing the 1954 book) ⁵¹	Book ⁵²	Textbook (citing the 1958 book) ⁵³
万盛米行的河埠头，横七竖八停泊着乡村里出来的敞口船。船里装载的是新米，把船身压得很低，齐着船舷的菜叶和垃圾给白腻的泡沫包围着，一漾一漾地，填没了这船和那船间的空隙。	万盛米行的河埠头，横七竖八停泊着乡村里出来的敞口船。船里装载的是新米，把船身压得很低，齐着船舷的菜叶和垃圾被白腻的泡沫包围着，一漾一漾地，填没了这只船和那只船间的空隙。	万盛米行的河埠头，横七竖八停泊着乡村里出来的敞口船。船里装载的是新米，把船身压得很低，齐着船舷的菜叶和垃圾给白腻的泡沫包围着，一漾一漾地，填没了这船和那船之间的空隙。	万盛米行的河埠头，横七竖八停泊着乡村里出来的敞口船。船里装载的是新米，把船身压得很低，齐着船舷的菜叶和垃圾给白腻的泡沫包围着，一漾一漾地，填没了这船和那船之间的空隙。	万盛米行的河埠头，横七竖八停泊着乡村里出来的敞口船。船里装载的是新米，把船身压得很低，齐着船舷的菜叶和垃圾给白腻的泡沫包围着，一漾一漾地，填没了这船和那船之间的空隙。	万盛米行的河埠头，横七竖八停泊着乡村里出来的敞口船。船里装载的是新米，把船身压得很低，齐着船舷的菜叶和垃圾给白腻的泡沫包围着，一漾一漾地，填没了这船和那船之间的空隙。
河埠上去是只容两三个人并排走的街道。万盛米行就在街道的那一边。朝晨的太阳光从破了的明瓦天棚斜射下	河埠上去是只容两三个人并排走的街道。万盛米行就在街道的那一边。朝晨的太阳光从破了的明瓦天棚斜射下	河埠上去是只容两三个人并排走的街道。万盛米行就在街道的那一边。朝晨的太阳光从破了的明瓦天棚斜射下	河埠上去是只容两三个人并排走的街道。万盛米行就在街道的那一边。朝晨的太阳光从破了的明瓦天棚斜射下	河埠上去是仅容两三个人并排走的街道。万盛米行就在街道的那一边。朝晨的太阳光从破了的明瓦天棚斜射下	河埠上去是仅容两三个人并排走的街道。万盛米行就在街道的那一边。朝晨的太阳光从破了的明瓦天棚斜射下

⁴⁷ Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, "Duo shou le san wu dou 多收了三五斗 [A few more bushels of rice]," *Wenxue* 文学 1, no. 1 (1933): 33–38.

⁴⁸ Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, "Duo shou le san wu dou 多收了三五斗 [A few more bushels of rice]," in *Ye Shengtao xuanji* 叶圣陶选集 [Selected works of Ye Shengtao], ed. Mao Dun 茅盾, Yi zhong ben di er ban 乙种本第二版 [Type B, 2nd edition] (Beijing: Kaiming shudian 开明书店, 1952), 210–20.

⁴⁹ Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, *Chuji zhongxue yuwen keben* 初级中学语文课本 [Middle School Yuwen Textbook], 5th ed., vol. 6, 6 vols. (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1955). The first edition of this textbook was from 1952, but I only have access to the 5th edition from 1955.

This textbook cites *Ye Shengtao xuanji* (i.e. the text in the far left column of this table). However, the textbook version is evidently different from the source.

⁵⁰ Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, *Ye Shengtao duanpian xiaoshuo xuanji* 叶圣陶短篇小说选集 [Selected short stories of Ye Shengtao] (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 1954).

⁵¹ Zhang Bilai 张毕来, Wang Wei 王微, and Cai Chaochen 蔡超尘, *Chuji zhongxue keben: wenxue* 初级中学课本: 文学 [Middle school textbook: literature]. The first edition of this textbook was from 1955, but I only have access to the 3rd edition from 1957.

This textbook cites *Ye Shengtao duanpian xiaoshuo xuanji* (column to the left) but is also different from the cited source.

⁵² Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, *Ye Shengtao wenji* 叶圣陶文集 [Collected writings of Ye Shengtao], vol. 2 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 1958).

⁵³ Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, ed., *Chuji zhongxue keben: yuwen* 初级中学课本: 语文 [Middle school textbook: Yuwen], 2nd ed., vol. 2, 6 vols. (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1960).

This textbook cites *Ye Shengtao wenji* (column to the left) but is also different from the cited source.

Table 5. Textual changes in Ye Shengtao's "A Few More Bushels of Rice," 1933-1960

1933; 1952	1952-1955	1954	1955-1957	1958	1960
Journal ⁴⁷ ; Book ⁴⁸	Textbook (citing the 1952 book) ⁴⁹	Book ⁵⁰	Textbook (citing the 1954 book) ⁵¹	Book ⁵²	Textbook (citing the 1958 book) ⁵³
来, 光柱子落在 柜台外面幌动着 的几顶旧毡帽 上。	来, 光柱子落在 柜台外面晃动着 的几顶旧毡帽 上。	来, 光柱子落在 柜台外面晃动着 的几顶旧毡帽 上。	来, 光柱子落在 柜台外面晃动着 的几顶旧毡帽 上。	来, 光柱子落在 柜台外面晃动着 的几顶旧毡帽 上。	来, 光柱子落在 柜台外面晃动着 的几顶旧毡帽 上。
那些戴旧毡帽的 大清早摇船出 来, 到了埠头, 气也不透一口, 便来到柜台前面 占卜他们的命 运。	那些戴旧毡帽 的, 大清早摇船 出来, 到了埠 头, 气也不透一 口, 就来来到柜 台前面占卜他们 的命运。	那些戴旧毡帽的 大清早摇船出 来, 到了埠头, 气也不透一口, 便来到柜台前面 占卜他们的命 运。	那些戴旧毡帽的 大清早摇船出 来, 到了埠头, 气也不透一口, 便来到柜台前面 占卜他们的命 运。	那些戴旧毡帽的 大清早摇船出 来, 到了埠头, 气也不透一口, 便来到柜台前面 占卜他们的命 运。	那些戴旧毡帽的 大清早摇船出 来, 到了埠头, 气也不透一口, 便来到柜台前面 占卜他们的命 运。
「糙米五块, 谷 三块, 」米行里 的先生有气没力 地回答他们。	「糙米五块, 谷 三块, 」米行里 的先生有气没力 地回答他们。	「糙米五块, 谷 三块, 」米行里 的先生有气没力 地回答他们。	「糙米五块, 谷三 块, 」米行里的先 生有气没力地回 答他们。	「糙米五块, 谷三 块, 」米行里的先 生有气没力地回 答他们。	「糙米五块, 谷三 块, 」米行里的先 生有气没力地回 答他们。
「什么! 」旧毡 帽朋友几乎不相 信他们的耳朵。 美满的希望突地 一沉, 一会儿大 家都呆了。	「什么! 」旧毡 帽朋友几乎不相 信他们的耳朵。 美满的希望突地 一沉, [...]大 家都呆了。	「什么! 」旧毡 帽朋友几乎不相 信他们的耳朵。 美满的希望突地 一沉, 一会儿大 家都呆了。	“什么!”旧毡帽 朋友几乎不相信 自己的耳朵。美 满的希望突地一 沉, 一会儿大家 都呆了。	“什么!”旧毡帽 朋友几乎不相信 自己的耳朵。美 满的希望突然一 沉, 一会儿大家 都呆了。	“什么!”旧毡帽 朋友几乎不相信 自己的耳朵。美 满的希望突然一 沉, 一会儿大家 都呆了。
「在六月里, 你 们不是卖十三块 么? 」	「在六月里, 你 们不是卖十三块 么? 」	「在六月里, 你 们不是卖十三块 么? 」	“在六月里, 你们 不是卖十三块 么?”	“在六月里, 你们 不是卖十三块 么?”	“在六月里, 你们 不是卖十三块 么?”
「十五块也卖 过, 不要说十三 块。」	「十五块也卖 过, 不要说十三 块。」	「十五块也卖 过, 不要说十三 块。」	“十五块也卖过, 不要说十三块。”	“十五块也卖过, 不要说十三块。”	“十五块也卖过, 不要说十三块。”
「哪里有跌得这 样利害的! 」	「哪里有跌得这 样厉害的! 」	「哪里有跌得这 样利害的! 」	“哪里有跌得这样 厉害的!”	“哪里有跌得这样 厉害的!”	“哪里有跌得这样 厉害的!”
「现在是什么时 候, 你们不知道 么? 各处的米像 潮水一般涌出 来, 隔几天还要 跌呢! 」	「现在是什么时 候, 你们不知道 么? 各处的米像 潮水一样涌出 来, 隔几天还要 跌呢! 」	「现在是什么时 候, 你们不知道 么? 各处的米像 潮水一般涌出 来, 隔几天还要 跌呢! 」	“现在是什么时 候, 你们不知道 么? 各处的米像 潮水一般涌出 来, 隔几天还要 跌呢!”	“现在是什么时 候, 你们不知道 么? 各处的米像 潮水一般涌出 来, 过几天还要 跌呢!”	“现在是什么时 候, 你们不知道 么? 各处的米像 潮水一般涌出 来, 过几天还要 跌呢!”
刚才出力摇船犹 如赛龙船似的一 股劲儿, 现在在 每个人的身体里 松懈下来了。今 年天照应, 雨水 调匀, 小虫子也 不来作梗, 一亩 田多收这么三五 斗, 谁都以为该 得透一透气了。 那里知道临到最 后的占卜, 却得 了比往年更坏的 课兆!	刚才出力摇船犹 如赛龙船似的那 一股劲儿, 现在在 每个人的身体里 松懈下来了。今 年天照应, 雨水 调匀, 小虫子也 不来作梗, 一亩 田多收这么三五 斗, 谁都以为该 得透一透气了。 哪里知道临到最 后 [...], 却得了 比往年更坏的兆 头!	才出力摇船犹如 赛龙船似的一股 劲儿, 现在在每 个人的身体里松 懈下来了。今年 天照应, 雨水调 匀, 小虫子也不 来作梗, 一亩田 多收这么三五 斗, 谁都以为该 得透一透气了。 哪里知道临到最 后的占卜, 却得 到比往年更坏的 课兆!	刚才出力摇船犹 如赛龙船似的一 股劲儿, 现在在 每个人的身体里 松懈下来了。今 年天照应, 雨水 调匀, 小虫子也 不来作梗, 一亩 田多收这么三五 斗, 谁都以为该 得透一透气了。 哪里知道临到最 后的占卜, 却得 到比往年更坏的 课兆!	刚才出力摇船犹 如赛龙船似的一 股劲儿, 现在在 每个人的身体里 松懈下来了。今 年天照应, 雨水 调匀, 小虫子也 不来作梗, 一亩 田多收这么三五 斗, 谁都以为该 得透一透气了。 那里知道临到最 后的占卜, 却得 到比往年更坏的 课兆!	刚才出力摇船犹 如赛龙船似的一 股劲儿, 现在在 每个人的身体里 松懈下来了。今 年天照应, 雨水 调匀, 小虫子也 不来作梗, 一亩 田多收这么三五 斗, 谁都以为该 得透一透气了。 哪里知道临到最 后的占卜, 却得 到比往年更坏的 课兆!

First published in 1933, “A Few More Bushels of Rice” is a sympathetic portrait of rice farmers in the alluvial plains of southeast China, close to the author’s home. In the opening scene, having had a particularly good season of harvest, farmers row down to the nearby town and sell off their crops to the merchants. Each of them carries “three to five more bushels of rice” than what they would have in an average year—hence the story’s title. But the hope for a comfortable winter is sunken as they discover that, due to the harvest and the dumping of foreign rice on the Chinese market, the price of rice has dipped down. The farmers will be paid less for producing more; “rice farmers won’t get a bite of the rice they grow.”⁵⁴

A comparison between the various editions of the story from the 1950s reveals that Ye Shengtao was revising his own story continuously throughout a decade. The 1952-55 textbook cited the *Selected Works of Ye Shengtao* but modified approximately 4% of the text, by count of character. The 1955-57 textbook cited a different source, but this doesn’t mean that it followed the new source either. Additional adjustments were made that had not appeared in prior versions of the texts, whereas some edits appearing in the 1952-55 textbook were abandoned and reversed back. The 1958 *Collected Works of Ye Shengtao* and 1960 *Yuwen* textbook saw similar processes of revision. In short, each version of the text appears to be the result of a new round of editing. No one version is identical to a version published before.

The revisions reflect an attempt to implement the requirements of linguistic standardization in the early 1950s. Here, I use Lü Shuxiang and Zhu Dexi’s *A Talk on Grammar and Rhetoric*, serialized in the *People’s Daily* in 1951, as a representation of the standardized national language. In *A Talk*, the key areas of standardization are vocabulary, grammatical

⁵⁴ Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, “Duo shou le san wu dou 多收了三五斗 [A few more bushels of rice],” 1933, 36.

particles, sentence structure, rhetoric, and punctuation. The editing of “A Few More Bushels of Rice” covered most of these areas, with particularly obvious attention to grammatical particles, punctuation, and stylistic economy. Also updated was the script of some Chinese characters (e.g. from 幌动 to 晃动), in line with the larger project of their simplification.

Some of Ye Shengtao’s revisions reflected the difficulty at the time, even on the part of professionals and scholars, to determine what is “correct grammar” for modern Chinese. On contentious issues, textbook editors wavered back and forth between the different possible choices of words. One example is the passive voice with the particle *bei* 被. As Lü Shuxiang and Zhu Dexi explain in *A Talk*:

Historically, the use of the passive voice followed strict rules. ... [The passive voice with “*bei*”] usually describes an action that is unpleasant to the grammatical subject (i.e. the receiver of the action): “to be bullied by him” and “to be cheated by him” are common expressions; “to be written by him” and “to be delivered by him” are not found in the spoken language. This is because the original meaning of the character “*bei*” is “to suffer,” with which only unpleasant events are discussed.

... If the performer of the action is unclear, we can say either “the bowl is broken by someone” or “the bowl got broken.” The latter structure carries the meaning of the passive voice without using a passive form; it is very common. This structure is often used when the event is not unpleasant and hence cannot be described by the passive voice with “*bei*.” For example, we can say “the letter got written” or “the goods got delivered.”

被动式的应用，在过去是有相当严格的限制的。……被动式所叙述的行为，对于主语（即被动者）大都是不愉快的：“被他欺负”、“被他骗了”是常见的，“被他写好”、“被他送来”就不说了。这是因为“被”字原来的意义是“遭受”，只有对于不愉快的事情我们才说是遭受。

……假如主动者不明，就是说“碗被人打破了”，要不然就干脆说“碗打破了”。这种没有被动形式而有被动意义的格式，非常普遍；不是不愉快的事情，不能用被动式，就常常用这个格式，如“信写好了”、“货送来了”。⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Lü Shuxiang 吕叔湘 and Zhu Dexi 朱德熙, *Yufa xiuci jianghua* 语法修辞讲话 [A talk on grammar and rhetoric], 1st ed., vol. 3 (Beijing: Kaiming shudian 开明书店, 1951), 117–18.

This is a succinct explanation of two kinds of passive voices in vernacular Mandarin. Historically, *bei* was used restrictively in situations where the receiving of an action is undesired; a generic, value-neutral instance of receiving an action could not take the particle *bei*. This is similar to what is called in modern Japanese grammar the “suffering passive.” However, Lü Shuxiang and Zhu Dexi emphasize

Lü Shuxiang 吕叔湘 (1904-1998)

A prolific linguist, Lü Shuxiang graduated with a degree in foreign languages and literature from National Southeastern University in Nanjing. He then studied in the UK and, in 1950, became professor of Chinese at Tsinghua University. In 1952 he began working at the Language Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (later reorganized into the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences). In addition, he worked extensively on the *Yuwen* curriculum of the early PRC and was also a lexicographer. He was credited for constructing the theoretical model for the study of modern Chinese grammar.

that this distinction is disappearing. In contemporary writing, suffering or not, sentences take *bei* as a marker of the passive voice. This development is undesirable for the linguists, who stress that Chinese language even has grammatical structures to indicate passiveness without any explicit marker for the passive voice. Inexperienced writers nowadays, however, insert the particle *bei* in every passive occasion, even for situations that have nothing to do with unpleasantness. This results in semantic confusion (Do you imply unpleasantness or not?) and stylistic redundancy.

In the original version of “A Few More Bushels of Rice” from 1933 and 51, Ye Shengtao wrote:

齐着船舷的菜叶和垃圾给白腻的泡沫包围着

Cabbage leaves and trash [floating on the river], being as high as the boat’s rail, were surrounded by greasy white foam

Because the white foam is “greasy,” this sentence is an example of the suffering passive. It takes the particle *gei* 给, which is also applicable to unpleasant situations, but more colloquial and less standard than *bei*. Linguists have argued that the use of *gei* as a marker of the passive voice did

not exist in Beijing dialect prior to the twentieth century. It gradually emerged in the early Republican period and became widespread in Mandarin only in the last few decades.⁵⁶ In the 1952-55 textbook version of the story, the *gei* was deleted and replaced with the standard suffering passive, *bei*. But the revision was short-lived. In the 1954 *Selected Short Stories by Ye Shengtao* and all the subsequent textbooks, while some of the other changes were retained, the passive marker *bei* was not. *Gei* was restored.

Another grammar point found in the same sentence is the particle *zhe* 着. In *A Talk*, Lü Shuxiang and Zhu Dexi caution against overusing “*zhe*” in places where it is not necessary. Textbook editors again showed divergent opinions on this word. In various versions of the textbook, the particle was removed in some editions and restored in others.

“A Few More Bushels of Rice” is a unique example to study the work of revision in the textbooks, because the editor-in-chief of the textbooks was also the author of the short story. For other authors not participating in textbook editing, the team at the People’s Education Press sometimes contacted them and completed the revision in consultation with them. This seems to be the case especially when the original author was a renowned figure. A former editor recalled the process of editing literary works by renowned authors: “The poetry and prose of Comrades Zhu

Zhu Dexi 朱德熙 (1920-1992)

Son of a bureaucrat in Jiangsu province, Zhu Dexi enrolled in the physics department of the war-time South-West Associated University in 1939. After a year, he transferred to the Chinese department to focus on paleography. In the late 1940s and the early 1950s, he taught at the Chinese department of Tsinghua and Peking Universities. In 1952 he went to Sofia University in Bulgaria to teach Chinese language, becoming PRC's first specialist in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. He continued working at the Chinese department of Peking University, for the rest of his life, researching both modern Chinese grammar and paleography. Between 1989 and 1992, he was a visiting professor at University of Washington and Stanford University in the US. He died in Palo Alto.

⁵⁶ Li Yuming 李宇明 and Chen Qianrui 陈前瑞, “Beijingshua ‘gei’ zi beidongju de diwei jiqi lishi fazhan 北京话‘给’字被动句的地位及其历史发,” *Fangyan* 方言 2005, no. 4 (November 24, 2005): 289–97.

De, Guo Moruo, and Mao Dun were edited and approved by the author.”⁵⁷ Meanwhile, in the cases when the original author was not reachable or deceased, editing proceeded nonetheless. Qu Qiubai’s work is an example.

(2) Qu Qiubai, “The Real American Tragedy” (1931)

1931; 1938	1952-55	1956	1953	1960
Journal ⁵⁸ ; Book ⁵⁹	Textbook (citing an unspecified edition of the 1938 title) ⁶⁰	Textbook (citing an unspecified edition of the 1938 title) ⁶¹	Book ⁶²	Textbook (citing the 1953 book) ⁶³
德莱赛 (Theodore Dreiser) 现在是美国资产阶级的文坛所公认的大文学家了。但是, 德莱赛的成名是很晚的。美国的资产阶级一向自以为『荣华富贵』, 了不得的文明国家。对于德莱赛这类揭穿他们的黑幕的文学家, 老实说是有点讨厌。但是, 德莱赛自己虽然从不去追求什么声望, 然而他的天才, 像太白金星似的放射着无穷的光彩, 始终不是美	德莱赛 (Theodore Dreiser) 现在是美国资产阶级的文坛所公认的大文学家了。但是, 德莱赛的成名是很晚的。美国的资产阶级一向自以为美国是『荣华富贵』[...] 了不得的文明国家。对于德莱赛这类揭穿他们的黑幕的文学家, 老实说是有点讨厌的。但是, 德莱赛自己虽然从不去追求什么声望, 然而他的天才[...] 像太白金星似的放射着无穷的光	德莱赛 (Theodore Dreiser) 现在是美国资产阶级的文坛所公认的大文学家了。但是, 德莱赛的成名是很晚的。美国的资产阶级一向自以为『荣华富贵』, 了不得的文明国家。对于德莱赛这类揭穿他们的黑幕的文学家, 老实说是有点讨厌。但是, 德莱赛自己虽然从不去追求什么声望, 然而他的天才, 象太白金星似的放射着无穷的光彩, 始终不是美	德莱赛 (Theodore Dreiser) 现在是美国资产阶级的文坛所公认的大文学家了。但是, 德莱赛的成名是很晚的。美国的资产阶级一向自以为『荣华富贵』, 了不得的文明国家。对于德莱赛这类揭穿他们的黑幕的文学家, 老实说是有点讨厌。但是, 德莱赛自己虽然从不去追求什么声望, 然而他的天才, 像太白金星似的放射着无穷的光彩, 始终不是美	德莱赛 (Theodore Dreiser) 现在是美国资产阶级的文坛所公认的大文学家了。但是, 德莱赛的成名是很晚的。美国的资产阶级一向自以为『荣华富贵』, 了不得的文明国家。对于德莱赛这类揭穿他们的黑幕的文学家, 老实说是有点讨厌。但是, 德莱赛自己虽然从不去追求什么声望, 然而他的天才, 象太白金星似的放射着无穷的光彩, 始终不是美

⁵⁷ Liu Guozheng 刘国正, “Si ceng xiang shi yan gui lai: zhongxue wenxue jiaoyu de fengyu licheng 似曾相识燕归来: 中学文学教育的风雨历程,” *Kecheng jiaocai jiaofa* 课程·教材·教法 [Curriculum, Teaching Material and Method], no. 6 (June 2000): 18–22.

⁵⁸ Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白, “Meiguo de zhenzheng beiju 美国的真正悲剧 [The real American tragedy],” *Beidou* 北斗 [The dipper] 1, no. 4 (1931): 59–63.

⁵⁹ Reprinted in Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白, “Meiguo de zhenzheng beiju 美国的真正悲剧 [The real American tragedy],” in *Luan tan ji qita* 乱弹及其他 [Random notes and other writings], 2nd ed. (Shanghai: Xia she 霞社, 1938), 397–404.

⁶⁰ Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, *Chuji zhongxue yuwen keben* 初级中学语文课本 [Middle School Yuwen Textbook], 1955.

⁶¹ Zhang Bilai 张毕来 and Cai Chaochen 蔡超尘, eds., *Chuji zhongxue keben: wenxue* 初级中学课本: 文学 [Middle school textbook: literature], 1st ed., vol. 4, 6 vols. (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1956).

⁶² Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白, “Meiguo de zhenzheng beiju 美国的真正悲剧 [The real American tragedy],” in *Qu Qiubai wenji* 瞿秋白文集 [Selected writings of Qu Qiubai], reprint, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 1953), 390–97.

⁶³ Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, ed., *Chuji zhongxue keben: yuwen* 初级中学课本: 语文 [Middle school textbook: Yuwen], 2nd ed., vol. 6, 6 vols. (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1960).

Table 6. Textual changes in Qu Qiubai's "The Real American Tragedy," 1931-1960

1931; 1938	1952-55	1956	1953	1960
Journal ⁵⁸ ; Book ⁵⁹	Textbook (citing an unspecified edition of the 1938 title) ⁶⁰	Textbook (citing an unspecified edition of the 1938 title) ⁶¹	Book ⁶²	Textbook (citing the 1953 book) ⁶³
<p>国式的市侩手段所掩盖得了的了。现在，大家都不能够不承认德莱赛是描写美国生活的极伟大的作家。他的一部伟大的著作『美国悲剧』新近已经摄制了电影片子，甚至于中国的上海都已经开演过。自然，美国的资产阶级的电影界会把这种作品糟蹋得不成样子，以至于德莱赛不能够不提出抗议。可是，美国资产阶级对付德莱赛的手段，这还算是最客气的了。今年七月间光景，他到美国的煤矿区里面去一趟，他在那里所遇到的事情，所看见的情形，简直是一段很有趣的故事。</p>	<p>彩，始终不是美国式的市侩手段所掩盖得了的了。现在，大家都不能够不承认德莱赛是描写美国生活的极伟大的作家。他的一部伟大的著作『美国悲剧』新近[...]摄制了电影片子，甚至于中国的上海都已经放映过。自然，美国的资产阶级的电影界会把这种作品糟蹋得不成样子，以至于德莱赛不能够不提出抗议。可是，美国资产阶级对付德莱赛的手段，这还算是最客气的了。今年七月间[...]，他到美国的煤矿区里[...]去了一趟，他在那里所遇到的事情，所看见的情形，简直是一段很有趣的故事。</p>	<p>国式的市侩手段所掩盖得了的了。现在，大家都不能够不承认德莱赛是描写美国生活的极伟大的作家。他的一部伟大的著作『美国悲剧』新近已经摄制了电影片子，甚至于中国的上海都已经开演过。自然，美国的资产阶级的电影界会把这种作品糟蹋得不成样子，以至于德莱赛不能够不提出抗议。可是，美国资产阶级对付德莱赛的手段，这还算是最客气的了。今年七月间光景，他到美国的煤矿区里面去一趟，他在那里所遇到的事情，所看见的情形，简直是一段很有趣的故事。</p>	<p>国式的市侩手段所掩盖得了的了。现在，大家都不能够不承认德莱赛是描写美国生活的极伟大的作家。他的一部伟大的著作『美国悲剧』新近已经摄制了电影片子，甚至于中国的上海都已经开演过。自然，美国的资产阶级的电影界会把这种作品糟蹋得不成样子，以至于德莱赛不能够不提出抗议。可是，美国资产阶级对付德莱赛的手段，这还算是最客气的了。今年七月间光景，他到美国的煤矿区里[...]去了一趟，他在那里所遇到的事情，所看见的情形，简直是一段很有趣的故事。</p>	<p>国式的市侩手段所掩盖得了的了。现在，大家都不能够不承认德莱赛是描写美国生活的极伟大的作家。他的一部伟大的著作『美国悲剧』新近已经摄制了电影片子，甚至于中国的上海都已经开演过。自然，美国的资产阶级的电影界会把这种作品糟蹋得不成样子，以至于德莱赛不能够不提出抗议。可是，美国资产阶级对付德莱赛的手段，这还算是最客气的了。今年七月间光景，他到美国的煤矿区里[...]去了一趟，他在那里所遇到的事情，所看见的情形，简直是一段很有趣的故事。</p>
<p>他去的煤矿区是美国宾息尔法尼亚省 (Pennsylvania) 和沃海欧省 (Ohio)。那地方四万多矿工宣布了罢工，已经有几个月了。美国的几个煤业公司联合了起来反对罢工工人，斗争正在紧张的时候。在这煤炭大王的王国里，德莱赛住了几个礼拜，住在那种山谷中间的小房子里，亲眼看见矿工的痛苦生活，听见了许多矿工和他们的老婆儿女的诉苦；和工头，警察，兵士，审判官谈过许多次话。他回来</p>	<p>他去的煤矿区是美国宾息尔法尼亚省 (Pennsylvania) 和沃海欧省 (Ohio)。那地方四万多矿工宣布[...]罢工，已经有几个月了。美国的几个煤业公司联合[...]起来反对罢工工人，斗争正在紧张的时候。在这煤炭大王的王国里，德莱赛住了几个星期，住在那种山谷中间的小房子里，亲眼看见了矿工的痛苦生活，听见了许多矿工和他们的老婆儿女的诉苦；和工头，警察，兵士，审判官谈过许多次话。</p>	<p>他去的煤矿区是美国宾息尔法尼亚省 (Pennsylvania) 和沃海欧省 (Ohio)。那地方四万多矿工宣布了罢工，已经有几个月了。美国的几个煤业公司联合了起来反对罢工工人，斗争正在紧张的时候。在这煤炭大王的王国里，德莱赛住了几个礼拜，住在那种山谷中间的小房子里，亲眼看见矿工的痛苦生活，听见了许多矿工和他们的老婆儿女的诉苦；和工头，警察，兵士，审判官谈过许多次话。他回来</p>	<p>他去的煤矿区是美国宾息尔法尼亚省 (Pennsylvania) 和沃海欧省 (Ohio)。那地方四万多矿工宣布了罢工，已经有几个月了。美国的几个煤业公司联合了起来反对罢工工人，斗争正在紧张的时候。在这煤炭大王的王国里，德莱赛住了几个礼拜，住在那种山谷中间的小房子里，亲眼看见矿工的痛苦生活，听见了许多矿工和他们的老婆儿女的诉苦；和工头，警察，兵士，审判官谈过许多次话。他回来</p>	<p>他去的煤矿区是美国宾息尔法尼亚省 (Pennsylvania) 和沃海欧省 (Ohio)。那地方四万多矿工宣布了罢工，已经有几个月了。美国的几个煤业公司联合了起来反对罢工工人，斗争正在紧张的时候。在这煤炭大王的王国里，德莱赛住了几个礼拜，住在那种山谷中间的小房子里，亲眼看见矿工的痛苦生活，听见了许多矿工和他们的老婆儿女的诉苦；和工头，警察，兵士，审判官谈过许多次话。他回来</p>

⁶⁴ In the original journal edition, United States (美国) was misprinted to be United Kingdom (英国). All subsequent editions corrected the typo.

1931; 1938	1952-55	1956	1953	1960
Journal ⁵⁸ ; Book ⁵⁹	Textbook (citing an unspecified edition of the 1938 title) ⁶⁰	Textbook (citing an unspecified edition of the 1938 title) ⁶¹	Book ⁶²	Textbook (citing the 1953 book) ⁶³
的时候，有新闻记者去问他，他的手都发着抖写了几句话：	他回来的时候，有新闻记者去问他，他的手都发着抖写了几句话：	的时候，有新闻记者去问他，他的手都发着抖写了几句话：	的时候，有新闻记者去问他，他的手都发着抖写了几句话：	的时候，有新闻记者去问他，他的手都发着抖写了几句话：
『我观察了美国几十年，我自己以为很知道美国。可是，我错了——我并不知道美国！……』	『我观察了美国几十年，[...]自[...]以为很知道美国。可是，我错了——我并不知道美国！……』	『我观察了美国几十年，我自己以为很知道美国。可是，我错了——我并不知道美国！……』	『我观察了美国几十年，我自己以为很知道美国。可是，我错了——我并不知道美国！……』	『我观察了美国几十年，我自己以为很知道美国。可是，我错了——我并不知道美国！……』

“The Real American Tragedy” was published in Shanghai in 1931, four years before Qu Qiubai’s death. The essay is a report of Theodore Dreiser’s research in the coal mines of Pennsylvania and Ohio, renarrating Dreiser’s conversations with military police who shot and incarcerated unionized miners. The violence that these miners were subject to, Qu Qiubai argues, was the “real” American tragedy, more tragic than the cinematic adaptation of Dreiser’s novel, the crime fiction *American Tragedy*, which was showing in Shanghai’s theaters.

In the excerpt shown in Table 4, which is the first three paragraphs of the essay, the revision concentrates on the use of grammatical particle to convey tense and aspect, especially the particle *le* 了, a suffix for the perfective aspect. *A Talk* explains:

“Le” for the completion of an action: Most actions can be completed, and therefore few verbs can’t take the *le*. The exceptions are the verbs that we discussed at the end of the previous section. They describe actions that can’t be terminated in a short time, therefore we don’t say “I have needed labor power” or “I have loved him” (but we can say “I have fallen in love with him.”). On the other hand, if a verb already entails the notion of completion, there is no need to add *le*...

“了”表示行为的结束 大多数行为都是能结束的，所以很少有动词不能加“了”。只有上一节最后所说的那些动词，它们所表示的行为是短期内不能结束的，所以我们不说“需要了劳力”或“爱了他”（但可以说“爱上了他”）。在另一方面，如果一个动词用在某一句里，本身含有结束的意思，就不必加

“了”……⁶⁵

In the first two paragraphs alone, the 1952-55 textbook made five instances of revision on the *le*:

Table 7. Posthumous grammatical corrections of “The Real American Tragedy”		
	<a> original	 1952-55 textbook
i	新近已经摄制了电影	新近[.....]摄制了电影
ii	他到美国的煤矿区里面去[...]一趟	他到美国的煤矿区里去了一趟
iii	那地方四万多矿工宣布了罢工，已经有几个月了。	那地方四万多矿工宣布[...]罢工，已经有几个月了。
iv	美国的几个煤业公司联合了起来反对罢工工人，斗争正在紧张的时候。	美国的几个煤业公司联合[...]起来反对罢工工人，斗争正在紧张的时候。
v	亲眼看见[...]矿工的痛苦生活，听见了许多矿工和他们的老婆儿女的诉苦	亲眼看见了矿工的痛苦生活，听见了许多矿工和他们的老婆儿女的诉苦

Some edits were challenged by the 1956 and 1960 textbooks. Nonetheless, all of them agreed on the change in Sentence <ii>, which is most uncontroversially a grammatical error: Since Dreiser has already returned from the coal mines, his trip is a complete single instance by this point, so the verb must take the *le* particle. Concerning the other four sentences, <i> is a matter of redundancy and not a grammatical error: The adverb “already” is redundant since the *le*-particle conveys the same meaning. Sentences <iii>, <iv> and <v> are debatable; grammar-wise, either way can work. That said, in <v>, one argument for the use of *le* is stylistic coherence: Since the second of the parallel clauses takes the *le*, it would be nice for the first clause to also take it.

Punctuation is another salient aspect in the revision of Qu Qiubai’s text. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, modern Chinese writing has experimented with several styles of punctuation. In mainland China, after several waves of standardization, some of the

⁶⁵ Lü Shuxiang 吕叔湘 and Zhu Dexi 朱德熙, *Yufa xiuci jianghua* 语法修辞讲话 [A talk on grammar and rhetoric], 1951, 3:111.

punctuation marks widely adopted in the Republican period turned obsolete. For instance, the earliest publications of “The Real American Tragedy” used the corner brackets 「」 and 『』; in later textbook editions, published after the author’s death, they were replaced by the curved English-style quotation markers “” and ‘’.

The two distinct cases of Ye Shengtao and Qu Qiubai show the dominant role of textbook editors and the extensiveness of their editing. Was there a text that escaped the editor?

(3) Lu Xun, “My Old Home” (1921)

1938 Book ⁶⁶	1952-55 Textbook (citing an unspecified edition of <i>Outcry</i>) ⁶⁷	1956 Textbook (without citation) ⁶⁸	1957 Book ⁶⁹	1960 Textbook (citing 1957 book) ⁷⁰
我冒了严寒，回到相隔二千余里，别了二十余年的故乡去。	我冒了严寒，回到相隔二千余里，别了二十余年的故乡去。	我冒了严寒，回到相隔二千余里，别了二十余年的故乡去。	我冒了严寒，回到相隔二千余里，别了二十余年的故乡去。	我冒了严寒，回到相隔二千余里，别了二十余年的故乡去。
时候既然是深冬；渐近故乡时，天气又阴晦了，冷风吹进船舱中，呜呜的响，从篷隙向外一望，苍黄的天底下，远近横着几个萧索的荒村，没有一些活气。我的心禁不住悲凉起来了。	时候既然是深冬；渐近故乡时，天气又阴晦了，冷风吹进船舱中，呜呜的响，从篷隙向外一望，苍黄的天底下，远近横着几个萧索的荒村，没有一些活气。我的心禁不住悲凉起来了。	时候既然是深冬；渐近故乡时，天气又阴晦了，冷风吹进船舱中，呜呜的响，从篷隙向外一望，苍黄的天底下，远近横着几个萧索的荒村，没有一些活气。我的心禁不住悲凉起来了。	时候既然是深冬；渐近故乡时，天气又阴晦了，冷风吹进船舱中，呜呜的响，从篷隙向外一望，苍黄的天底下，远近横着几个萧索的荒村，没有一些活气。我的心禁不住悲凉起来了。	时候既然是深冬；渐近故乡时，天气又阴晦了，冷风吹进船舱中，呜呜的响，从篷隙向外一望，苍黄的天底下，远近横着几个萧索的荒村，没有一些活气。我的心禁不住悲凉起来了。
阿！这不是我二十年来时时记得的故乡？	阿！这不是我二十年来时时记得的故乡？	阿！这不是我二十年来时时记得的故乡？	阿！这不是我二十年来时时记得的故乡？	阿！这不是我二十年来时时记得的故乡？

⁶⁶ Lu Xun 鲁迅, “Guxiang 故乡 [My Old Home],” in *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 [The complete works of Lu Xun], ed. Lu Xun xiansheng jinian weiyuanhui 鲁迅先生纪念委员会 [The memorial committee of Mr. Lu Xun], vol. 1, 20 vols. (Shanghai: Lu Xun quanji chubanshe 鲁迅全集出版社, 1938), 344–58.

⁶⁷ Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, *Chuji zhongxue yuwen keben* 初级中学语文课本 [Middle School Yuwen Textbook], 7th ed., vol. 4, 6 vols. (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1955).

⁶⁸ Zhang Bilai 张毕来 and Cai Chaochen 蔡超尘, eds., *Chuji zhongxue keben: wenxue* 初级中学课本：文学 [Middle school textbook: literature], 3rd ed., vol. 3, 6 vols. (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1956).

⁶⁹ Lu Xun 鲁迅, “Guxiang 故乡 [My Old Home],” in *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 [The complete works of Lu Xun], ed. Lu Xun xiansheng jinian weiyuanhui 鲁迅先生纪念委员会 [The memorial committee of Mr. Lu Xun], vol. 1 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 1957), 61–71.

⁷⁰ Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, *Chuji zhongxue keben: yuwen* 初级中学课本：语文 [Middle school textbook: Yuwen], 1960.

Table 8. Textual changes in Lu Xun's "My Old Home," 1938-1960

1938	1952-55	1956	1957	1960
Book ⁶⁶	Textbook (citing an unspecified edition of <i>Outcry</i>) ⁶⁷	Textbook (without citation) ⁶⁸	Book ⁶⁹	Textbook (citing 1957 book) ⁷⁰
我所记得的故乡全不如此。我的故乡好得多了。但要我记起他的美丽，说出他的佳处来，却又没有影像，没有言辞了。仿佛也就如此。于是我自己解释说：故乡本也如此，——虽然没有进步，也未必有如我所感的悲凉，这只是我自己心情的改变罢了，因为我这次回乡，本没有什么好心绪。	我所记得的故乡全不如此。我的故乡好得多了。但要我记起他的美丽，说出他的佳处来，却又没有影像，没有言辞了。仿佛也就如此。于是我自己解释说：故乡本也如此，——虽然没有进步，也未必有如我所感的悲凉，这只是我自己心情的改变罢了，因为我这次回乡，本没有什么好心绪。	我所记得的故乡全不如此。我的故乡好得多了。但要我记起他的美丽，说出他的佳处来，却又没有影像，没有言辞了。仿佛也就如此。于是我自己解释说：故乡本也如此，——虽然没有进步，也未必有如我所感的悲凉，这只是我自己心情的改变罢了，因为我这次回乡，本没有什么好心绪。	我所记得的故乡全不如此。我的故乡好得多了。但要我记起他的美丽，说出他的佳处来，却又没有影像，没有言辞了。仿佛也就如此。于是我自己解释说：故乡本也如此，——虽然没有进步，也未必有如我所感的悲凉，这只是我自己心情的改变罢了，因为我这次回乡，本没有什么好心绪。	我所记得的故乡全不如此。我的故乡好得多了。但要我记起他的美丽，说出他的佳处来，却又没有影像，没有言辞了。仿佛也就如此。于是我自己解释说：故乡本也如此，——虽然没有进步，也未必有如我所感的悲凉，这只是我自己心情的改变罢了，因为我这次回乡，本没有什么好心绪。
这次是专为了别他而来的。我们多年聚族而居的老屋，已经公同卖给别姓了，交屋的期限，只在本年，所以必须赶在正月初一以前，永别了熟识的老屋，而且远离了熟识的故乡，搬家到我在谋食的异地去。	这次是专为了别他而来的。我们多年聚族而居的老屋，已经公同卖给别姓了，交屋的期限，只在本年，所以必须赶在正月初一以前，永别了熟识的老屋，而且远离了熟识的故乡，搬家到我在谋食的异地去。	这次是专为了别他而来的。我们多年聚族而居的老屋，已经公同卖给别姓了，交屋的期限，只在本年，所以必须赶在正月初一以前，永别了熟识的老屋，而且远离了熟识的故乡，搬家到我在谋食的异地去。	这次是专为了别他而来的。我们多年聚族而居的老屋，已经公同卖给别姓了，交屋的期限，只在本年，所以必须赶在正月初一以前，永别了熟识的老屋，而且远离了熟识的故乡，搬家到我在谋食的异地去。	这次是专为了别他而来的。我们多年聚族而居的老屋，已经公同卖给别姓了，交屋的期限，只在本年，所以必须赶在正月初一以前，永别了熟识的老屋，而且远离了熟识的故乡，搬家到我在谋食的异地去。
第二日清早晨我到了我家的门口了。瓦楞上许多枯草的断茎当风抖着，正在说明这老屋难免易主的原因。几房的本家大约已经搬走了，所以很寂静。我到了自家的房外，我的母亲早已迎着出来了，接着便飞出了八岁的侄儿宏儿。	第二日清早晨我到了我家的门口了。瓦楞上许多枯草的断茎当风抖着，正在说明这老屋难免易主的原因。几房的本家大约已经搬走了，所以很寂静。我到了自家的房外，我的母亲早已迎着出来了，接着便飞出了八岁的侄儿宏儿。	第二日清早晨我到了我家的门口了。瓦楞上许多枯草的断茎当风抖着，正在说明这老屋难免易主的原因。几房的本家大约已经搬走了，所以很寂静。我到了自家的房外，我的母亲早已迎着出来了，接着便飞出了八岁的侄儿宏儿。	第二日清早晨我到了我家的门口了。瓦楞上许多枯草的断茎当风抖着，正在说明这老屋难免易主的原因。几房的本家大约已经搬走了，所以很寂静。我到了自家的房外，我的母亲早已迎着出来了，接着便飞出了八岁的侄儿宏儿。	第二日清早晨我到了我家的门口了。瓦楞上许多枯草的断茎当风抖着，正在说明这老屋难免易主的原因。几房的本家大约已经搬走了，所以很寂静。我到了自家的房外，我的母亲早已迎着出来了，接着便飞出了八岁的侄儿宏儿。
我的母亲很高兴，但也藏着许多凄凉的神情，教我坐下，歇息，喝茶，且不谈搬家的事。宏儿没有见过我，远远的对面站着只是看。	我的母亲很高兴，但也藏着许多凄凉的神情，教我坐下，歇息，喝茶，且不谈搬家的事。宏儿没有见过我，远远的对面站着只是看。	我的母亲很高兴，但也藏着许多凄凉的神情，教我坐下，歇息，喝茶，且不谈搬家的事。宏儿没有见过我，远远的对面站着只是看。	我的母亲很高兴，但也藏着许多凄凉的神情，教我坐下，歇息，喝茶，且不谈搬家的事。宏儿没有见过我，远远的对面站着只是看。	我的母亲很高兴，但也藏着许多凄凉的神情，教我坐下，歇息，喝茶，且不谈搬家的事。宏儿没有见过我，远远的对面站着只是看。

(4) Lu Xun, "A Minor Incident" (1920)

Table 9. Textual changes in Lu Xun's "A Minor Incident," 1938-1960

1938	1952-53	1956	1957	1960
Book ⁷¹	Textbook (citing an unspecified edition of <i>Outcry</i>) ⁷²	Textbook (without citation) ⁷³	Book ⁷⁴	Textbook (citing 1957 book) ⁷⁵
我从乡下跑到京城里，一转眼已经六年了。其间耳闻目睹的所谓国家大事，算起来也很不少；但在我心里，都不留什么痕迹，倘要我寻出这些事的影响来说，便只是增长了我的坏脾气，——老实说，便是教我一天比一天的看不起人。	我从乡下跑到京城里，一转眼已经六年了。其间耳闻目睹的所谓国家大事，算起来也很不少；但在我心里，都不留什么痕迹，倘要我寻出这些事的影响来说，便只是增长了我的坏脾气，——老实说，便是教我一天比一天的看不起人。	我从乡下跑到京城里，一转眼已经六年了。其间耳闻目睹的所谓国家大事，算起来也很不少；但在我心里，都不留什么痕迹，倘要我寻出这些事的影响来说，便只是增长了我的坏脾气，——老实说，便是教我一天比一天的看不起人。	我从乡下跑到京城里，一转眼已经六年了。其间耳闻目睹的所谓国家大事，算起来也很不少；但在我心里，都不留什么痕迹，倘要我寻出这些事的影响来说，便只是增长了我的坏脾气，——老实说，便是教我一天比一天的看不起人。	我从乡下跑到京城里，一转眼已经六年了。其间耳闻目睹的所谓国家大事，算起来也很不少；但在我心里，都不留什么痕迹，倘要我寻出这些事的影响来说，便只是增长了我的坏脾气，——老实说，便是教我一天比一天的看不起人。
但有一件小事，却于我有意义，将我从坏脾气里拖开，使我至今忘记不得。	但有一件小事，却于我有意义，将我从坏脾气里拖开，使我至今忘记不得。	但有一件小事，却于我有意义，将我从坏脾气里拖开，使我至今忘记不得。	但有一件小事，却于我有意义，将我从坏脾气里拖开，使我至今忘记不得。	但有一件小事，却于我有意义，将我从坏脾气里拖开，使我至今忘记不得。
这是民国六年的冬天，大北风刮得正猛，我因为生计关系，不得不一早在路上走。一路几乎遇不见人，好容易雇定了一辆人力车，教他拉到S门去。不一会，北风小了，路上浮尘早已刮净，剩下一条洁白的大道来，车夫也跑得更快。刚近S门，忽而车把上带着一个人，慢慢地倒了。	这是民国六年的冬天，大北风刮得正猛，我因为生计关系，不得不一早在路上走。一路几乎遇不见人，好容易雇定了一辆人力车，教他拉到S门去。不一会，北风小了，路上浮尘早已刮净，剩下一条洁白的大道来，车夫也跑得更快。刚近S门，忽而车把上带着一个人，慢慢地倒了。	这是民国六年的冬天，大北风刮得正猛，我因为生计关系，不得不一早在路上走。一路几乎遇不见人，好容易才雇定了一辆人力车，教他拉到S门去。不一会，北风小了，路上浮尘早已刮净，剩下一条洁白的大道来，车夫也跑得更快。刚近S门，忽而车把上带着一个人，慢慢地倒了。	这是民国六年的冬天，大北风刮得正猛，我因为生计关系，不得不一早在路上走。一路几乎遇不见人，好容易才雇定了一辆人力车，教他拉到S门去。不一会，北风小了，路上浮尘早已刮净，剩下一条洁白的大道来，车夫也跑得更快。刚近S门，忽而车把上带着一个人，慢慢地倒了。	这是民国六年的冬天，大北风刮得正猛，我因为生计关系，不得不一早在路上走。一路几乎遇不见人，好容易才雇定了一辆人力车，教他拉到S门去。不一会，北风小了，路上浮尘早已刮净，剩下一条洁白的大道来，车夫也跑得更快。刚近S门，忽而车把上带着一个人，慢慢地倒了。

⁷¹ Lu Xun 鲁迅, "Yi jian xiaoshi 一件小事 [A Minor Incident]," in *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 [The complete works of Lu Xun], ed. Lu Xun xiansheng jinian weiyuanhui 鲁迅先生纪念委员会 [The memorial committee of Mr. Lu Xun], vol. 1, 20 vols. (Shanghai: Lu Xun quanji chubanshe 鲁迅全集出版社, 1938), 321-24.

⁷² Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, *Chuji zhongxue yuwen keben* 初级中学语文课本 [Middle School Yuwen Textbook], 2nd revision, vol. 5, 6 vols. (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1953).

⁷³ Zhang Bilai 张毕来, Wang Wei 王微, and Cai Chaochen 蔡超尘, *Chuji zhongxue keben: wenxue* 初级中学课本: 文学 [Middle school textbook: literature].

⁷⁴ Lu Xun 鲁迅, "Yi jian xiaoshi 一件小事 [A Minor Incident]," in *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 [The complete works of Lu Xun], ed. Lu Xun xiansheng jinian weiyuanhui 鲁迅先生纪念委员会 [The memorial committee of Mr. Lu Xun], vol. 1 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 1957), 43-45.

⁷⁵ Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, *Chuji zhongxue keben: yuwen* 初级中学课本: 语文 [Middle school textbook: Yuwen], 1960.

Table 9. Textual changes in Lu Xun’s “A Minor Incident,” 1938-1960

1938	1952-53	1956	1957	1960
Book ⁷¹	Textbook (citing an unspecified edition of <i>Outcry</i>) ⁷²	Textbook (without citation) ⁷³	Book ⁷⁴	Textbook (citing 1957 book) ⁷⁵
<p>跌倒的是一个女人，花白头发，衣服都很破烂。伊从马路边上突然向车前横截过来；车夫已经让开道，但伊的破棉背心没有上扣，微风吹着，向外展开，所以终于兜着车把。幸而车夫早有点停步，否则伊定要栽一个大觔斗，跌到头破血出了。</p>	<p>跌倒的是一个女人，花白头发，衣服都很破烂。伊从马路边上突然向车前横截过来；车夫已经让开道，但伊的破棉背心没有上扣，微风吹着，向外展开，所以终于兜着车把。幸而车夫早有点停步，否则伊定要栽一个大觔斗，跌到头破血出了。</p>	<p>跌倒的是一个女人，花白头发，衣服都很破烂。伊从马路边上突然向车前横截过来；车夫已经让开道，但伊的破棉背心没有上扣，微风吹着，向外展开，所以终于兜着车把。幸而车夫早有点停步，否则伊定要栽一个大觔斗，跌到头破血出了。</p>	<p>跌倒的是一个女人，花白头发，衣服都很破烂。伊从马路边上突然向车前横截过来；车夫已经让开道，但伊的破棉背心没有上扣，微风吹着，向外展开，所以终于兜着车把。幸而车夫早有点停步，否则伊定要栽一个大觔斗，跌到头破血出了。</p>	<p>跌倒的是一个女人，花白头发，衣服都很破烂。伊从马路边上突然向车前横截过来；车夫已经让开道，但伊的破棉背心没有上扣，微风吹着，向外展开，所以终于兜着车把。幸而车夫早有点停步，否则伊定要栽一个大觔斗，跌到头破血出了。</p>
<p>伊伏在地上；车夫便也立住脚。我料定这老女人并没有伤，又没有别人看见，便很怪他多事，要自己惹出是非，也误了我的路。</p>	<p>伊伏在地上；车夫便也立住脚。我料定这老女人并没有伤，又没有别人看见，便很怪他多事，要自己惹出是非，也误了我的路。</p>	<p>伊伏在地上；车夫便也立住脚。我料定这老女人并没有伤，又没有别人看见，便很怪他多事，要自己惹出是非，也误了我的路。</p>	<p>伊伏在地上；车夫便也立住脚。我料定这老女人并没有伤，又没有别人看见，便很怪他多事，要自己惹出是非，也误了我的路。</p>	<p>伊伏在地上；车夫便也立住脚。我料定这老女人并没有伤，又没有别人看见，便很怪他多事，要自己惹出是非，也误了我的路。</p>

Bonnie McDougall once wrote, in *Fictional Authors, Imaginary Audiences*: “Lu Xun, as always, is a special case.”⁷⁶ The special case also applied in textbook editing; Lu Xun’s works cannot be edited. Apart from sporadic orthographic changes, which were required as part of the simplification of characters, his grammar and vocabulary remained untouched by textbook editors.

In *A Talk*, Lu Xun and Mao Zedong were the two authors who jointly provide the majority of the example sentences. Despite the differences in the textual characteristics of the two men, they were both the “model of writing” on which the official style guide was based. But this does not mean Lu Xun’s writing always conformed to the linguistic norms that *A Talk* aimed

⁷⁶ Bonnie S. McDougall, *Fictional Authors, Imaginary Audiences: Modern Chinese Literature in the Twentieth Century* (Chinese University Press, 2004), 46.

to establish. For example, the female third-person pronoun in “A Minor Incident,” *yi* 伊 was not standard for written Chinese in the 1950s but was still preserved in the textbooks. Another case in point concerns the particles *de*, which was written variously as 的/底/地/得 and gave rise to several contending systems of rules historically. Lu Xun’s preferred usage was one that later linguists abandoned, so his works contain instances of the *de* that are ungrammatical judging by current standards. The opening passages of “My Old Home,” for example, contain two such cases.⁷⁷ More examples can be found in the rest of Lu Xun’s oeuvre, some of which would appear intolerably bizarre in the eyes of a reader who has learned to read and write in the current mass education program:

中国的一切革命底和遵命底的批评家⁷⁸

现在的人，的事，⁷⁹

描写本国军队的胜利，的勇敢，的爱国的亚美利加式电影⁸⁰

⁷⁷ “呜呜的响” and “远远的对面站着”; in both cases the “的” should be replaced by “地”.

⁷⁸ Lu Xun 鲁迅, “Hamosheng de ji ju hua 哈谟生的几句话 [A few words by Hamsun],” in *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 [The complete works of Lu Xun], vol. 7 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 2005), 346.

⁷⁹ Lu Xun 鲁迅, “Fei geming de jijin geminglun zhe 非革命的急进革命论者 [Unrevolutionary Eagerness for Revolution],” in *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 [The complete works of Lu Xun], vol. 4 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 2005), 233.

⁸⁰ Iwasaki Akira 岩崎 昶, “Xiandai dianying yu youchanjiejie 现代电影与有产阶级 [Modern cinema and the property-owning class],” in *Lu Xun yiwen ji* 鲁迅译文集 [The collected translations of Lu Xun], trans. Lu Xun 鲁迅, vol. 10 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 1959), 319.

In the 2005 edition of the complete works of Lu Xun, this sentence is edited. The comma before the *de* is placed after the *de*: “描写本国军队的胜利的，勇敢的，爱国的亚美利加式电影.” Iwasaki Akira 岩崎 昶, “Xiandai dianying yu youchanjiejie 现代电影与有产阶级 [Modern cinema and the property-owning class],” in *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 [The complete works of Lu Xun], trans. Lu Xun 鲁迅, vol. 4 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 2005), 410.

For a linguistic discussion of the “*de*,” see Lao Zhijun 老志钧, *Lu Xun de ouhua wenzi: zhongwen ouhua de xingsi* 鲁迅的欧化文字：中文欧化的省思 [The Europeanized writing of Lu Xun: Reflections on the Europeanization of the Chinese language] (Taipei: Shi da shu yuan 师大书苑, 2005), 268–71; Gunn, *Rewriting Chinese*, 66–70. Also see Chapter 4 for more on linguistic stylistics.

These sentences were never used in the textbooks, but they were and are still printed in their original form in the publications of Lu Xun's writing in the PRC. In other words, whereas Ye Shengtao diligently revised both his own and other people's prose, and Qu Qiubai had his grammatical errors corrected decades after his death, Lu Xun was exempted from the scrutiny of the editors. He remains the only author whose ungrammaticality is also worthy of reading.

The problem here is the tension between standardized grammar and a writer's idiosyncratic use of the language, due to historical language change or any other reason.

We must now return to Ye Shengtao's quote on revision:

The texts selected likely require refinement. We refine the texts not because we are overly demanding and want to embarrass the author. Since we want to show our students the models of writing, which is expected to be beautiful in both form and substance, we naturally should amend and polish the flaws of the texts. A narrow-minded author may feel displeased, but an author who is understanding should certainly be happy to accept it. The work of refinement is indeed not easy. It is necessary to read and recite repeatedly, so as to become very familiar with the author's thinking and to deeply perceive the author's intentions. Then, one will be able to distinguish the strengths and shortcomings [of their writing]. Then, one will be able to approach where there is a shortcoming and refine that spot. Moreover, every author's writing has their style. When we refine other people's writing, it is necessary to adapt to their style. It is not desirable to complement other people's writing with our own style, to the extent that the text loses its overall harmony. In sum, in order to make revisions appropriately, one must deeply understand the difficulty of reading and writing. I hope that we can make an effort together to do so.

选定之文，或不免须与加工。加工者，非过为挑剔，俾作者难堪也。盖欲示学生以文章之范，期于文质兼美，则文中疏漏之处，自当为之修补润色。固陋之作者或将不快，明达之作者宜必乐承。加工之事，良非易为。必反复讽诵，熟谙作者之思路，深味作者之意旨，然后能辨其所长所短，然后能就其所短者而加工焉。他则作者文笔，各有风裁，我人加工，宜适应其风裁，不宜出之以己之风裁，致使全篇失其调谐。总之，欲求加工得当，必深知读书为文之甘苦，愿与诸公共勉之矣。⁸¹

⁸¹ Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, "Kewen de xuanbian: zhi renjiaoshe zhongxue yuwen bianjishi 课文的选编——致人教社中学语文编辑室 [The selection and editing of textbook readings: a letter to the middle-school *Yuwen* editing office at the People's Education Press]," 719.

In this passage Ye Shengtao highlighted two aspects of revision. First, the revision is aimed at “amend[ing] and polish[ing] the flaws of the texts” so that the text can truly serve as “models of writing.” Second, the caveat of this revision is that the specific author’s style should be preserved. In short, the stylistic traits of the text must not be changed while linguistic flaws need to be changed. If we follow this recipe, it seems then that the textbook editors used different definitions of style when they revised Lu Xun’s and Qu Qiubai’s works. “Lu Xun’s style” would encompass a much wider range of textual characteristics than the style of Qu Qiubai. The grammatical irregularities of Lu Xun’s writing can still be interpreted on stylistic terms, that is, interpreted to be the authentic expression of an author from a past generation who was working with different set of linguistic expectations, whereas the grammatical irregularities of Qu Qiubai, who was from that same generation and working under similar linguistic expectations, are just plainly a flaw and had better be repaired by the editors.

The preserved linguistic irregularities of Lu Xun’s writing have caught the eyes of linguists.⁸² In contemporary popular media too, there is no lack of comments on the odd language of the writer who is supposed to be the preeminent example of Chinese literature. But what is demonstrated by the history of textbook editing, or the history of revision generally, is that Lu Xun after all is *not a special case* in producing these oddities, because the writers of the early Republican period as a whole were faced with the problem of the lack of standardization, and they all used linguistic forms that we now consider non-standard. It is not Lu Xun who was uniquely irregular; everyone was irregular, but only Lu Xun had the privilege of having his irregularity preserved.

⁸² For example, see Lao Zhijun 老志钧, *Lu Xun de ouhua wenzi: zhongwen ouhua de xingsi* 鲁迅的欧化文字：中文欧化的省思 [The Europeanized writing of Lu Xun: Reflections on the Europeanization of the Chinese language].

This then prompts us to consider linguistic difficulty as an inherent characteristic of New Literature. By linguistic difficulty, I mean not only that New Literature writers were faced with an under-standardized language of writing, but also that many of them were not native speakers of Mandarin. Counterintuitively, however, their non-native writing became the basis on which the standards for that language were later invented. An illustrative account of this linguistic difficulty is the following excerpt from an autobiography of philologist Zhang Zhongxing, who worked with Ye Shengtao at the People's Education Press in the 1950s. Zhang Zhongxing describes how Ye Shengtao, despite being the editor-in-chief, struggled with the Mandarin language. Zhang Zhongxing wrote,

My interaction with Mr. Ye Shengtao on the aspect of words and ink began with the collaborative work on the revision of the language of the textbooks. At that time, he had just moved to the north. With his family, he spoke the Soochow dialect; with people from other places, he spoke a mix of northern and southern tones. But whenever he wrote he was determined to use Mandarin. His Mandarin was not fluent, so he asked me to help him proofread, despite me being his subordinate. Out of respect, I didn't want to put a red pen on his writing, so initially I just proposed some negotiable suggestions. He said to me, "Don't be polite. To save time, you should just write on it. Don't restrict yourself to linguistic problems. Feel free to change anything you find inappropriate. Don't be cautious and afraid of making unhelpful revisions, because if I find anything unhelpful, I will just change it back." So, I followed his instruction, got rid of my politeness, and did it the way he asked. But he was as polite as ever. If there was a word or two that he thought could remain unchanged, he would come to me in person, asking, with modesty and sincerity, whether I agreed to revoke the edits. Of course, I agreed. I told him: "Please do whatever you think is better. There is absolutely no need to run it with me." He said: "Alright." But the next time he would still find me in person and consult, as though it was me who took charge, not him.

我同叶圣陶先生文墨方面的交往，从共同修润课本的文字开始。其时他刚到北方来，跟家乡人说苏州话，跟其他地方人说南腔北调话。可是他写文章坚决用普通话。普通话他生疏，于是不耻下问，让我帮他修润。我出于对他的尊敬，想不直接动笔，只提一些商酌性的意见。他说：“不必客气。这样反而费事，还是直接改上。不限于语言，有什么不妥都改。千万不要慎重，怕改得不妥。我觉得不妥再改回来。”我遵嘱，不客气，这样做了。可是他却不放弃客气，比如有一两处他认为可以不动的，就一定亲自来，谦虚而恳切

地问我，同意不同意恢复。我当然表示同意，并且说：“您看怎么样好就怎么样，千万不要再跟我商量。”他说：“好，就这样。”可是下次还是照样来商量，好像应该作主的是我，不是他。⁸³

It is no surprise, then, that Ye Shengtao wrote in Classical Chinese in his diary and letters, including the passage I cited on the rationale of textual refinement. Classical Chinese was his first and most comfortable writing language, although it was this language that he called to renounce. This is one of the many examples in this

Zhang Zhongxing 张中行 (1909-2006)

Philologist, editor, and essayist, Zhang Zhongxing was born in Hebei province and studied Chinese at Peking University. In 1949, he began working at the *Yuwen* textbook editing office at the People's Education Press, under the supervision of Lü Shuxiang and Ye Shengtao. In the 1980s, after retirement, Zhang Zhongxing gained popularity as an essayist and memoirist writing about intellectual circles in Beijing in the Republican and early PRC periods. Notable works include *Trivial Words under the Warm Sun* (*Fu xuan suo hua* 负暄琐话, 1986) and *Fragmentary Shadows of the Fleeting Years* (*Liu nian sui ying* 流年随影, 1997).

dissertation attesting to the strong hold of Classical Chinese literature in the Cold War era.

Based on the cases of Ye Shengtao, Qu Qiubai, and Lu Xun, this chapter will propose a hypothesis, which cannot be thoroughly verified within the scope of this study but merits further investigation using a bigger set data. The hypothesis is that the canonical works of New Literature in the early Republican period, when they were first published, were linguistically heterogeneous and diverse, with no shortage of linguistic patterns that are seen as ungrammatical by today's standards. Subsequently, in the revision and reprints of those canonical works in the PRC, the rules of Standard Modern Chinese were retroactively applied onto this body of texts. Their linguistic irregularities were smoothed out. Consequently, the current canon of New Literature—in the PRC—is no longer the New Literature of the early Republican period, but a revised version of it, created in the 1950s and beyond. Hence, although the concept of canon

⁸³ Zhang Zhongxing 张中行, “Ye Shengtao xiansheng er san shi 叶圣陶先生二三事 [Two or three things about Mr. Ye Shengtao],” *Dushu* 读书, no. 1 (January 1990): 11–12.

seems to imply stability, it is only nominally stable. The content of the canon is being updated over time, even if the titles appear the same on the syllabus.

From Reading to Writing

Literacy consists of reading and writing; once you can read, the next step is to write. I now turn to the pedagogy of composition in early Maoist China, and I continue to use Ye Shengtao's work as the main example. Like the reading pedagogy, the writing pedagogy was also affected by the stylistic preferences of the New Literature writers and reproduced some aspects of the pedagogy of Classical Chinese.

From the pedagogical handbooks drafted by Ye Shengtao and his colleagues, as well as the biographical sources on them, we can extract two typical approaches to teaching composition. The first is based on the belief that good writing is the result of having read a lot. Therefore, the cultivation of writing skills requires, as a prior step, reading a large quantity of literary works. Ye Shengtao elaborates on this approach in an article he wrote for a newspaper in 1964:

Some people treat reading and writing as though they were two irrelevant matters, and put a lot of emphasis on writing, complaining all the time that the students don't have good writing abilities, as though one's level in *yuwen* is solely determined by writing abilities. But without effective basic training in reading, the students can't develop their writing abilities. Publishers often receive requests for making books on "How to Write Essays," and so on, as if once you have this type of book, once you can advise the students based on this type of book and the pedagogy of writing is all resolved. In reality, writing is based on reading. Only if a teacher teaches well, only when if a student reads well, they will be able to write well.

有些人把阅读和写作看作不甚相干的两回事，而且特别着重写作，总是说学生的写作能力不行，好像语文程度就只看写作程度似的。阅读的基本训练不行，写作能力是不会提高的。常常有人要求出版社出版“怎样作文”之类的书，好像有了这类书，依据这类书指导作文，写作教学就好办了。实际上写

作基于阅读，老师教得好，学生读得好，才写得好。⁸⁴

Moreover, in order for writing skills to improve, reading should be careful and close; skimming is not acceptable:

Reading must be conscientious. The first goal is to be conscientious; after that comes the speed. This is a substantial basic training that needs to be done in the reading classes.

If you don't have good reading habits, it will for sure impact your own expression, that is to say, your writing skills will be hard to improve.

阅读必须认真，先求认真，次求迅速，这是极重要的基本训练，要在阅读课中训练好。

阅读习惯不良，一定会影响到表达，就是说，写作能力不容易提高。⁸⁵

That extensive reading is a necessary condition for good writing was a belief held by Classical writers. For example, Su Shi 苏轼 (1037-1101) recorded, in *Collected Memories of the Eastern Slope*, an anecdote about his mentor Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修 (1007-1072):

A few years ago, Sun Shenlao got to know Ouyang Xiu and found the opportunity to ask him about writing. Ouyang Xiu answered: "There is no other technique, only to read often and write a lot, and then your writing will automatically become good. ..."

顷岁孙莘老识欧阳文忠公，尝乘间以文字问之。云：“无它术，唯勤读书而多为之，自工。……”⁸⁶

To be sure, the kind of writing concerning classical authors such as Ouyang Xiu and Su Shi is beyond the level of the modern middle school. But what is interesting in the Ouyang Xiu

⁸⁴ Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, "Yuedu shi xiezuo de jichu 阅读是写作的基础 [Reading is the foundation of writing]," in *Ye Shengtao jiaoyu wenji* 叶圣陶教育文集 [The collected writings of Ye Shengtao on education], vol. 3 (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1994), 279.

⁸⁵ Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, 281.

⁸⁶ Su Shi 苏轼, *Dong po zhi lin* 东坡志林, ed. Wang Songling 王松龄 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局, 1981), 20.

anecdote is the word “automatically”: the assumption that writing has no learnable strategies, that it naturally improves as long as you read and write a lot. That said, the risk of this pedagogy is that, if followed in a rigid way, it overemphasizes a writer’s relation to texts that have been produced previously and neglects the relationship between what one writes and what one is experiencing in their actual environment. In other words, if you have to read good books in order to write good books, and after you write a good book your book will be read by others who wish to write their own good books, then literature becomes a self-contained loop, a world of its own, independent of other aspects of reality being lived.

Another striking aspect of the traditional pedagogy is the idea of “a lot,” that is, repetition. Besides Ouyang Xiu’s example above, one can certainly also be reminded of the Qing-dynasty scholar’s proposal of reading 110 times. Zhang Zhongxing, who worked at the People’s Education Press in the 1950s under the supervision of Ye Shengtao and Lü Shuxiang, reiterated the same principle in an autobiography he wrote in the early 2000s:

I’m reiterating old wisdom: Learning a language, whether it is speaking or writing, in order to have good results, there is only one secret: experience. Experience comes from repetition. ... You need to be like a martial artist who never loosens their fist, or a singer who never stops humming a tune. Writers also need to use the methodology of repetition. Repetition will directly cultivate a sense of experience, which will then indirectly lead to competency. The experience of reading is fundamentally tied to the experience of writing. Through reading you absorb two things: one is the content, that is, the emotions and ideas of the author; the other is the expression, that is, the means through which the content is communicated to the readers (with what words, sentence patterns, and structures). After you absorb these, mixing them, comparing them, and choosing them in your own head, you will feel like having things to write when you pick up your pen, and you will know how to write it.

仍是旧调重弹，这是学语言，不管用口还是用笔，想有成，秘诀只是一个字，曰“熟”。熟来于多次“重复”。.....学写也是这样，要像学武术的拳不离手，学歌唱的曲不离口，也要用多重复的办法直接培养熟，间接培养会。多读和多写有血肉联系，读，所吸收是两种，一属于内容，是作者的情意，二属于表达，是如何（用什么词语、句式以及什么条理）传给读者的；只有吸收了这些，并经过自己头脑里的掺合、比较、选择，拿起笔，才有的可写，

以及知道如何写。⁸⁷

Once an essay is written, it needs to go through line-editing. This is the second approach to composition, which was deeply ingrained in the training of the traditional scholar historically. Line-editing can be done in two ways. The first way is by vocalizing. This is the method that Ye Shengtao and his team adopted in the revision of literary works for the *Yuwen* textbook. the Editor-in-Chief recommended students to try the same with their own work:

When you edit a draft, you cannot just look at it, you have to read it aloud. In other words, to say the whole text verbally. It's also possible to read it aloud without raising your voice, to say the words quietly. As you keep reading it aloud, the flaws will naturally be discovered. For example, when a sentence doesn't connect well to the previous sentence, when a paragraph doesn't connect to the previous paragraph, when a word isn't compatible with another word, or when a sentence part is missing or when it has an excessive part... All these problems can be discovered.

I asked many people whether they have the habit of reading their drafts aloud and doing revisions based on the results of reading aloud. Some do it, others don't. I then advised those who don't start doing it. They tried it, and some of them came back to me and said it was effective. It doesn't matter whether they raise their voice or not; when they get stuck reading it aloud, they know that's the point to make changes. After reading it aloud a few more times, they understand how exactly they should change it.

修改稿子不要光是“看”，要“念”。就是把全篇稿子放到口头说说看。也可以不出声念，只在心中默默地说。一路念下去，疏忽的地方自然会发现。下一句跟上一句不接气啊，后一段跟前一段连得不紧密，词根词的配合照应不对头啊，句子的成分多一点儿或者少一点儿啊，诸如此类的毛病都可以发现。……

曾经问过好些人，有没有把稿子念几遍的习惯，有没有依据念的结果修改稿子的习惯。有人说有，有人说没有。我就劝没有这种习惯的人不妨试试看。他们试了，其中有些人后来对我说，这个方法有效验，不管出声不出声，念下去觉得不顺畅，顿住了，那就是需要修改的地方，再念几遍，修改的办法

⁸⁷ Zhang Zhongxing 张中行, *Liu nian sui ying* 流年碎影 [Fragmentary shadows of the fleeting years] (Beijing: Zuo jia chubanshe 作家出版社, 2006), 273–74.

也就来了。⁸⁸

Vocalization was a main test for style for writers of New Literature. Besides Ye Shengtao, Lu Xun also mentioned it in an article titled “How I Came to Write Fiction” (1933):

After finishing a story, I would always read it through twice. When I felt something didn't sound right, I would add or delete a few words, so that it would read more smoothly [for the mouth].⁸⁹

我做完之后，总要看两遍，自己觉得拗口的，就增删几个字，一定要它读得顺口……⁹⁰

Whether through vocalization or silent visual editing, a main goal of editing is to achieve stylistic economy. An editor, therefore, must know the art of excision. This compares to the case of English modernism, which Sullivan studies in her chapter on “Excision and Textual Waste”;⁹¹ given the Chinese writing script, excision is primarily interpreted in terms of the deletion of redundant Chinese characters. Ye Shengtao put it in the following way when he wrote a study guide for middle school students:

This essay is of a clean shape, without any redundant characters. Even for each individual *de* and *le*, they only appear when absolutely needed.

这篇文章通体干净，没有多余的话，没有多余的字眼。即使一个“的”字一个“了”字也是必须用才用。⁹²

⁸⁸ Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, “He jiaoshi tan xiezuo 和教师谈写作 [Discussing with teachers on writing],” in *Ye Shengtao jiaoyu wenji* 叶圣陶教育文集 [The collected writings of Ye Shengtao on education], vol. 3 (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1994), 439.

⁸⁹ Lu Xun 鲁迅, “How I Came to Write Fiction,” in *Jottings under Lamplight*, ed. Eileen J. Cheng and Kirk A. Denton, trans. Jon Eugene von Kowallis (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017), 55.

⁹⁰ Lu Xun 鲁迅, “Wo zenme zuo qi xiaoshuo lai 我怎么做起小说来 [How I Came to Write Fiction],” in *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 [The complete works of Lu Xun], vol. 3 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 2005), 525–30.

⁹¹ Sullivan, *The Work of Revision*.

⁹² Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, *Wenzhang li hua* 文章例话 [Commentaries on writing with examples], 9.

Here, Ye Shengtao was commenting on an essay by Zhu Ziqing titled “My Father’s Back” (Beiying 背影), which has been used in textbooks since the 1930s till this day. “Without any redundant characters” is, arguably, the highest praise conceivable in Chinese literary criticism.

In order to achieve this “clean shape,” a writer need to be “ruthless.” In 1932, when *The Dipper* magazine invited Lu Xun to offer his opinion on writing, he gave the following advice:

4. Read your story through at least twice after finishing it, and ruthlessly cut all words, phrases and sections that are not essential.⁹³

四，写完后至少看两遍，竭力将可有可无的字，句，段删去，毫不可惜。⁹⁴

But this ruthless desire for stylistic economy should not be understood as a new, modernist value borrowed from the west. It was a long-standing principle of writing pursued by classical literati, which Lu Xun himself derided when he attacked the inefficiency of the traditional writing pedagogy. In a series of correspondences with Qu Qiubai on translation style, in 1931, Lu Xun mockingly stated that the key to good writing in Classical Chinese is the deletion of characters:

The secret of essay composition is to avoid common characters and to delete grammatical particles. If you do so, you make a good essay...

作文的秘诀，是在避去熟字，删掉虚字，就是好文章.....⁹⁵

For the classical writer getting trained under a tutor, they know that their composition is improving when they see the tutor’s red strikethrough marks become more and more sparse:

The writing teacher didn’t care to tell us about *Mister Ma’s Grammar Guide*, *Methods of Composition*, and things like that. From day to night we just read, wrote, read, wrote. You didn’t write well? Read more and write more. And he absolutely refused to tell us what was wrong with an essay, or what should be

⁹³ Lu Xun 鲁迅, “A Reply to the Magazine *The Dipper*,” 162.

⁹⁴ Lu Xun 鲁迅, “Da beidou zazhishe wen 答北斗杂志社问 [A Reply to the Magazine *The Dipper*],” 373.

⁹⁵ Lu Xun 鲁迅, “Guanyu fanyi de tongxin 关于翻译的通信 [An Exchange on Translation],” in *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 [The complete works of Lu Xun], vol. 4 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 2005), 391. For an English translation of this text, see Lu Xun 鲁迅 and Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白, “An Exchange on Translation,” in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti, trans. Chloe Estep, 4th ed. (Routledge, 2021), 106–21.

done when you write. It was total midnight, a dark alley, you are on your own. Whether you manage to get out of the alley is up to heaven's will. But, all of a sudden, not knowing why - I mean really all of a sudden, really not knowing why - the essays we wrote on the exam sheets had fewer and fewer red marks in them. More and more words were left untouched. More and more places got circled [which suggests praise]. And the student was enraptured, so he kept doing it - he was really clueless, really just trying to keep doing the same. As years went by, the teacher had no edit to make to your essay. At most, he would write a comment at the end, something like, "good form and good technique, no excess and no digression." When you got to this point, as it was said, your writing is "smooth."

从前教我们作文的先生，并不传授什么《马氏文通》，《文章作法》之流，一天到晚，只是读，做，读，做；做得不好，又读，又做。他却决不说坏处在那里，作文要怎样。一条暗胡同，一任你自己去摸索，走得通与否，大家听天由命。但偶然之间，也会不知怎么一来——真是“偶然之间”而且“不知怎么一来”，——卷子上的文章，居然被涂改的少下去，留下的，而且有密圈的处所多起来了。于是学生满心欢喜，就照这样——真是自己也莫名其妙，不过是“照这样”——做下去，年深月久之后，先生就不再删改你的文章了，只在篇末批些“有书有笔，不蔓不枝”之类，到这时候，即可以算作“通”。⁹⁶

This article above is sarcastically titled “The Secrets to Writing Classical Prose and Being a Good Person.” Nonetheless, offering his tips on writing to the readers of the *The Dipper* magazine in 1932, Lu Xun contradicted himself and recommended ruthless excision, slipping into the role of the traditional tutor he so vehemently hated. This makes another case of the contradictory commitments of the New Literature writers.

But when a teacher corrects a student's essay assignment, economy for economy's sake simply makes bad pedagogy. Even though Ye Shengtao and Lu Xun's criticism of the traditional pedagogy should not be taken as an adequate generalization of all teaching practices in premodern China, there was surely a consensus among turn-of-the-century intellectuals that the traditional pedagogy of writing—comprising of reading often, writing a lot, and deleting

⁹⁶ Lu Xun 鲁迅, “‘Zuo guwen’ yu ‘zuo haoren’ de mijue ‘做古文’与‘做好人’的秘诀 [The secrets to writing classical prose and being a good person],” in *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 [The complete works of Lu Xun], vol. 4 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 2005), 276.

unnecessary characters—needed a reform. This issue attracted even Liang Qichao, late-Qing reformer and a minister in the early Republican government, who delivered a public lecture on the topic in 1923. It was transcribed and published as a pamphlet, *Pedagogy of Writing for the Middle School and Beyond*. In his lecture, Liang Qichao argued against a pedagogy based on local editing, emphasizing that writing is meant communicate thoughts:

In the past, when teachers edited the students' essays, they only corrected the words and sentences that are not well written. This is a disregard of the general laws and a preoccupation with technical refinement. All this time we have been teaching writing with the traditional Chinese method, and there was little effect. I believe, in order to write, one must first organize one's thoughts, and then write down the thoughts that have already been organized. This is the main idea of my whole article.

从前先生改文只顾改词句不好的地方，这是去规矩而言巧，素以中国旧法教文，没有什么效果。我以为作文必须先将自己的思想整理好，然后将已整理的思想写出来，这是我全篇的大意。⁹⁷

Ye Shengtao argued similarly, when he recommended writers to vocalize their drafts:

If the reading can be completed coherently, it must be that the language is smooth and appropriate; if the language is smooth and appropriate, the meaning must also be smooth and appropriate. Vice versa, if the reading cannot be done coherently, it must be that the language has a blockage; if the language has a blockage, thinking must also have a blockage.

念下去顺畅，就因为语言流畅妥贴，而语言流畅妥贴，也就是意思的流畅妥贴。反过去，念下去不顺畅，必然是语言有这样那样的疙瘩，而语言的任何疙瘩，也就是思想上的疙瘩。⁹⁸

Here, at long last, we see a dialectical treatment of the relationship between form and content in writing pedagogy. One does not need to prioritize the correctness of ideas to such a degree that linguistic prescription is dispensable; one also does not need to be so preoccupied with issues at

⁹⁷ Liang Qichao 梁启超, Wei Shisheng 卫士生, and Shu Shizheng 束世徵, *Zhongxue yishang zuowen jiaoxuefa* 中学以上作文教学法 [Pedagogy of writing for the middle school and beyond] (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局, 1929), 3.

⁹⁸ Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, "He jiaoshi tan xiezuo 和教师谈写作 [Discussing with teachers on writing]," 440.

the sentence level that writing loses its purpose as the communication of thoughts. Ye Shengtao wrote: “The revision of writing... is in fact the revision of thoughts. The goal is to think more correctly, to think more perfectly.”⁹⁹

The claim of this chapter so far has been that the pedagogy of literacy in modern Chinese is built upon the canonical works of New Literature and shaped by the stylistic preferences of the New Literature writers. This relation can be seen in both the pedagogy of reading and the pedagogy of composition. Concerning reading, firstly, in the early Republican period, New Literature provided educators with the first group of vernacular texts to be used in the classroom for the instruction of literacy; further, in the 1950s in the PRC, through extensive textual revision, Ye Shengtao and his colleagues’ stylistic preferences were edited into the literary works of the Republican period. At the same time, in the teaching of composition, those preferences are directly executed as the teacher manually corrects student assignments line-by-line. This claim should be carefully qualified, however, because the study of literacy involves the training of many other skills that do not have to do with writing style, such as pronunciation. Moreover, in the editing stage, stylistic principles such as economy are intertwined with grammatical rules determined by linguists such as Lü Shuxiang, so it is difficult to isolate a realm of style where the aesthetic judgment prevails over other types of standards. Besides, New Literature certainly is not the only thing that the mass literacy program teaches. In the textbooks of the 1950s, translated foreign literature, the speeches of political figures, and the writings by newly literate “Stakhanovites” also appeared. Nonetheless, the styles of canonical works of New Literature and the stylistic preferences of New Literature writers form part of the basis of the literacy

⁹⁹ Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶, “Tan wenzhang de xiugai 谈文章的修改 [On the revision of writing],” in *Ye Shengtao jiaoyu wenji* 叶圣陶教育文集 [The collected writings of Ye Shengtao on education], vol. 3 (Beijing: Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe 人民教育出版社, 1994), 399.

curriculum of modern China, whether in or outside the PRC. Ultimately, since the legitimate form of a national language is what is taught in the mass literacy education, the legitimate form of the modern Chinese language is inseparable from the language of New Literature.

The Textbook Canon

The relationship between literacy education and canon formation I have outlined so far compares to the case of English, examined in detail in John Guillory's *Cultural Capital*. Guillory's inspiring account elucidates two interrelated processes in cultural production. The first is that, historically, people of different social groups did not have the same degree of access to literacy, and for that reason, not because of the critics' intentional exclusion of writers of specific social groups, the canon of western literature comprises mostly works by "dead white men." The second process is how that canon is a tool for the distribution of linguistic capital to the public through the schooling system, which is to say, an ever-enlarging number of citizens learn to read and write in the language of the canon, thereby acquiring the ability to participate in certain realms of public life. In the case of England, before the eighteenth century, that linguistic capital had been Greek and Latin, but it expanded and shifted to Standard English, which means that the compulsory readings of the students also changed from Homer's Greek to Shakespeare's English. Therefore, if the current canon of western literature is being modified or expanded, it will not directly result in a more equal relationship between social groups. What it entails is rather that a kind of social change has taken place which generates a demand for new types of cultural capital, a demand that the preexisting canon cannot satisfy.

The present chapter is not concerned with the first process, but provides ample evidence for the second. New Literature, as the modern Chinese literary canon, has been a tool for the

distribution of linguistic capital since the 1920s-30s, in the same way that texts such as *The Analects* used to distribute linguistic capital in imperial times. Whether one can read New Literature or writings similar to New Literature is the test for one's possession of the linguistic capital disposable in "modern" China. Moreover, if we were to follow Guillory's line of thought more thoroughly, we could even consider the hypothesis that the canonicity of New Literature actually does not require the critical authority's endorsement of the ideologies documented in the works of Lu Xun, Zhu Ziqing, or Hu Shi. This hypothesis cannot be verified within the scope of this dissertation, but what would be strong evidence for it is the fact that New Literature writers never had one unified ideology, so the sense of a conceptual center that is the condition of possibility for an act of endorsement is imaginary to begin with. If this hypothesis holds, what it entails is that the canonicity of New Literature is less grounded in what *ideas* this literature purports to sell, but more in its *utility* in the project of literacy, which was so dear to twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals despite their ideological differences.

That said, an important caveat of the Chinese case comes from the prominent role of the editor. If the canon is a tool that distributes linguistic capital, then the curious part of the Chinese case is that the language of the canon is not entirely the language of the original author but may have been "refined," in Ye Shengtao's words, by the editor-pedagogue. Furthermore, since editing is anonymous teamwork, the language of the canon, in the end, cannot be attributed to any specific author—that is, only in terms of its role in the distribution of linguistic capital, not in terms of its subject matter or political message. Does this mean, then, that any text of any degree of perceived value can potentially be used as a tool in literacy education? In other words, if we follow the claim that canonicity stems from the utility in education, then what the Chinese

case shows is that this canonicity is not something that is inherent in the literary work but can be selectively assigned by the editor-pedagogue.

Irrespective of the Chinese case, at a more general level, on the relationship between literacy education and the literary canon, the role of style is central to this relationship and merits a more concrete analysis and understanding. In fact, the account of this relationship in *Cultural Capital* often relies on the concept of style,¹⁰⁰ but there, style is still treated as the naturalized, unexplained category. Basing on the case studies in this chapter, I propose a few preliminary observations, and invite further investigations and comparative studies: The style of writing is one of the intermediary points that connect the literary canon to literacy education. Literacy education upholds and distributes a system of values about what good writing is, including certain stylistic preferences which stem from existing judgements on the style of canonical literary works. In this context, “style” should be understood as stylistic norms. And by “norms” here I mean standards and criteria; I do not mean something that is average or the most numerous by quantity. “Norms” refer to the critical authority’s preferences, for which the works of canonical authors can usually serve as examples. Although the number of canonical authors is few and the great majority of the literate masses do not write in styles similar to those of the canonical authors, everybody’s writing is held up against a system of criteria modeled on canonical authors. But even though canonical authors define stylistic norms, once their styles are elevated to the level of “norms,” they become generalized standards and cannot be interpreted as merely the representation of the unique individual traits of specific authors. For example, concerning the high classical style of Han-dynasty historical writing, it is missing the point if we were just to study the unique individual traits in Sima Qian or Liu Xiang’s works; the point to be

¹⁰⁰ Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 78–79, 100, 120.

taken is rather that the characteristics of Sima Qian or Liu Xiang's writings have become the norms of classical Chinese prose, a "model of writing" that later writers always find themselves measured against. These norms are not so much argued for explicitly in literary criticism, although such arguments can be found. They are, instead, and at a much bigger scale, maintained in the tacit practice that is the pedagogical approach, the line-editing of a text by a critical authority.

Lastly, another point that merits further investigation, although it is also beyond the scope of this chapter, is the reverse impact of writing on the spoken language. This is salient in both the Chinese and the English cases: At the very stage of the de-classicization of the literary language, the new vernacular literary language, once stabilized, replaces the classical language as "polite speech" and comes to be used orally.¹⁰¹ Literacy education plays a role here, because the schooling system never only teaches reading and writing. Non-native speakers learn to speak the national language in schools; even native speakers need to be trained in the correct dialect or sociolect. Consequently, it seems to me now, it is not only the norms of writing style that are modeled on the literary canon. The norms of speech, especially in the high register, are also modeled on that. This seems an important sociolinguistic mechanism to understand, but we still lack the theoretical vocabulary to describe and analyze it.

In conclusion, I propose the concept of the "textbook canon" as a heuristic nodal point that draws together the various, sprawling lines of relations I have described so far in the chapter. It can be a departure point for us to begin to investigate the role of literacy education in the formation of the literary canon. The textbook canon refers to the texts typically used in the curriculum of literacy education, which may or may not be for the masses, run by the state, or

¹⁰¹ Guillory, 78–79, 124–33.

compulsory. As the three middle chapters in *Cultural Capital* outlines, there are different canons for different level of education; the graduate school canon is different from the undergraduate and from the secondary education. “The textbook canon” must be the canon of the lowest possible level, the first group of literary works that one is exposed to as they learn to read. The features of the textbook canon are, first, a broad readership, because everyone who has some degree of reading proficiency in that language is supposed to have read the textbook. Second, its readers are particularly deeply attached to it, regardless of their subjective willingness or interest, because, due to the pedagogical setting, the student typically must go over the textbook again and again, or read it aloud, or even to learn it by heart. But the limitation of this definition is that literacy education does not always use a pedagogy that is based on the intensive reading of texts. Therefore, the “textbook canon” is more relevant to some contexts than others. It is relevant to the study of classical languages and literatures globally; it is also relevant to modern and contemporary East Asia.

New Literature was the textbook canon for twentieth-century China. Whereas the 1935 publication of *The Compendium of Chinese New Literature* has been seen as an indispensable early step in the canonization of New Literature, as early as the 1920s-30s, the writings of Lu Xun, Zhu Ziqing, Zhou Zuoren, Ye Shengtao, Hu Shi, and so on, were already being taught in schools. The textbook canon preceded the formation of the canon at other levels. That said, the specific list of authors of the textbook canon is not definite and still depends on location, the most important example of which is the ubiquity of Lu Xun in the PRC and the censoring of the author in Martial Law Taiwan. That said, certain other authors, for example Zhu Ziqing who died shortly before the end of the civil war in 1948, were shared by the two syllabi even at the height

of the Cold War. Today, the presence of New Literature is reduced in many parts of the Sinophone world, but it has not disappeared.

The textbook canon is the hardest to challenge, because the discontinuation of this canon is only possible after its withdrawal from the mass literacy program. At the current stage, for the PRC at least, the language is not changing, and the pedagogy of the language has stabilized. New Literature will continue to be a passage to literacy, the canon with the greatest number of readers.

CHAPTER 3: THE IMPRESSIONISTIC APPROACH

This chapter shows that a common way to describe style is by reproducing the subjective, emotional impression of reading that style. This impression is often expressed through adjectives that identify a certain feeling (“terse, forceful, and condensed”; “sloppy, loose, vulgarly sentimental”¹); these adjectives have been studied by philosophers as “aesthetic categories.” What I have said so far may sound abstract, but I hope that the case studies in the rest of the chapter will demonstrate the ubiquity of this approach; this approach is also historical, for it lies at the foundation of classical literary theory in antiquity, both Chinese and western. Following prior scholarship on the topic, I call this approach “impressionistic criticism” (*yinxiang piping* 印象批评). The goals of this chapter are to explain the origin of this approach; to describe how it works in practice; and to illustrate how it affected a few important debates in post-war Chinese literary criticism, which in turn determined the shape of our scholarly field.

Style is a concept that is difficult to pin down, but this difficulty is particularly evident when it is described with an adjective. For example, if I say that “his style is cold,” am I referring to a characteristic of the text, or my personal reaction? In the former case, what is the characteristic that generates a cold style? Can this characteristic be isolated and described? In the latter case, does “coldness” denote a universal, necessary reaction to the given text? What if another reader, having read the same text, decides that they do not feel cold? Or, what if the other reader does feel something similar, but, for whatever reason, would not like to use the word “cold” to describe their feeling? A better understanding of the impressionistic approach is hence

¹ Hsia, *The Gate of Darkness: Studies on the Leftist Literary Movement*, 100.

necessary not just for Chinese literary studies but for a broader context. The approach is widespread across languages and cultures, but it is often used unconsciously.²

For literary scholars, the challenge especially has to do with how the impressionistic approach operates at a level of subjective reaction. This distinguishes the impressionistic approach from the pedagogical and linguistic approaches I discuss in the other chapters of this dissertation, which work with standardized, even overly rigid, criteria. In the cases I study in this chapter, sometimes, a literary critic's subjective reaction to a given text helped him³ produce a convincing opinion about the text and communicate the opinion efficiently; other times, however, the adjectives of feelings were applied at a point where a description of the textual characteristics and an exposition of their functions were needed, but not given. Instead, with the adjectives, whose definitions are often fluid, the critic glossed over the conceptual difficulties that gave rise to the need of an analysis. In effect, he moved away without giving evidence for his claim.

That said, the unique function of the impressionistic approach is the mediation of the social relations between the readers. The adjectives of styles are based on the feelings of one reader and can evoke the feelings of other readers. This affective exchange creates a community of readers, who label the same author or text with the same adjective as a matter of convention. Even though the description of textual characteristics and the exposition of their functions are absent, whenever two readers use the same adjective to describe their reactions to the style of one text, they both feel that they have been understood.

² Scholarship on aesthetic judgements and aesthetic categories are abundant and have greatly informed this study, especially Ngai, *Our Aesthetic Categories*; Dango, "Camp's Distribution." However, little has been written in the study of style or linguistic stylistics that directly treat the relationship between style and aesthetic categories.

³ I use the masculine pronoun because the critics I study in this chapter are all men.

The protagonists of this chapter are four scholars of Chinese literature who, between the 1950s and 70s, participated in some interpretive communities and refused to participate in others. They are Jaroslav Průšek, the brothers T. A. and C. T. Hsia, and Yan Yuanshu. Notably, two of them are known to be the disciples of New Criticism. In the late 40s, just before the communist takeover of mainland China, C. T. Hsia went to study English in the United States with a recommendation from William Empson. He first studied at Kenyon College, under John Crowe Ransom, and eventually at the English department of Yale, whose faculty of the time listed Cleanth Brooks, W. K. Wimsatt, René Wellek, and R. P. Warren.⁴ Two decades later, in 1967, Yan Yuanshu defended his doctoral dissertation on Katherine Mansfield at the University of Wisconsin, before returning to Taiwan and chairing the Foreign Languages and Literatures department of National Taiwan University. With a series of articles he published in Chinese, Yan Yuanshu was credited as one of the scholars who introduced New Criticism to Chinese-language academia.⁵ However, at some point in their career, these men, who were trained in English

⁴ Biographical information on the Hsia brothers is collected from their recently published letters and the prefaces to their books. See the five volumes of their letters: Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, *Xia Zhiqing Xia Ji'an shuxin ji* 夏志清夏济安书信集 [Collected letters between C. T. Hsia and T. A. Hsia], 2015. Also see C. T. Hsia, “Quan xue pian--zhuan fu Yan Yuanshu jiaoshou 劝学篇——专覆颜元叔教授 [An exhortation to learning: a special reply to Professor Yan Yuanshu],” *Wenyi* 文艺, no. 84 (June 1976): 128–47.

⁵ Yan Yuanshu 颜元叔, “Xinping xuepai de wenzue lilun yu shoufa (1) 新批评学派的文学理论与手法 (一) [The literary theory and method of the school of New Criticism (1)],” *You Shi Wenyi* 幼狮文艺 30, no. 181 (January 1969): 9–14; Yan Yuanshu 颜元叔, “Xinping xuepai de wenzue lilun yu shoufa (2) 新批评学派的文学理论与手法 (二) [The literary theory and method of the school of New Criticism (2)],” *You Shi Wenyi* 幼狮文艺 30, no. 182 (February 1969): 28–43; Yan Yuanshu 颜元叔, “Xinping xuepai de wenzue lilun yu shoufa (3) 新批评学派的文学理论与手法 (三) [The literary theory and method of the school of New Criticism (3)],” *You Shi Wenyi* 幼狮文艺 30, no. 183 (March 1969): 17–35.

Despite his influence in Taiwan in the 1960s and 70s, little of Yan Yuanshu’s writing has appeared in English. Some available sources include Yan Yuanshu 颜元叔, “Looking Forward to a New Kind of Literature,” in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Literary Taiwan*, ed. Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, Michelle Yeh, and Ming-ju Fan, trans. Edward Gunn (Columbia University Press, 2014), 279–80; Yan Yuanshu 颜元叔, “Take Pains to Read, Take Care to Evaluate *Family Catastrophe*,” in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Literary Taiwan*, ed. Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, Michelle Yeh, and Ming-ju Fan, trans. Edward Gunn (Columbia University Press, 2014), 275–78; Yuan-shu Yen, “Katherine Mansfield’s Use of Point of View” (Ph.D., Wisconsin, USA, The University of Wisconsin, Madison),

studies, turned to studying Chinese literature. The Hsia brothers, whose professional transition was a direct result of Cold War America's governmental funding allocation, are the foundational figures of modern Chinese literary studies in the United States. In this chapter I revisit their scholarship, mostly in the English language but also in Chinese, first to establish that their work employs the impressionistic approach; I then use their writings to show how the impressionistic criticism of literary style plays out in practice.

In T. A. Hsia's articles on Lu Xun and C. T.'s influential *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, which were published in the 1960s in English, canonical works of modern Chinese fiction were introduced to the American public for the first time. The brothers were keenly interested in style and based their appraisal of an author's work on the judgment of that author's style. To do so, they wrote long passages that describe and reproduce their reaction to the style of the text. These passages are densely dotted with adjectives. For instance, T. A. Hsia wrote, on Lu Xun: "terse, forceful, and condensed in thought but capable of flights of fancy, and stirring in a dry and sardonic way."⁶ These adjectives are the core of the impressionistic sketch of the critic, for it is the choice of the aesthetic category that enables the critic to tell his audience what it feels like to read that text. In the 1960s, many of the Hsia brothers' readers knew little about China and certainly did not read Chinese. Impressionistic criticism is successful when the readers, even if they have not read the original literary text, comprehend a given aesthetic category, feel it, own it, and accept as truth the connection between the feeling and the primary text.

Following this approach to style, in the present chapter, style is not defined formalistically. It is not located in the formal or linguistic characteristics of the text, but rather in

accessed July 14, 2023,
<https://www.proquest.com/pqdtglobal/docview/302263180/citation/7CC14C6625D843BCPQ/1>.

⁶ Hsia, *The Gate of Darkness: Studies on the Leftist Literary Movement*, 100.

the reader's reaction to its general mood and tone, expressed as an aesthetic judgment. That said, because textual features are often linked to the author's personal traits, when style is described as a cluster of aesthetic categories, the personality of the author, the writing style of the author, and the style of a particular text are treated as a whole. A comment on Lu Xun can quickly shift from an assessment of his personality traits ("bitterness, relentlessness, demoniac delight in picking a fight"⁷) to that of his writing style ("cold, cutting, brilliant essays"⁸).

C. T. Hsia's *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* has drawn several waves of criticism since its publication, many of which have to do with its methodology. The best known of the criticism was published in a 1962 issue of *T'oung Pao*, Europe's leading sinology journal, by Czech scholar Jaroslav Průšek, a man from the other side of the iron curtain. As a result of the debate, a conceptual dichotomy was established between a "scientific" method of literary studies, supported by the political left, and a "subjective" one, supported by C. T. Hsia. C. T. Hsia's position was further linked to American New Criticism and its conservative politics. For instance, in 1963, when C. T. Hsia wrote a response to Průšek's negative review, he invoked the New Critics: "For Průšek's kind of critical approach, two distinguished literary theorists, W. K. Wimsatt, Jr. and Monroe Beardsley, have a phrase, 'the Intentional Fallacy,' which has met with almost universal acceptance in American and British academic circles."⁹ In the introduction to the latest version of C. T. Hsia's book, published in 1999, David Der-wei Wang also writes: "It

⁷ Hsia, 102.

⁸ Hsia, 103.

⁹ C. T. Hsia, "On the 'Scientific' Study of Modern Chinese Literature: A Reply to Professor Průšek," *T'oung Pao* 50, no. 4/5 (1963): 436–37.

has become a commonplace to discuss Hsia's book as one inspired by the theories of F. R. Leavis and New Criticism."¹⁰

The Hsia/Průšek debate generated questions that has troubled and divided modern Chinese literary studies since the 1960s: What, after all, is C. T. Hsia's method in *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*? Is it subjective? What is his relation to "the theories of F. R. Leavis and New Criticism," and how does this relation account for, or justify, the "subjectivity" of his method? The study of style and its judgment provide me with a new angle to understand these questions and propose new answers. In the second half of this chapter, with the help of sources not yet discussed in English-language scholarship, I revisit the Hsia/Průšek debate. I reject a common interpretation that sees the debate as primarily a product of the political schism of the Cold War. Instead, in line with the recent historiographical work by Leonard K. K. Chan, I treat the debate rather as a reflection of the contradictory goals of a "literary critic" versus a "literary historian."¹¹ In so doing, I also map the Hsia/Průšek debate onto current discussions in Anglophone literary studies on methodology, which similarly highlights a distinction between the practices of "literary criticism" and "literary studies."¹²

Then, by introducing the work of Yan Yuanshu and by comparing the Hsia/Průšek debate to C. T. Hsia's debate with Yan Yuanshu in 1976, I depart from Chan's recent historiography. My disagreement is two-fold: First, I question the linking of C. T. Hsia's method to American New Criticism, which has so far been accepted by both his supporters and critics.¹³ In 1976,

¹⁰ David Der-wei Wang, "Introduction," in *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, by C. T. Hsia, 3rd ed. (Indiana University Press, 1999), xi.

¹¹ Chen Guoqiu 陈国球 (Kwok Kou Leonard Chan), "'Literary Science' and 'Literary Criticism.'"

¹² For example, North, *Literary Criticism: A Concise Political History*.

¹³ The example of a critic is Kang Liu, "Politics, Critical Paradigms: Reflections on Modern Chinese Literature Studies," *Modern China*, Symposium: Ideology and Theory in the Study of Modern Chinese Literature. Paradigmatic Issues in Chinese Studies, II, 19, no. 1 (January 1993): 13–40.

when Yan Yuanshu, himself a disciple of New Criticism, accused C. T. Hsia of promoting subjectivity and imprecision in literary scholarship, C. T. Hsia defended his method by pointing to the limitation of New Criticism: “Brooks’ pedagogy of poetry... is very useful for college students who just began learning poetry, but for graduate students it is overly rigid.”¹⁴ He differentiated his American literary training from New Criticism proper: “I myself was trained in New Criticism. Back in my days, Yale was the base camp of New Criticism. ... But Yale’s Department of English has a long and solid tradition; New Criticism is not what it labels itself with... Literary studies is more than ‘criticism’.”¹⁵ Second, through an analysis of the Hsia/Yan debate in 1976, which centered around the validity of Classical Chinese poetics in modern literary scholarship, I argue that C. T. Hsia’s literary criticism is more grounded in Classical Chinese poetics than in American literary studies. Ultimately, by disconnecting C. T. Hsia’s work from American New Criticism but replacing it in the genealogy of Chinese literary thought, I question the relevance of the Cold War ideological divide to the Hsia/Průšek debate which is considered the beginning of modern Chinese literary studies in the United States.

It is not, however, my intention to decouple C. T. Hsia’s method from American New Criticism entirely. Rather, I mean to show the complex investments of New Criticism in both the “subjective” and “scientific” positions of literary studies. In the teaching of English in the college classroom, New Critics designed a program that makes the reader “focus upon the poem rather than upon his own reactions”¹⁶ and prevents “the vaguest sort of impressionistic

¹⁴ Hsia, “Quan xue pian--zhuan fu Yan Yuanshu jiaoshou 劝学篇——专覆颜元叔教授 [An exhortation to learning: a special reply to Professor Yan Yuanshu],” 132.

¹⁵ Hsia, 129.

¹⁶ Cleanth Brooks, “The Formalist Critics,” *The Kenyon Review* 13, no. 1 (1951): 75.

comment.”¹⁷ Yet, the Hsia brothers, who produced influential work in the impressionistic mode, were nurtured by New Criticism and employed New Criticism as a theoretical tool to justify their impressionistic commentary. Further, C. T. Hsia’s approach to criticism was rejected by Yan Yuanshu, who was himself an avowed disciple of New Criticism. In short, as two critics who worked with radically different approaches and produced conflicting arguments—C. T. Hsia and Yan Yuanshu—both declared an indebtedness to New Criticism, the most urgent question to be answered is the one on the nature of New Criticism itself. Recent scholarship in English-language literary theory has proposed a revisionist history of New Criticism;¹⁸ in this chapter, I present a history of the Chinese reception of New Criticism in the mid-twentieth century, which can dialogue with and contribute to the ongoing research in American literary theory.

The beginning point to understand these issues is a place I have visited in the preceding chapters, which is where I will now turn to: Classical Chinese poetics.

Describing Style with Adjectives

The use of adjectives to describe style, which is the core of the impressionistic approach, has a long history in Classical Chinese literary criticism.

A vocabulary for the theorization and analysis of literary style first flourished in the Chinese language in the Six Dynasties (third to sixth century). Among the influential texts on style in this period is the “Body and Nature” chapter in Liu Xie’s *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (see Chapter 1). In this text, Liu Xie conceived of a notion of style using the

¹⁷ Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, eds., *Understanding Poetry: An Anthology for College Students* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1938), iv.

¹⁸ For example, North, *Literary Criticism: A Concise Political History*; Buurma and Heffernan, *The Teaching Archive: A New History for Literary Study*.

term “body.” He then offered a taxonomy of eight writing styles, naming each of them with a compound of two adjectives. In Stephen Owen’s English translation of the text, the eight styles are referred to as “eight normative forms”:

If we can generalize about the paths followed, we find that the number is complete in eight normative forms: **decorous and dignified; obscure and far-reaching; terse and essential; obvious and consecutive; lush and profuse; vigorous and lovely; novel and unusual; light and delicate.**

若总其归途。则数穷八体。一曰典雅。二曰远奥。三曰精约。四曰显附。五曰繁缛。六曰壮丽。七曰新奇。八曰轻靡。¹⁹

The phrase “eight normative forms” had appeared several centuries earlier in another important text, *Shuowen Jiezi*, a dictionary of Chinese characters (also see Chapter 1). In *Shuowen Jiezi*, the eight styles refer to the calligraphy style, that is, the shape of the writing script. When Liu Xie categorized eight styles of literature, it became less obvious what qualities or aspects of literature generate the differences that form the basis of this classification. Liu Xie did define the eight pairs of adjectives, but in the definitions, he relied even more on adjectives:

The decorous and dignified form is one that takes its mold from the Classics and Pronouncements and rides in company with the Confucian school. The obscure and far-reaching form is one whose bright colors are covered over, whose writing is decorous, and one that devotes itself to the mysterious doctrines. The terse and essential form is one that examines every word and reflects on each line, making discriminations by the finest measures. The obvious and consecutive form is one in which the language is direct and where the truths are spread out before us, satisfying the mind by adherence to natural principle. The lush and profuse form is one with broad implications in its variegated colors, whose branches and tributaries sparkle and gleam. The vigorous and lovely form is one whose lofty discourses and grand judgments have superlative flash and rare colors. The novel and unusual form is one that rejects the old and rushes instead after what is modern; off-balance, it shows delight in the bizarre. The light and delicate form is one whose insubstantial ornament is not securely planted, whose airy vagueness is close to the common taste.

典雅者。熔式经诰。方轨儒门者也。远奥者。馥采曲文。经理玄宗者也。精约者。核字省句。剖析毫厘者也。显附者。辞直义畅。切理厌心者也。繁缛

¹⁹ Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, 214.

者。博喻酿采。炜烨枝派者也。壮丽者。高论宏裁。卓烁异采者也。新奇者。摛古竞今。危侧趣诡者也。轻靡者。浮文弱植。缥缈附俗者也。²⁰

Liu Xie's eight styles are only one of the many models of classification. Much later, in the ninth century, Sikong Tu 司空图 put forward an extensive list of 24 poetic styles, also in the form of adjectives:

Potent and undifferentiated; limpid and calm; delicate-fresh and rich-lush; firm and self-possessed; lofty and ancient; decorous and dignified; washed and refined; strong and sturdy; intricate beauty; the natural; reserve/accumulation within; swaggering abandon; essence and spirit; close-woven and dense; disengagement and rusticity; lucid and wondrous; twisting and turning; solid world; melancholy and depression; description; transcendence; drifting aloof; expansive contentment; flowing movement

雄浑、冲淡、纤秣、沉着、高古、典雅、洗炼、劲健、绮丽、自然、含蓄、豪放、精神、缜密、疏野、清奇、委曲、实境、悲慨、形容、超诣、飘逸、旷达、流动²¹

Besides these and other taxonomies of adjectives, it was also typical for critics to use individual adjectives of their choice, not belonging to a system of classification, to comment on the style of authors and texts. I take an example from Cao Pi's "A Discourse on Literature." At one point in the essay, Cao Pi commented on two poets of the late second to early third century:

Ying Yang is **coordinated** but not **strong**. Liu Zhen is **strong** but not **dense**.

应场**和**而不**壮**。刘桢**壮**而不**密**。²²

Western classical literary theory of the west saw a similar conceptual development. In Latin, Cicero's *Orator* and *De Oratore* are credited as the foundation of the study of style, or, in his vocabulary, the writing *stilus*. In Cicero, too, style functions as a classification of different

²⁰ Owen, 214.

²¹ Owen, 299–357. On page 299, see a brief discussion of Chinese aesthetic categories and the impressionistic mode of poetic criticism.

²² Owen, 62. The English translation is my own.

modes of writing; that classification relies on adjectives. For example, the basic framework of style in the Roman rhetorical tradition is the hierarchical “level of styles” from high (or grand) to middle and low. Additionally, an assortment of adjectives is applied, in the works of Cicero and Quintilian, to represent stylistic variations. Art historian Willibald Sauerländer includes a few examples in his survey of the history of the concept of style: “the *stilus artifex, tardus, rudis et confusus*, to name only a few of them.”²³

Sauerländer reminds us that stylistic categories, such as *artifex, tardus*, and so on, are “more or less reprehensible.” Here we have an important point that applies equally well to Classical Chinese poetics: The adjectives, as descriptions of style, are not value neutral. Some adjectives are by definition negative, others by definition positive. The choice of the adjective alone can reflect the critic’s value judgment of the text being discussed. In Liu Xie’s theory, his opinion grows negative as he counts the eight styles. The first is the most valuable, in line with the Confucian classics, whereas the eighth is a bad style that the critic opposes.

The adjectives lie at the core of the Classical Chinese literary theory of style. As discussed in Chapter 1, in the long history of Classical Chinese writings, there is a large quantity of work on the various concepts that relate to what we think of as style. But if we postpone the consideration of the differences between these concepts, and observe what the critics were doing in practice with them, it appears that a good part of their effort was to label texts and authors with adjectives. This effort is remarkable in several ways: First, in modern scholarship, stylistics is concerned with linguistics. Although literary scholars today have not reached a consensus on what specific aspect of the text generates stylistic differences, we know, at least, that some questions about style are solvable by analyzing a text’s grammar, syntax, diction, figures of

²³ Sauerländer, “From Stilus to Style: Reflections on the Fate of a Notion,” 254.

speech, and so on. In the classical literature on style, however, linguistic analysis is irrelevant, or, it is more accurate to say, linguistic tools have not yet been developed to serve this particular purpose. Second, the adjectives are not clearly defined. Some of them are metaphors of physical reality or the senses, such as “far-reaching” or “light,” but there is little explanation of what drives a text “far” or how to weigh its relative “lightness.” In Liu Xie’s example, an adjective may be defined by other adjectives; in Cao Pi’s example, the adjective comes with a poet’s name, which prompts his reader to understand the meaning of the adjective by trying to recall the experience of reading that poet’s works. In such a situation, the definition of the adjective is a tautology: the poet’s works and the style define each other. If a reader has not read this poet’s works, they may try to recall a different poet’s work that has been linked to the same adjective. And if they have not seen this adjective applied elsewhere either, then it is unclear how they can comprehend the critic’s judgment of style at all. But not understanding does not mean not agreeing; this reader may still decide to accept the linkage between the poet and the adjective as it is, in which way they will gradually become better versed in this stylistic system. Third, because the adjectives are not explicitly defined, the pairing of a given text/author with a given adjective may appear fairly arbitrary. Nonetheless, as long as every adjective carries an inherent value judgment, the pairing of an adjective with a text, however arbitrary, can fulfill the goal of appraising and ranking literary works. The problem is whether it can convince others. As the examples I collect in this chapter show, opinions built on the impressionistic approach are particularly prone to methodological criticism.

These internal contradictions and difficulties can be illustrated by a historical case in the criticism of Classical Chinese poetry, concerning the poetic genre of the *ci* 词. In the Ming dynasty, Zhang Yan 张綖 compiled an anthology of the *ci* which is also designed as a manual of

the *ci*'s metrical and musical system. In the preface to this book, Zhang Yan proposed that the *ci* consists of two main styles:

There are generally two normative forms of the *ci*: the one is **graceful**, the other is **bold**. The graceful ones want the emotion of their words to be implicit; the bold ones want the atmosphere to be expansive. This likely depends on the person who writes. For example, Qin Guan's works are mostly graceful; Su Shi's works are mostly bold. In general, the correct style of the *ci* is graceful.

词体大略有二：一体婉约，一体豪放。婉约者欲其辞情蕴藉，豪放者欲其气象恢弘。盖亦存乎其人，如秦少游之作多是婉约，苏子瞻之作多是豪放。大抵词体以婉约为正。²⁴

This model of stylistic classification is representative of how Classical Chinese critics engaged with style. It uses adjectives for categorization; it relies on more adjectives to define the initial categories of adjectives; it links adjectives to authors; and finally, a value judgment is made inherent to the classification. The critic asserts that “the graceful” is the “correct” or “standard” style of the genre, implying that the bold is a deviant or non-normative style. He also implies that he values Qin Guan more than Su Shi. This stylistic hierarchy remained influential throughout the Ming and Qing.²⁵

Notice how Zhang Yan judges with no sampling of primary texts and no analysis. It suffices to equate authors to certain categories and then declare some categories better than

²⁴ Zhang Yan 张綖, *Shi yu tu pu* 诗馀图谱, Xu Xiu Si Ku Quan Shu 续修四库全书 1735 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chuban she 上海古籍出版社, 2002). I only have access to a digital copy of this text at <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&res=4697>. This passage is on page 15 of the ctext version.

Also see Zhu Chongcai 朱崇才, “Lun Zhang Yan ‘wanyue-haofang’ er ti shuo de xingcheng ji lilun gongxian 论张綖‘婉约-豪放’二体说的形成及理论贡献 [On the formation and theoretical contribution of the two-body theory of ‘graceful vs. bold’ by Zhang Yan],” *Wenxue yichan* 文学遗产, no. 1 (2007): 72–79; Yue Shuzhen 岳淑珍, *Ming dai ci xue piping shi* 明代词学批评史 [The history of the criticism of the *ci* in the Ming dynasty] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe 社会科学文献出版社, 2014).

²⁵ Yue Shuzhen 岳淑珍, *Ming dai ci xue piping shi* 明代词学批评史 [The history of the criticism of the *ci* in the Ming dynasty], 161-171, 207-208, 224–33.

others. Even the definitions of the categories can be vague. In the more recent studies of the *ci*, critics no longer complied with the schema that Zhang Yan represented. Here, to cut a long history of poetic criticism short, I jump to 1957, when Mao Zedong, reading classical poetry for leisure one summer night, jotted down a message to his wife and daughter:

The *ci* has two strands: the **graceful** and the **bold**. Depending on the occasion, each can offer its own kind of pleasure, so both are worthy of reading. When you read a lot of graceful ones, you get tired, and you will need to switch to the bold; when you read a lot of the bold ones, you also get tired, and you should switch to the graceful. My interest inclines to the bold, although I do not abandon the graceful. The moods of a human being are complicated. They are biased, but still complicated. To be complicated means to be in a unity of opposites. The moods of a human being often possess elements that are oppositional. They are not homogenous but dissectible. An example of this is the two schools of the *ci*, graceful and bold: A reader can sometimes like the former, sometimes like the latter.

词有婉约、豪放两派，各有兴会，应当兼读。读婉约派久了，厌倦了，要改读豪放派。豪放派读久了，又厌倦了，应当改读婉约派。我的兴趣偏于豪放，不废婉约。 人的心情是复杂的，有所偏但仍是复杂的。所谓复杂，就是对立统一。人的心情，经常有对立的成分，不是单一的，是可以分析的。词的婉约、豪放两派，在一个人读起来，有时喜欢前者，有时喜欢后者，就是一例。²⁶

Literary scholars had already challenged the normativity of the graceful style before Mao's rise to power. Hu Shi's anthology of the *ci* in 1927, for example, considered Su Shi the genre's golden period, because it was Su Shi who expanded the genre's subject matter and diversified its style.²⁷ In the 1950s and 60s, in line with Mao's own creative practice (he wrote *ci* pieces that are considered to fall under the bold category), critical taste shifted quickly and radically. In the anthologies, textbooks, and criticism of the *ci* in the socialist period, it is fair to

²⁶ Mao Zedong, "Dui Fan Zhongyan liangshou ci de pingzhu 对范仲淹两首词的评注 [Commentaries on two works of *ci* by Fan Zhongyan]," in *Mao Zedong wenyi lun ji* 毛泽东文艺论集 [Mao Zedong on literature and the arts] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe 中央文献出版社, 2002), 189.

²⁷ Hu Shi 胡适, ed., *Ci xuan* 词选 [Anthology of *ci*] (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan 商务印书馆, 1949), 7–8.

say that “the correct style of the *ci* is the bold.” An anthology from 1962 alleges that the bold style “raising the flag of patriotism, formed a torrential main-current,” whereas the graceful style “representing the pessimistic and individualistic hedonistic thinking of the Southern Song literati, formed an escapist, meter-bound counter-current.”²⁸

As the bold became the preferred style of the *ci*, the conventional value judgment was reversed, but unchanged was the practice of using adjectives to construct aesthetic hierarchy. In the 1980s, scholarly debates moved to dislodge the graceful/bold classification entirely. In a series of journal articles on the *ci*, Wu Shichang 吴世昌 (1908-1986), best known as a scholar of the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, identified several flaws of the graceful/bold dichotomy. I summarize some of his criticism:²⁹ (1) After-the-fact: In the Song dynasty when the *ci* was being written, although the words “graceful” and “bold” existed, no poet conceptualized their work according to the dichotomy of graceful and bold. The adjectives and the concepts associated with these adjectives stabilized in the Chinese language much later. (2) Unclear definition: The words “graceful” and “bold” had different meanings in different historical periods. Critics use the labels without definition. (3) Biased textual sampling: The complete collection of Su Shi’s *ci* lists 340 works, but only six or seven are typically labeled by critics as “bold.” The rest of his oeuvre is stylistically similar to other poets’ works that are neither “bold” nor highly valued by critics.

²⁸ Hu Yunyi 胡云翼, ed., *Song ci xuan* 宋词选 [Anthology of Song-dynasty *ci*] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1962), 18.

²⁹ Wu Shichang 吴世昌, “Song ci zhong de ‘haofang pai’ he ‘wanyue pai’ 宋词中的‘豪放派’与‘婉约派’ [The bold and the graceful styles in Song-dynasty *ci*],” *Wen shi zhishi* 文史知识 [Literary and historical knowledge] 1983, no. 9 (1983): 18–24; Wu Shichang 吴世昌, “Youguan Su ci de ruogan wenti 有关苏词的若干问题 [Several questions about Su Shi’s *ci*],” *Wenxue yichan* 文学遗产, no. 2 (1983): 42–51; Wu Shichang 吴世昌 and Ji Xueyuan 季学原, “Guanyu Song ci zhong ‘wanyue pai’ he ‘haofang pai’ wenti de tongxun 关于宋词中‘豪放派’和‘婉约派’问题的通讯 [An exchange on the question of the ‘bold style’ and the ‘graceful style’ in Song-dynasty *ci*],” *Ningbo shifan xue bao* (*zhexue shehui kexue ban*) 宁波师院学报 (社会科学版) 1985, no. 1 (1985): 29–33.

But the work in the 1980s certainly did not remove these terms from the lexicon of literary criticism. The graceful and the bold continue to structure the reception of the *ci* genre, very much for the common readers, if less so for the academic critics. What, then, is the attraction of the adjectives as a description of style? What do they do so well that they cannot be replaced by other means of literary appreciation? The answer, I argue, is their social function. This has been well explained by scholarship on aesthetic judgment, especially recent scholarship that centers on the function of aesthetic categories in contemporary American culture. I borrow Michael Dango's succinct introduction to the topic:

Aesthetic categories are, in their definition, social: to describe something as belonging to an aesthetic category ("this is really cute") is also to offer it up propositionally to others ("don't you agree?"). Every aesthetic category helps mediate a hypothetical sociality in which people come together to evaluate a thing by trying to understand what it is a species of.³⁰

This interpretation derives from Kant. In Sianne Ngai's *Our Aesthetic Categories*, from which Dango borrows, Ngai revisits Kant's theorization of the beautiful: "For Kant, beauty is famously not a stylistic property of the object," but rather "a compulsory sharing of pleasure that refers the subject to a relation among his subjective capacities, which in turn refers him to a relation between the world in general and his ability to know it."³¹ In short, the nature of the statement "X is beautiful" is not actually to characterize X as the holder of an objective concept of beauty. It is rather to invite a conversation, the beginning of a social relationship: "I feel something about X; isn't it so? Don't you feel it too?" However, the judgment is always stated with a false syntax of objectivity. We always say "X is cute," not "I judge X cute," although the latter more accurately reflects the nature of the judgment being uttered.

³⁰ Dango, "Camp's Distribution," 39.

³¹ Ngai, *Our Aesthetic Categories*, 38.

For readers of literature, interpretive communities are formed through the circulation and exchange of these aesthetic categories. When a critic asserts that “Su Shi’s poetry is bold,” they do not need to define it all that well, because their main task is to invite other readers to do something with them: to read Su Shi together, to think together about Su Shi’s style, to have a conversation, which will ideally conclude in an agreement that “Su Shi’s poetry is truly bold” or that “it is truly not graceful,” or, even if an agreement is not achieved, the conversation itself is worthwhile. If this seems less obvious for the case of Zhang Yan, who was after all writing a technical manual for the genre, it will become more evident later in this chapter when we look at Classical Chinese forms of literary commentary, the *shihua* or *cihua* (诗话/词话).

The formation of social relations is the ideal outcome of aesthetic judgments, but this outcome is not easily earned. To explain the drawbacks of the use of the aesthetic categories in literary criticism, I will return briefly to Ngai. Invoking Stanley Cavell, Ngai stresses that, after a speaker makes an initial statement (“X is cute”), the power shifts to the interlocutor, who will then decide whether this statement can successfully solicit an agreement—or, in J. L. Austin’s terminology, whether it is “felicitous.” If the interlocutor does not also judge X cute, then the statement of the initial speaker fails, even if cuteness is for the initial speaker a category of positive value, intended as a compliment. My question here is what the conditions are to achieve felicity. For example, to a reader who do not know the Chinese language, the phrase “potent and undifferentiated,” however carefully translated, is hard to imagine as a literary style. Likewise, classical western aesthetic category like the sublime, as well as contemporary ones like the zany or the camp, have no direct equivalents in Chinese. In other words, if an interlocutor has not already been trained in the corresponding system of cultural convention, due to a basic linguistic blockage, the exchange of aesthetic category cannot be felicitous. This infelicity is exacerbated

by the fact that aesthetic categories typically cannot be defined in any straight-forward manner. If an aesthetic category happens to be untranslatable, then there is no easy way to explain its meaning in order to overcome the infelicity quickly. Besides, sharing the same language is not sufficient anyways, because a speaker of Chinese still may not be sufficiently well-versed in the canon of its classical literature. They may not know Su Shi and Qin Guan sufficiently well to be able to react to the judgment of the graceful and the bold in an expected manner. Lastly, even for true insiders, seasoned readers who share the knowledge of a large number of authors and texts, the meaning of an aesthetic category can still be contested. As the modern scholarship on the *ci* has pointed out, the usage of words like “graceful” and “bold” evolved historically, so a critic’s usage of the word in the tenth century is not necessarily identical to another critic’s in the seventeenth century. In other words, even among readers who know the language and are steeped in the same cultural convention, it is still not guaranteed that two readers think the same about one adjective.

In sum, the felicitous statements, when a speaker and their interlocutor feel the same about an object and can use the same words to describe their reaction to a style, are extremely lucky instances that take place within a social group in a restricted time and place. On a larger scale, thinking globally and historically, aesthetic categories are infelicitous.

Infelicity, however, does not mean that the interpretive community will collapse. A reader may not have read Su Shi, they may not feel intuitively why Su Shi’s poetry is dubbed “bold,” but this does not mean that they will necessarily speak up in protest: “No, it is not...” Instead, there are plenty of incentives for the initially infelicitous reader to trust the judgment of Su Shi’s boldness, to believe that it is true, and to reproduce it in their own discussion of Su Shi’s style. One incentive is simply that they want to stay in the community and do not want to

appear different. This leads to another drawback of the aesthetic categories, which has to do with the problem of authority. In my observation, in the practice of talking about style with aesthetic categories, the conversation-starting, community-building function of aesthetic judgments is often cancelled out, because the interpretive community does not actually rely on public discussion or debate to generate opinions, but overly rely on the reproduction of established conventional judgments.

The bold and the graceful are one example of such convention. The convention was consolidated in the mid to the late Ming, but would continue to accumulate new authors and texts, aligning them with existing ones. For example, when a twentieth-century critic says that Mao Zedong's poetry is "bold," it means that Mao's poetry is comparable to Su Shi and other poets who have already been labeled "bold." Mao's poetry is given a place in the aesthetic evaluative hierarchy, at a level not too far from the other authors of the bold tier. Once the linkage between a certain adjective and a certain set of authors and works is conventionalized, for any member of this interpretive community, in order to make their own voices heard, they must somehow gesture toward a knowledge of the given linkage; they must reproduce it. Their own opinion must first be established on acknowledging and engaging with the convention.

The power of the convention partly stems from a unique function of aesthetic categories, that is, as Ngai points out, an aesthetic category can simultaneously indicate an objective stylistic type and subjective judgment. In other words, when an aesthetic category is used to describe the style of a text, the objective characteristics of the text are conflated with the judgment being made about that text. We never say "I judge Su Shi bold" or "Su Shi's style gives me a feeling comparable to the concept of boldness," but always, assertively, say "Su Shi's poetry is bold." In an ideal situation, this is a sentence pattern that invite a collective rumination on Su Shi's style

and form social bonds between readers; but in an undesirable situation, which I believe is much more common, what it entails is that the members of that interpretive community, including the one member who produces the initial aesthetic judgment of “Su Shi’s poetry is bold”, will consider boldness an intrinsic quality of Su Shi’s poetry. The boundary is blurred between the personal, subjective judgment of boldness and the non-personal, objectively existing characteristics of Su Shi’s works. For any new member hoping to join this interpretive community, they are incentivized to believe that Su Shi’s poetry is intrinsically bold, and to use the word “bold” in such a manner, in order to be accepted into the community. Ultimately, since aesthetic categories also carry value judgments, the constituent elements of a style and the value judgment of that style are no longer distinguished.

Aesthetic categories hence become the building blocks of an aesthetic hierarchy. Literary authors and texts are placed on the various tiers of the hierarchy by way of their relation to aesthetic categories that are assigned a varying quantity of value. When someone uses an aesthetic category, they are not required to define it, and neither are they required to demonstrate a process of analysis which can explicitly explain why the characteristics of a text can be associated to the given aesthetic category. What is required, however, is to know, every time you encounter an adjective, which authors and texts have already been linked to this adjective in the given convention. In this way, the goal of evaluating and ranking literature is attained. This is the mechanism through which style is indispensable in canon formation in the history of Chinese literary criticism.

To conclude, to describe style with adjectives means to build readership communities who know the same authors, have read the same texts, and feel the same about them. But because these communities privilege interlocutors who come from the same social background and who

already possess the same system of knowledge, and because they are inclined to privilege the conventional opinion of critical authorities, it can be said that such communities are as exclusive as they may be inclusive. Hence, there is no easy answer whether these communities should be defended or not. With this understanding of the function of the aesthetic categories, I move to a reading of C.T. and T.A. Hsia's scholarship on modern Chinese literature in the 1960s, focusing on their use of the adjectives to describe Lu Xun's style.

Lu Xun's Style

I treat the Hsia brothers' scholarship on modern Chinese literature as a whole, not just because they were siblings. The recent publication of biographical sources testifies to the close ties between their works. In the 1950s and the early 60s, until T. A.'s untimely death in 1965, when C. T. was writing *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* (hereafter *A History*) and T. A. his essays on the leftist literary movement, there was not a month that passed without the brothers thinking about each other's work and exchanging opinions on literature. Below, I will begin with an example drawn from their letters in the 1950s.

C. T. Hsia began studying modern Chinese literature as part of short-term job helping political scientists compiling information about China, for the use of the American military in the Korean War.³² In

Chih-tsing Hsia 夏志清 (1921-2013)

Born in Shanghai, Chih-tsing Hsia was the second son in a banker's family. In 1946, while at Peking University, his essay on William Blake won him a scholarship to study in the US. He ended up staying there for decades, married an American woman, earned degrees in English, but taught modern Chinese literature at Columbia from 1962 till the end of his life. His book *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* is considered the foundation of modern Chinese literary studies in the United States. A polemical figure, he was upfront about dissident opinions and was involved in several high-profile scholarly debates in both Chinese and English languages, on topics ranging from New Criticism to *Dream of the Red Chamber*. He died in New York City.

³² Hsia, *Zhongguo xiandai xiaoshuo shi* 中国现代小说史 [A History of Modern Chinese Fiction], xxi-xxiii.

1951, when C. T. Hsia was finishing up his doctoral dissertation on English poetry at Yale, there were no clear options for the next step. David Rowe, a political scientist working under U. S. governmental funding, happened to be writing a sourcebook about communist China. Rowe hired C. T. in a contracted position to write chapters on “the aspects of culture and literature.” In the summer of 1951, C. T. wrote to his brother, then a teacher and editor in Taipei: “This job is easy, and it suits my personality. From this year on, I will no longer worry about my livelihood, and I can even send more money home and to you... You were newly appointed the editor of *Free China Review*. Your reputation is growing and your income is increasing. The course of our destiny, hopefully, will be taking a turn upward.”³³

The short-term job gave C. T. thoughts about writing a survey book on modern Chinese literature—a kind of scholarly work that was yet to appear in the English language. The project was supported by Yale and earned a Rockefeller grant. For three year, C. T. read Chinese literature in the Yale library. Many of the modern Chinese authors were new to him, because he received his early education in mission schools and had all his degrees in English literature. On the other hand, T. A. Hsia, five years C. T.’s senior, had had a more diverse formative experience that

Tsi-an Hsia 夏济安 (1916-1965)

The eldest son of the family, Tsi-an Hsia received his education in Shanghai. In his 30s, he held short-term jobs at Peking University and in Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Taipei, mostly as a tutor of English. He left the mainland at the end of the civil war and settled as a professor of English at the National Taiwan University, before moving to the United States as a visiting scholar. Meanwhile, the Hsia family’s banker father, mother, and a little sister remained in Shanghai; the father left his job and the sister switched from English studies to Russian. Throughout the 50s and 60s Tsi-an and Chih-tsing were sending money home to the family. In the early 1960s, Tsi-an Hsia began to receive attention in the U.S. for his talks and publications on Chinese leftist writers. He was hoping to obtain a permanent academic position when, on February 23, 1965, he died suddenly of a brain hemorrhage, in Oakland, California, at the age of 49.

³³ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, eds., *Xia Zhiqing Xia Ji'an shuxin ji* 夏志清夏济安书信集 [Collected letters between C. T. Hsia and T. A. Hsia], vol. 2 (Taipei: Linking 联经, 2016), 94 (Letter 146).

overlapped with the bustling scene of the New Culture Movement. When T. A. learned that C. T. was studying Chinese literature, he responded enthusiastically: “In high school, as a young man with a passion for literature, I read quite a variety of literary books, and many of them I’ve since forgotten... Mao Dun—I haven’t touched him for nearly 20 years! (How time flies!)”³⁴

C. T. consulted his older brother about the research, both because he was less experienced with the authors and works coming out of the May Fourth period, and because the American libraries had a limited collection of primary sources. In a letter from Taipei to New Haven, dated January 18, 1953, T. A. Hsia laid out the master plan for a comprehensive survey of vernacular Chinese literature since the fall of the Qing. I quote this long passage in full, for a reason that should soon become clear to readers familiar with *A History*:

I think you’d better first decide: In that period, what were the main literary trends in China? This way you can avoid putting too much emphasis on the leftists. The leftists had a political background. They really wanted to knock out the other trends and prevail over the literary field. The more they tried to create a unified scene, the more we need to reward the other trends in our literary history. As far as I know, apart from the leftists, which include the early Chinese Literary Association and Creation Society, there were two other trends: (1) The Beijing School: The leader should be Zhou Zuoren. Later members were Zhu Guangqian, Shen Congwen, Yuan Kejia, and so on, you know them. There was this guy who wrote fiction called Fei Ming. They said he had the style of Joyce. Zhou Zuoren promoted him a lot. Many people said they couldn’t understand his writing. With your current knowledge and training, you are the most suitable person to appraise this modern Chinese writer who has been said to be difficult. (2) The Shanghai School: Shanghai used to have a lot of literary journals. They came and died so fast. Don’t you remember this guy called Dai Dunfu at Jinan University – didn’t he also found a magazine? And in addition to the leftists in Shanghai and the Saturday Society, was there another group of people writing literature? I remember, back in the days, apart from a journal *Literature* that promoted Lu Xun, there was also *Les contemporains*, by Dai Wangshu and Shi Zhecun, etc. The latter had a considerable influence. The Beijing and Shanghai Schools, it seems to me, both had a bit of that fine, adept, soft, and feeble style, “art for art’s sake.” Stephen Soong grew up under this influence. Regarding the difference between the Beijing and the Shanghai schools, it’s hard for me to say. It seems that the Beijing School gives out a thicker “air of Chinese mud” and “air of

³⁴ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 2:189 (Letter 181).

pedantry”; the Shanghai School gives out a thicker “air of the metropolis” (including the tiny rooms in the slums and the “sensations” of Avenue Joffre) and “air of the salons.” Neither of them could compete with the leftists, due to many factors for sure. But I think one reason has to do with the **seriousness** of their attitudes towards life. The leftists were backed with a range of philosophies: Some were simply hotheaded, others were strictly following the instructions of the first and third internationals of the communist party. But regardless of their philosophies, they did show that they cared about life. At least they cared about the hardship of the people, the social changes, and the choices one has to make in his life, and so on. I’m afraid that this is why they satisfied the demands of the readers of their time, even though they became an instrument of politics in the end. The Beijing and Shanghai Schools both lack **high seriousness**. The one is the celebrity intellectual of the westernized metropolis, the other is the pedant using literature for leisure and self-entertainment. Their literature is personal, and personal only with regard to aesthetics, nothing close to morality. I think modern China lacks a kind of literature that is not centered on society but on the individual and that is also **morally serious**. It is certainly still possible to be impersonal while centering on the individual. These, I believe, are also your claims.

我想你顶好先决定一下：在那一个时期里，中国文坛上有几派，以免把“左派”看得太重要。左派有政治背景，他们真有野心要打击别派，独霸文坛。他们愈是想造成清一色的局面，我们的文学史里愈应该替别派表彰。据我所知出[sic]除了左派以外（早期的文学研究会和创造社都汇集而成左派）应该尚有这两派：（一）京派——应该算周作人为盟主，后来就是你所认识的朱光潜、沈从文、袁可嘉他们了。有一个写小说的叫废名，据说有 Joyce 作风，周作人很捧他，很多人说看不懂，凭你现在的学养，来评这一个中国近代号称艰深的小说家，应该是顶合适的了。（二）海派——上海以前忽生忽灭的文学杂志很多，你记得暨南大学有个文学青年戴敦复不也是办了个杂志吗？上海除了左派和礼拜六派之外，是不是另外还有一派人在写作呢？我记得当年除了一个捧鲁迅的《文学》以外，还有戴望舒、施蛰存等的《现代》，影响亦不小。海派和京派似乎都有点 art for art’s sake 的纤巧柔弱作风，宋奇就是在这种影响下长大的。“京”“海”之间有什么分别，我一时也难说，似乎京派的“中国泥土气”和“学究气”重些；海派则“大都市气”（包括 slums 里的亭子间和霞飞路的“情调”等）和“沙龙气”重些。他们两派都敌不过左派，原因当然很多，我以为对于人生态度是否 **严肃** 一点也有关系。左派不管他们背后的哲学是什么（有的是只凭血气冲动，有的是严格地遵照共产党第一第三国际的路线的），他们显得都关心人生，至少他们是关心民生疾苦，时代的变迁，人生路径的抉择等等问题的。他们恐怕是迎合了那个时候读者的需求，虽然他们终究只成了政治的工具。可是“京”“海”两派的 **high seriousness** 都不够，一种是洋场才子，一种是用文艺来怡情自娱的学究。他们的文学比较 **personal**，而且他们的 **personal** 的还只是在 **aesthetic** 的一方面，不是 **moral** 的一方面。我认为中国近代缺乏一种“不以 **society** 为中心，

而以 individual 为中心的 **morally serious** 的文学”。Individual 为中心当然依旧可以 impersonal。这些我相信也是你的主张。³⁵

This passage in T. A's letter, from 1953, foretold a main argument that would shape the field of modern Chinese literary studies after his death: that the scholarly emphasis on leftist writing of the Republican period was an ideological domination, that alternative literary trends widely existed but were overshadowed by the leftists, and that, in order to overcome this politically biased literary history, scholars should refocus on non-leftist writers, canonize them, and prevent the unification of the literary field. Variations of this argument have been made in studies on modern Chinese literary history, including C. T.'s book, as well as the post-war Taiwanese case I will discuss in Chapter 4. In January 1953, C. T. wrote back to his brother: "It is very correct of you to point out that I overemphasized the leftists."³⁶ He followed his brother's advice. In *A History*, besides outlining the life and work of the main leftist writers, C. T. Hsia paid equal attention to writers not affiliated with the leftist movement, some of them representatives of the Beijing and Shanghai schools. Shen Congwen, Eileen Chang, and Qian Zhongshu are three examples of writers of the non-left category, whose rise to fame in the late twentieth century was thanks to C. T. Hsia's promotion. This "decentering of May Fourth," the conceptual rejection of leftist writing as the singular canon of modern China, is not an idea that T. A. Hsia is known for, but he should be credited as one of its originators.

Another point of interest in this letter is the way T. A. Hsia constantly thinks through style. He employed different terms, many with classical roots: style of work (*zuofeng* 作风), "breath" (*qi* 气), and "trend" (*pai* 派). When he tried to distinguish between the Beijing and

³⁵ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 2:189–90 (Letter 181).

³⁶ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 2:194 (Letter 182).

Shanghai groups of writers, although he could not articulate their essential difference, he chose to describe it as a matter of stylistic distinction. He used the term “breath” to create analogies: the Beijing school gives out “a breath of Chinese mud and pedantry,” whereas the Shanghai school “a breath of the metropolis and its salons.”

But in C. T.’s Hsia response, the younger brother picked up another point, one that also materialized in his book manuscript:

Your analysis of modern Chinese literature is extremely correct. Your final conclusion, that modern China lacks “a literature that is not centered on society but on the individual and that is **morally serious**,” is incisive. I assume that anyone who has read a lot of western literature would feel the same.

你对中国现代文学分析得极对，最后的结论谓中国近代缺乏一种“不是 society 为中心，而以 individual 为中心的 **morally serious** 的文学”是一针见血之语，想多读西洋文学的人，都会感觉到这一点。³⁷

In *A History*, C. T. Hsia applies the idea of “moral seriousness” to the discussion of Lu Xun’s “Diary of a Madman”:

Despite its obvious **moral seriousness**, the indictment that Chinese life is hypocritical and cruel is presented in an ingenious manner which is more indicative of the author’s erudition than his satiric ability.³⁸

“Serious” or “morally serious,” as the Hsia brothers were discussing in their 1953 letters, is an aesthetic judgment of an author that is inherently positive. The idea of seriousness as a criterion of literary judgment likely came from F. R. Leavis, for whom moral seriousness is the basic test for literary value.³⁹ The Hsia brothers both admired Leavis. The English critic famously opened his book *The Great Tradition* with the line: “The great English novelists are

³⁷ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 2:193 (Letter 182).

³⁸ Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, 33.

³⁹ Colin Bower, “Against Moral Seriousness as a Literary Value: Casement, Conrad, and Leavis,” *The Cambridge Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (2015): 66; also see Emily Holman, “In Defence of Moral Seriousness: Reply to Colin Bower,” *The Cambridge Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (2015): 341–53; Malcolm Pittock, “Literature and Moral Seriousness: A Note,” *The Cambridge Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (September 1, 2016): 199–207.

Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James and Joseph Conrad.”⁴⁰ “Critics have found me narrow,” he admitted, but he would not compromise his opinion, because “the only way to escape misrepresentation is never to commit oneself to any critical judgment that makes an impact—that is, never to *say* anything.” So he pressed on, “except Jane Austen, George Eliot, James, and Conrad, there are no novelists in English worth reading.” In *A History*, written a few years after the publication of Leavis’ tour de force, it was also C. T. Hsia’s belief that the critic’s primary task is “the discovery and appraisal of excellence.”⁴¹ He adjudicated on the national canon with a similar assertiveness. In short, C. T. Hsia’s indebtedness to Leavis in *A History* should be clear, even if it is less manifest to a twenty-first century audience.

If seriousness is a main criterion for the appraisal of literature, what makes a writer serious? Judging by the Hsia brothers’ writing, it is not a formalistic issue, but has to do with the content of one’s writing. Seriousness is reflected in the subject matter and, in fiction, the views expressed through plot and characterization. The novelist must not concern themselves only with aesthetics, “art for art’s sake,” and must consider how one should live one’s life. Meanwhile, in the political climate of the 1950s, the brothers also wanted seriousness to be moral and not social, that is, oriented towards the individual, not the society.

Regarding the judgment of specific authors, the brothers had some disagreements. T. A. lamented that the Beijing and Shanghai schools lack “high seriousness,” even though they are artistically refined; C. T., on the other hand, held some members of the two schools in high esteem, such as Shen Congwen. Nonetheless, as the biographical sources and the scholarly publication converge, we see in this example of the “seriousness” how two critics negotiate a

⁴⁰ F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition* (Faber, 2008), 9.

⁴¹ Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, vi.

conventional aesthetic category to perform the task of literary appraisal. When C. T. began studying Chinese literature in the 1950s, the two brothers became the kind of fellow readers who knew the same texts and agreed on using the same words to talk about them. In their uninterrupted communication over two decades, they formed a community of their own.

“Serious” is not the only aesthetic category in the Hsia brothers’ writing. A large number of adjectives, some western and some with Classical Chinese roots, join the critic in the execution of his task. To fully illustrate the origins and functions of these adjectives is impossible, so in this chapter I rely on quantity instead of quality. Below is a list of the adjectives that appear in a total of three article-length publications: C. T.’s chapter on Lu Xun in *A History* (1999 edition) and T. A.’s two articles, “Lu Hsün and the Dissolution of the League of Leftist Writers” and “Aspects of the Power of Darkness in Lu Hsün” (both published in 1968).

In the following list, my selection of adjectives adheres to three rules. First, I do not distinguish part of speech. I collect words in the adjective form as well as those written as a noun or adverb, e.g. both “warm” and “warmth.” Second, I also include compound words or phrases if certain adjectives are central in them. Third, I rule out adjectives that indicate a literary movement, trope, or rhetorical device, such as “symbolic,” “ironic,” or “realist,” but I may consider them if they are used in a phrase together with other adjectives or notions.

C. T. Hsia:

- “Kong Yiji”: **touching; sketchy; economic; restraint**
- “Medicine”: **bleak**
- “My Old Home”: **honest; didactic; gentle lyricism**
- “The Real Story of Ah Q”: **mechanical structure; facetious in tone; “the author facetiously...”; incongruity of tone**
- *Hesitations*: **despondency**
- “Benediction”: **leisurely; lyrical warmth**
- *Wild Grass*: **somber**
- *Morning Blossoms Gathered at Dusk*: **delightful**

- *Old Tales Retold*: **levity and chaos**
- The essays (*zawen*): **humorous; rude; vivid; incisive; lively; “vivid homespun imagery and illustration, occasionally brilliant epigrams, much sardonic humor and venom”; “the mood of despondency and pessimism”; jeering attitude; entertaining; quarrelsome garrulity; sentimental**

T. A. Hsia:

“Terse, forceful, and condensed in thought but capable of flights of fancy, and stirring in a dry and sardonic way” ; “his bitterness, his relentlessness, his demoniac delight in picking a fight”; moods of despondency; sincere; honest; pure in idealism; “cold, cutting, brilliant essays”; chilliness; resentment; smoldering anger; bewilderment; reproachful; pained; fiery style; terseness; bitterness; sardonic humor; strange beauty; purity and versatility; jagged and jerky; terror and anxiety; jerky rhythm and stark images; bizarre beauty and delirious terror; nightmarish; shock; sadness; somber; morbid; somber and sardonic; cleverness and anger; “alternatively gloomy or cheerful, whimsical or angry, lighthearted or relentless”; sarcastic or prophetic

The adjectives can be used in a number of ways to produce a literary impression. Some describe the tone of the narrative; others are used to reproduce the scene in the story. In C. T. Hsia’s chapter on Lu Xun, for example, after quoting the last two paragraphs of “Medicine,” he writes:

This **bleak** scene, in which a mother’s cry, wrung from her **despair** and her **desperate** belief in Heaven’s justice, becomes a symbolic questioning over the meaning and future of the revolution, is one of the imaginative highest in modern Chinese fiction, with its **dramatic irony** of the crow, perching there **motionless, utterly unresponsive** in its **sphinxlike** silence to the mother’s cry.⁴²

In the next example, the adjectives describe Lu Xun’s writing style and his personality. C. T.

Hsia comments on Lu Xun’s *zawen* essays:

These *tsa-wen* contain **vivid homespun** imagery and illustrations, occasionally **brilliant** epigrams, much **sardonic humor and venom**. But on the whole they leave the impression of **trivial self-assertion**. Lu Hsün was so **vain** that he was quite incapable of admitting error or fault. The more important social and cultural criticisms in these essays are inseparable from the element of sophistry, as Lu

⁴² Hsia, 35–36.

Hsün **relentlessly** hounds his enemies and vindicates his infallibility at the expense of logic and fact.⁴³

T. A. Hsia's work is different because he was hired as a historian of the Chinese Communist Party, not a critic of literature. But the impressionistic approach is still adopted, especially when he depicts the personality and psychology of a historical figure. On Lu Xun's involvement with the League of Leftist Writers, he writes:

Anyhow, chillness, wounds licked in private, awareness of his failing strength, resentment at the field marshal and some comrades-in-arms, smoldering anger, bewilderment at people who should have known how to act more wisely and behave more respectfully, and a growing disaffection for the group to which he still belonged—such was Lu Hsün's relation with the League for the latter part of 1934 and all of 1935.⁴⁴

In these impressionistic sketches, one feature of the aesthetic categories is that they come in clusters. Occasionally, the critic would use a single adjective to characterize a style; more often than not, whenever an adjective appears, it is followed by a string of other adjectives that convey a similar mood. Since the adjectives are not explicitly defined, clustering can help the reader identify one semantic area where all the adjectives overlap, hence clarifying their intended meaning. Furthermore, in some cases, the adjectives become the building blocks for the critic to retell the original text in a way that underscores its aesthetic quality and emotional impact. C. T. Hsia's comment on Lu Xun's "Medicine" is such a case: C. T.'s remark on the crow in the short story, that it is "perching there motionless, utterly unresponsive in its sphinxlike silence," is a rephrasing of Lu Xun's original line, which is quoted on the same page: "perched among the straight boughs as if it were cast in iron."⁴⁵ In other words, when the author writes, "as if it were cast in iron," the critic rewrites, "motionless, utterly unresponsive, sphinxlike." The result of this

⁴³ Hsia, 48.

⁴⁴ Hsia, *The Gate of Darkness: Studies on the Leftist Literary Movement*, 116.

⁴⁵ Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, 35.

renarration is a reconstruction of the experience of reading “Medicine” where the emotional aspect of the experience is made more direct and more accessible, since the critic has boiled it down to a cluster of aesthetic categories. Once the renarration is complete and the emotion communicated, the critic concludes that “Medicine” is an artwork of the highest rank.

Another feature of the Hsia brothers’ use of adjectives has to do with the comparison with western literature. It is a formula of their criticism to suggest that a Chinese writer’s work is similar to an English-language work, by linking them simultaneously to the same set of aesthetic categories. For example, C. T. Hsia compared Lu Xun’s “economy and restraint characteristic”⁴⁶ to Hemingway’s Nick Adams stories; to Joyce’s *Dubliners* the “sloth, superstition, cruelty, and hypocrisy of the rural and town people”⁴⁷; to Matthew Arnold the “lyrical confession of his own uncertainty and hesitation”.⁴⁸ This can be seen as an reworking of the trope in Classical Chinese poetics where an aesthetic category and a poet define one another. Since the American readers are unfamiliar with the Chinese writers being discussed, the critic practices his method in a translingual manner. When Lu Xun and Hemingway are both linked to the quality of being “restrained”, the two writers are elevated to the same ranking in the hierarchy of the critic’s judgment.

Between the brothers, T. A. Hsia was the one who showed a consistent and explicit interest in style. In Taiwan, in the 1950s, T. A. was the beloved mentor of a cohort of young writers at the Foreign Languages department of National Taiwan University, who, in a few decades, would become the household names of post-war modernism. In a journal founded by T. A. Hsia, where the modernist writers published their juvenile drafts, he announced a few stylistic

⁴⁶ Hsia, 34.

⁴⁷ Hsia, 32.

⁴⁸ Hsia, 41.

principles. “The style we promote is **straightforward, reasoned, and calm**” (*pusu* 朴素, *lizhi* 理智, *lengjing* 冷静),⁴⁹ he wrote in the foreword to the journal’s inaugural issue in 1956. Three years later, in another forward, he reiterated:

We rarely publish writings that are **extravagant in diction, enthusiastic, or unrestrained**. Most of the pieces in *Literary Review* are **straightforward, lucid, and reasoned**. ... The writings in *The Literary Review* would rather err on the side of being **cold, thin, and dry**, but we would never be afflicted with the disease of **superficial flamboyance and warm passion**.

我们很少登载词藻华丽热情奔放的文章，《文学杂志》多数的文章是朴素的、清醒的、理智的。……《文学杂志》的文章宁可失之冷瘦干燥，不愿犯浮艳温情的病。⁵⁰

He concluded that their journal was “a **calm** journal” (*yi ben lengjing de zazhi* 一本冷静的杂志).

When T. A. Hsia began writing in English on the leftist writers, the attention to style persisted. At the beginning of “Lu Hsün and the Dissolution of the League of Leftist Writers,” T. A. Hsia gave an overview of Lu Xun’s stylistic achievements:

He introduced in his essays and stories a new style of Chinese prose – **terse, forceful, and condensed** in thought but capable of flights of fancy, and **stirring** in a **dry and sardonic** way – a solid proof that the *pai-hua* was not necessarily **sloppy, loose, or vulgarly sentimental**.⁵¹

This view, that Lu Xun’s achievement as a writer is first and foremost a stylistic one, was reiterated in a letter T. A. wrote to C. T. in 1962:

The **condensed** quality of his writing is absolutely shocking. “Diary of a Madman” was written in 1917, but its style was **lean and hard**, which was pioneering for the new vernacular language. I reread it now and the style [body of

⁴⁹ Hsia, “Zhi duzhe 致读者 [To readers],” September 20, 1956.

⁵⁰ Tsi-An Hsia, “Zhi duzhe 致读者 [To readers],” *Wenxue zazhi* 文学杂志 [Literary Review] 6, no. 1 (March 1959): 88. I am following Edward Gunn’s translation of the three adjectives “straightforward, lucid, and reasoned” in Gunn, *Rewriting Chinese*, 147.

⁵¹ Hsia, *The Gate of Darkness: Studies on the Leftist Literary Movement*, 100.

writing] still feels new. The intellectuals of the time, such as Hu Shi, Fu Sinian, and Chen Duxiu, all wrote too **loosely** when they wrote in the vernacular. Their works all look like Liang Qichao's vernacular writing. When we read those works today, we cannot but feel that they were the products of a nascent stage, because not only were they poor in thinking, but also evidently unimpressive in writing. Had there not been Lu Xun, had there been nothing in the literary field but Hu Shi's fake logic and Guo Moruo's reckless emotions, *baihua* literature would not have accomplished what it accomplished today.

其文章之**洗练**，实在惊人。《狂人日记》是1917年写的，但其文**瘦硬**，开新白话之先河。我再读一遍，觉得文体还是很新。同时诸公，如胡适、傅斯年、陈独秀等，其白话文皆太**松**，皆像梁启超写的白话，我们今日一看，只觉其为启蒙时期之作，非但思想无甚可取……，但文章之不精彩亦是有目共睹的。如无鲁迅，只剩胡适的假逻辑与郭沫若的感情用事去驰骋文坛，中国白话文学的成就，当无今日之局面。⁵²

Compare T. A. Hsia's view on Lu Xun's style to the style he prescribed to writers in post-war Taiwan:

- Good style: **朴素/straightforward; 理智/reasoned; 冷静/calm; 清醒/lucid; 冷瘦干燥/cold, lean, and dry**
- Bad style: **华丽/extravagant; 热情/enthusiastic; 奔放/unrestrained; 浮艳温情/superficial, flamboyant, warm, and passionate; loose**
- Lu Xun's style is: **terse; forceful; condensed; stirring; dry; sardonic; 洗练/condense; 硬瘦/lean and hard**
- Lu Xun's style is not: **sloppy; loose; vulgarly sentimental**

They overlap. The critic was attributing to Lu Xun a similar set of aesthetic categories with which he established the stylistic criteria for post-war writing in Taiwan. This explains T.A. Hsia's general position on the leftist writers: He thought that most of them were stylistic failures, but one man was exceptional. Despite Lu Xun's avid support of Marxism and his leadership in the League of the Leftist Writers, which T. A. Hsia denounced, on an aesthetic level, he believed, Lu Xun wrote what the Chinese language should be.

⁵² Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, *Xia Zhiqing Xia Ji'an shuxin ji* 夏志清夏济安书信集 [Collected letters between C. T. Hsia and T. A. Hsia], 2019, 5:105 (Letter 564).

A work of translation underlies T. A. Hsia's choice of adjectives. "Cold" and "chill" he said often in both languages; "condensed" is *xilian* (洗练); "vulgarly sentimental" would be a fitting translation of *fu yan wen qing* (浮艳温情). This effort of translation testifies to the extent that T. A. Hsia's conceptual framework of the aesthetic categories is rooted in Classical Chinese. For example, "condensed" or *xilian* appears in Sikong Tu's twenty-four poetic styles. "Cold" and "lean" are famously a pair of stylistic labels of Tang-dynasty poets Meng Jiao and Jia Dao;⁵³ they reprise in T. A. Hsia's phrasing as *leng shou gan zao* (冷瘦干燥). T. A. was a knowledgeable reader of classical literature. In another letter to his younger brother in 1951, he even wrote: "My ambition in the Chinese literary field isn't just about writing a couple of novels. I want to create an anti-May Fourth movement, promote classicism, and resist the romanticism since the May Fourth."⁵⁴

But T. A. Hsia's most avowed support of classical stylistic principles is his intense desire for stylistic economy. He stressed again and again the virtue of being "terse" and "condensed," rejecting the "sloppy" and the "loose." Economy operates at two levels. The first is brevity in syntax and diction, that is, to eliminate redundancy in expression. At a higher level, more than just the sparseness of words, economy also entails the control of emotion. T. A. Hsia liked Lu Xun for being emotionally restrained, "dry," and cleansed of naive youthful passion, which set Lu Xun apart from the leftist hotheads. Here is another point of disagreement between the two brothers. Both acknowledged that Lu Xun's style is charged with negative emotions, "despondent" and "sardonic." T. A. appreciated them artistically, as long as there is no mistake

⁵³ "郊寒岛瘦," from "Ji Liu Ziyu wen" 祭柳子玉文 [In memory of Liu Zi Yu]. Su Shi 苏轼, *Su Shi quanji jiaozhu* 苏轼全集校注 [The annotated complete works of Su Shi], 18:6971.

⁵⁴ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, *Xia Zhiqing Xia Ji'an shuxin ji* 夏志清夏济安书信集 [Collected letters between C. T. Hsia and T. A. Hsia], 2016, 2:65 (Letter 154).

of emotional excess; C. T., on the other hand, said in various places that his favorite of Lu Xun was the memoir *Morning Blossoms Gathered at Dusk*, which he called “delightful.”⁵⁵

The Hsia/Průšek Debate Revisited

C. T. Hsia and Průšek’s debate on *A History* has gone through several waves of critical reevaluations and is now familiar to any student of modern Chinese literary history, but the recent publication of the Hsia brothers’ letters brought the debate into the present tense with detailed documentation of the circumstances around it. Personal conversations beyond the published articles further demonstrate that style was a focal point. Moreover, at a general level combining published and personal sources, the Hsia/Průšek debate thoroughly reveals the methodological controversies and difficulties surrounding the impressionistic mode of criticism.

By 1963, both T. A. and C. T. Hsia had obtained academic appointments in the US. After several years of teaching college English, C. T. became Associate Professor of Chinese, first at the University of Pittsburgh and then Columbia; T. A. was employed by the Center of Chinese Studies at the University of California Berkeley, under the supervision of Shih-Hsiang Chen. In April 1963, during a visit to the United States, Průšek first met C. T. at a conference in Philadelphia, then T. A. at Berkeley, and then met C. T. again at Columbia University. The brothers were aware ahead of the meetings that Průšek had written a review of *A History* which would soon be published. C. T. expected that the review would not be friendly, because Průšek “was a man inside the iron curtain, whose political position must be radically different from

⁵⁵ Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, 46.

mine.”⁵⁶ At Philadelphia, the initial meeting of C. T. Hsia and Průšek was “distant.”⁵⁷ The two barely spoke. The turning point was the first week of April, when Průšek gave several talks at Berkeley. T. A. Hsia had long conversations with him, during which he negotiated with Průšek on issues pertaining to *A History*. For example, according to T. A.’s letter, on April 3, at a talk given Průšek at Berkeley, titled “The Artistic Methods of Lu Xun,” the conversation between Průšek, T. A. Hsia, Shih-Hsiang Chen, and Cyril Birch addressed several times C. T. Hsia’s criticism of Lu Xun in *A History*. Průšek said that he “was greatly dissatisfied with” C. T.’s book, while T. A. pressed Průšek on the differences between Průšek’s and C. T. Hsia’s views of Lu Xun.⁵⁸

The problem of authority in literary criticism became a matter of interest when T. A. wrote a letter to his brother, reporting the Berkeley events. Průšek had lived in China in the 1930s and befriended renowned leftist writers. By 1945 he was a department head at Charles University,⁵⁹ whereas *A History* was only C. T. Hsia’s first book. In T. A.’s interpretation, Průšek’s negative review of *A History* was motivated by a sense of seniority. T. A. told C. T.: “[Průšek’s] greatest dissatisfaction with you is emotional. How come Hsia Chih-tsing, being so young, dared to show such disrespect to writers of an older generation? Things like this he said quite a few times. He put too much weight on his seniority. He said that he knew those writers in person.”⁶⁰ T. A.’s overall depiction of Průšek was a scholar of an outdated generation, whose

⁵⁶ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, *Xia Zhiqing Xia Ji'an shuxin ji* 夏志清夏济安书信集 [Collected letters between C. T. Hsia and T. A. Hsia], 2019, 5:167 (Letter 576).

⁵⁷ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 5:189 (Letter 579).

⁵⁸ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 5:182 (Letter 578).

⁵⁹ Olga Lomová, “Jaroslav Průšek (1906–1980): A Man of His Time and Place,” *The Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies* 2 (December 30, 2021): 169.

⁶⁰ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, *Xia Zhiqing Xia Ji'an shuxin ji* 夏志清夏济安书信集 [Collected letters between C. T. Hsia and T. A. Hsia], 2019, 5:186 (Letter 578).

training in literary theory and history was now inadequate, and who spoke frail arguments in a mumbling tone. “Mr. P is absolutely no match to you and me.”⁶¹ However, ultimately, T. A. Hsia wanted to befriend him: “I will continue to try to win him over to our side—he is now beginning to develop positive feelings for you. After all, he is just a pitiful good old man.”⁶²

The next week, Průšek arrived in New York City before T. A.’s letter, so C. T. met Průšek for the second time, without knowledge of T. A.’s mediating attempts. The Columbia meeting was collegial. C. T. was respectful to the sinologist a generation older than him, and Průšek apologized for his harsh review of the younger scholar’s work. C. T. wrote: “[Průšek] said frankly that he was very unsatisfied with the book. If he had known me before writing the review, we could have exchanged opinions and there could have been forgiveness, but now the review was completed and submitted [to the publisher]. So, he was very sorry.”⁶³ Průšek also spoke highly of T. A. to C. T. and appeared to consider T. A. a good friend.⁶⁴

Up to this point, Průšek’s review on the *T’oung Pao* had not yet become available to the Hsia brothers. Two months later, in June 1963, Průšek personally mailed a copy of the review to C. T. Hsia, who read it for the first time.⁶⁵

Judging by the review article, it can be said that Průšek saw two types of information in *A History*: the compilation of data, such as the plot synopsis of literary works and the bibliography at the end of the book; and “subjective remarks and judgments”⁶⁶ on literary works. While the

⁶¹ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 5:179 (Letter 578).

⁶² Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 5:187 (Letter 578).

⁶³ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 5:190 (Letter 579).

⁶⁴ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 5:191 (Letter 579).

⁶⁵ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 5:288 (Letter 592).

⁶⁶ Jaroslav Průšek, “Basic Problems of the History of Modern Chinese Literature and C. T. Hsia, A History of Modern Chinese Fiction,” *T’oung Pao* 49, no. 4/5 (1962): 372.

data may be “useful,”⁶⁷ the subjective remarks are not. He described them as “chance remarks”⁶⁸ “of accidental character”⁶⁹ or “confused agglomeration of chance epithets,”⁷⁰ and suggested that they undermine the literary scholar’s responsibility of a scientific analysis of literature.

The examples Průšek gave for C. T. Hsia’ “subjective remarks” often involve the use of aesthetic categories. For example, Průšek strongly opposed a passage in *A History* that compares Mao Dun and Lao She’s styles with adjectives, of which I quote only a small portion below. C. T. Hsia had written in *A History*:

Mao Dun uses an **ornate literary** vocabulary; Lao She at his best writes a **pure** Peking vernacular. Using the time-honored tests of Northern and Southern literary sensibilities, we may say that Lao She represents the North, **individualist, forthright, humorous,** and Mao Dun, the more **feminine** South, **romantic, sensuous, melancholic.**⁷¹

Průšek responded: “It would take us too far to investigate the correctness of this assertion, and mainly, in which cases it applies and in which not.” He believed that north/south distinction of Chinese culture is “invalid,” and instead urged an investigation into the cause of the linguistic differences between Mao Dun and Lao She, which, to his disappointment, did not appear in *A History*.⁷²

Another type of “subjective remarks” that Průšek disliked is the impressionistic comparison between a Chinese author and a western one. He wrote in the review that,

Hsia occasionally mentions points of resemblance between characters in the works of Mao Dun and characters “in the naturalistic fiction of Zola, Norris, and Dreiser”; he speaks of Lao She’s predilection for English literature, even noting

⁶⁷ Průšek, 404.

⁶⁸ Průšek, 368.

⁶⁹ Průšek, 367–68.

⁷⁰ Průšek, 395.

⁷¹ Průšek, 391–92; Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, 165.

⁷² Průšek, “Basic Problems of the History of Modern Chinese Literature and C. T. Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*,” 392.

that his novel *Niu Tianci* is modeled on Fielding's *Tom Jones*, and affirms that *Camel Xiangzi* reveals a close emotional affinity with Hardy's fiction, especially *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. These, however, are nothing more than chance remarks, though a study of such affinities might have greatly assisted him in assessing the originality and maturity of the new literature.⁷³

To be sure, an ideological disagreement, on the general social function of literature and on the specific views expressed in the works of leftist writers, lies at the core of the Hsia/Průšek debate. However, at this point in Průšek's review, he did not comment directly on the ideological disagreement and instead commented on C. T. Hsia's method of argumentation. In other words, two layers of disagreements overlap in the debate and pressure one another: First, it is indeed the ideological divide of the Cold War, leading to the discrepancies in aesthetic and moral criteria of judgment; second, there is Průšek's methodological dissatisfaction with Hsia's impressionistic "chance remarks." On the former issue, Průšek believed that some of Hsia's views were simply wrong; but on the latter, he did not always think that the content of the remark was wrong. In fact, he often agreed and did not hesitate to express his accord. For instance, on Lu Xun's "New Year's Sacrifice," Průšek wrote: "Hsia is right when he says that the story reminds one of Greek tragedy."⁷⁴ On Yu Dafu, he also quoted a line from *A History* and noted in agreement: "This is true."⁷⁵ The problem is rather that, for Průšek, a literary scholar should not be allowed to just declare that "X author reminds me of Y author" or "X novel is similar to Y novel" and stop there. Literary scholarship is not the declaration of the existence of such affinities, but the "study" of them, as he phrased it. This study is missing in *A History*.

This "study," which is the substance of Průšek's proposal for a "scientific" literary scholarship, can consist of one or more of the following kinds of analysis: the analysis of

⁷³ Průšek, 368.

⁷⁴ Průšek, 385.

⁷⁵ Průšek, 400.

authorial intent; the analysis of literature's social context; the analysis of a work's "literary context," i.e., the relationship between a work and the works written before it, with regards to both the subject matter and the form or technique. In short, the scholar should "plac[e] the literary phenomenon of which he treats [sic] in proper historical perspective, of showing their connection with the preceding development, or eventually bringing them into relation with world literature."⁷⁶ "Historicism" may be a plausible concept to summarize Průšek's approach, which would align the Hsia/Průšek debate to the methodological debates in literary studies today, although today's historicism focuses on the social context and, unlike Průšek, does not typically refer to the historical development of literary form.

When C. T. Hsia read Průšek's review and decided to write a response, his immediate reaction was to return to the primary texts. In the review, Průšek advised C. T. Hsia to catch up on the scholarship on the Chinese authors as well as on the comparable works of world literature; C. T. Hsia, nonetheless, believed that his rebuttal of Průšek must be based on a more solid grasp of the primary texts, regardless of the usefulness of secondary sources. He reread all the literary works that Průšek mentioned, including Lu Xun's complete fiction, memoir, and some essays. This instance is one of the clearest indications of C. T. Hsia's methodological indebtedness to New Criticism. Back in 1953, writing what would become *A History* in the Yale library, C. T. was regretful that he could not read enough primary texts. He told his brother: "I wrote a few studies, 30-40 pages long, on Mao Dun, Lao She, Ba Jin, Shen Congwen, Zhang Tianyi, Lu Xun, Yu Dafu, etc., but I was not able to read their works thoroughly. My time was very constrained. I was not able to write well."⁷⁷ In 1963, after reading Průšek's review, he said:

⁷⁶ Průšek, 367.

⁷⁷ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, *Xia Zhiqing Xia Ji'an shuxin ji* 夏志清夏济安书信集 [Collected letters between C. T. Hsia and T. A. Hsia], 2016, 2:211 (Letter 188).

I want to rebuff Průšek, so I reread Lu Xun and Mao Dun. Yesterday I reread *Morning Blossoms Gathered at Dusk* and felt greatly satisfied. In *Outcry and Hesitations* there are some bad stories, but in *Morning Blossoms Gathered at Dusk* every piece is brilliant. No wonder it got you interested in stuff like the “Spirit of Impermanence.” Lu Xun was a very sensitive person. He remembered everything that happened in his youth. Later in his life this sensitivity became trivial, so the materials that he organized became chaotic (like *Old Tales Retold*). In *Old Tales Retold*, “Taming the Floods” has an ironic section about the Land of Clever Tricks which is very well done, and “Gathering Ferns” has no weakness throughout, but the other stories are not smart.

我想把 Průšek 反驳一下，重读鲁迅、茅盾。昨天重读《朝华夕拾》，极满意。《呐喊》、《彷徨》中都有劣小说，《朝华夕拾》篇篇精彩，无怪你对“无常”之类大感兴趣。鲁迅是极 sensitive 的人，年轻时的事都记著，到后来是琐碎式的敏感，整齐出来的材料（如《故事新编》）就不免杂乱了。《故事新编》中〈理水〉文化山一段讽刺很不差，〈采薇〉全篇可读，其他的几篇都不高明。⁷⁸

This expanded rereading of the modern Chinese literary canon led C. T. Hsia to retract a few of his views in *A History*, for example, his assessment of “Diary of a Madman,”⁷⁹ while it confirmed for him most of the critical evaluations he had penned in the 1950s.

C. T. Hsia’s response to Průšek was published in *T’oung Pao* a few months later. In it, C. T. Hsia categorically rejected the idea that the aim of *A History* was to place modern Chinese literary works in social or literary history—contrary to what its title would imply. Such work is valuable and should be undertaken, he argued, but the task of his own book was “discrimination and evaluation,”⁸⁰ that is, the appraisal of literary value which would produce a ranking of works:

... until we have distinguished the possibly great from the good writers, and the good from the poor, we cannot begin the study of influence and technique, however temptingly scientific the latter kinds of study may be.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, *Xia Zhiqing Xia Ji'an shuxin ji* 夏志清夏济安书信集 [Collected letters between C. T. Hsia and T. A. Hsia], 2019, 5:298 (Letter 595).

⁷⁹ Hsia, “On the ‘Scientific’ Study of Modern Chinese Literature: A Reply to Professor Průšek,” 444–45.

⁸⁰ Hsia, 430.

⁸¹ Hsia, 430.

He further asserted the centrality of judgment in all kinds of engagement with literature, even in the work of a historian:

A literary historian, of course, should possess the necessary linguistic competence and the necessary biographical and historical knowledge for the proper appreciation of any writer, any period, but this historical scholarship cannot excuse him from the ultimate responsibility of literary judgment.⁸²

The response to Průšek was a defining moment for C. T. Hsia's approach to literary criticism. His borrowings from the American New Critics and English critics such as Leavis were clearly articulated; so was the emphasis on reading primary source and executing literary judgment. Following the Hsia/Průšek debate, a conceptual opposition was established between the "scientific" analysis of literature, associated with Průšek's leftist political views, and C. T. Hsia's non-objective, non-scientific interest in evaluating the quality of individual literary works. On the basis of this opposition, several generations of scholars since the 1960s formulated their research questions and selected primary texts to study.

Before continuing into the next episode in C. T. Hsia's career, with which I mean to challenge the above-mentioned interpretation of the Hsia/Průšek debate, here is one last observation from the Hsia brothers' letters: Anecdotal information shows that, beyond the published writings of these scholars, in the events surrounding the Hsia/Průšek debate, Lu Xun's style was also a recurrent topic. This topic served a social function, for it secured a consensus among the scholars of distinct interests, smoothing out their disagreements. According to T. A. Hsia's letter, at Průšek's Berkeley talk on "The Artistic Methods of Lu Xun," T. A. Hsia suggested that Lu Xun's style changed around the year 1927, and summarized the pre-1927 style

⁸² Hsia, 435.

to be “**light-tasted, distant, and detached.**”⁸³ After it was established that the brothers and Průšek all liked the pre-1927 style, T. A. Hsia asked Průšek whether he also believed, like C. T., that the change was due to Lu Xun’s conversion to Marxism and that it represented a regression in Lu Xun’s art. Průšek answered; T. A. was unsatisfied; Cyril Birch followed up. Eventually, Shih-hsiang Chen intervened, relying on a vague Chinese word meaning “writing” generally (*wenzhang* 文章), with a remark to the effect that he thought Lu Xun “writes well.” The discussion then concluded with everybody agreeing that Lu Xun indeed “writes well.” The disagreement on the author’s conversion to Marxism was suspended.⁸⁴

Towards a Scientific Literary Criticism

After 1963, C. T. Hsia continued to discuss methodological issues of literary criticism that surfaced in his debate with Průšek. An example of his continued engagement with the “scientific method” is his debate with Yan Yuanshu of National Taiwan University in the 1976. In the latter debate, the use of aesthetic categories in literary criticism was again a main point of contention, but C. T. Hsia defended them not with the tools of American literary criticism, but with Classical Chinese poetics. In doing so, he showed more affinity with Classical Chinese literary thought than with New Criticism, and supported New Criticism only to the extent it overlapped with Classical Chinese literary thought.

In 1976, news came to C. T. Hsia that the renowned scholar and writer Qian Zhongshu had died in Beijing. This turned out to be misinformation; Qian Zhongshu actually lived till 1998. He would meet C. T. Hsia in person at Columbia University and the two would exchange

⁸³ “淡远而 detached,” Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, *Xia Zhiqing Xia Ji'an shuxin ji* 夏志清夏济安书信集 [Collected letters between C. T. Hsia and T. A. Hsia], 2019, 5:182 (Letter 578).

⁸⁴ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 5:183 (Letter 578).

letters for more than a decade. But in 1976, saddened by the news of Qian Zhongshu's death, C. T. Hsia wrote an essay in memoriam, where he praised Qian Zhongshu's scholarship in *Tan Yi Lu* (谈艺录), a work of comparative literary criticism written in Classical Chinese and published in 1948.

Although the content of *Tan Yi Lu* partly involves western literary theory, it was written in a genre of classical Chinese poetic commentary, called the *shihua* or the *cihua* (诗话/词话), where the critic jots down a mosaic of remarks on a large amount of literary works in a series of short passages. In this genre of commentary, adjectives are ubiquitous as descriptions of style. In C. T. Hsia's 1976 essay on Qian Zhongshu, he commended this traditional approach of literary commentary for its ability to convey the reader's personal reaction to literature without the mediation of theoretical jargon. He quoted the following passage from *Tan Yi Lu* as an example of the traditional approach. Qian Zhongshu wrote,

It has been said for Bao Zhao's poetry that "the performance of the melody is **risky and rushed**." Li He transforms Bao Zhao's **flowing and changing** into **frozenness and heaviness**, but then how does Li He also manage to be **risky and rushed**? This is exactly where Li He is groundbreaking. The nature of his every element is always **steady and solid**, but the movement of the totality is **rapid and fluctuating**. Therefore, if you separate them and look at them individually, the diction is **frozen and heavy**; if you combine them and sing them all together, the body of the air is moving in the wind. This is unlike Han Yu's long autumn river pouring down one thousand miles in a single track; also unlike Su Shi's spring of ten thousands tanks of water flowing onto the surface at any location. It is like the sudden collapse of an iceberg and the swift movement of the desert, forcefully carrying small pieces of earth and rock and advancing directly forward. Although it is solid, it has a flowing quality.

夫鲍家之诗，“操调**险急**”。长吉化**流易**为**凝重**，何以又能**险急**。曰斯正长吉生面别开处也。其每分子之性质，皆**凝重坚固**；而全体之运动，又**迅疾流转**。故分而视之，词藻**凝重**；合而咏之，气体飘动。此非昌黎之长江秋注，千里一道也；亦非东坡之万斛泉源，随地涌出也。此如冰山之忽塌，沙

漠之疾移，势挟碎块细石而直前，虽固体而具流性也。⁸⁵

A long list of adjectives, mostly metaphors of the physical world, are employed to describe a poet's style and distinguish one poet's style from another. C. T. Hsia commented:

You may say that this kind of criticism is not scientific at all, entirely depending on the subjective impression of a reader. But the opinions that are really worthy of our attention are always the subjective combinations of individual critics, without any objective evaluation of a scientist. We believe that Shakespeare is the greatest poet of England, and this is the synthesis of countless readers' objective impressions since Ben Johnson. In his early article, "The Perfect Critic," T. S. Eliot emphasized the importance of the combination of impressions of individual critics ("a system of impressions," "a structure of perfection").

你可以说，这种批评一点也不科学，全凭一个读者主观的印象。但真正值得我们注意的见解，都是个别批评家主观的组合，此外并无科学家的，客观的判断（evaluation）。我们认为莎士比亚是英国最伟大的诗人，这是彭强生以来多少主观读者印象的综合。爱略特在他初期论文《完美的批评家》（“The Perfect Critic”）里强调个别批评家的印象组合，（“a system of impressions”，“a structure of perfection”）的重要。⁸⁶

Here, Classical Chinese poetic commentary is merged with T. S. Eliot. In both kinds of criticism, C. T. Hsia suggested, the “unscientific” and “subjective impressions of readers” are valuable, because the critic is speaking his sincere personal reaction to literature like a common reader, and does not fall prey to the blinding complications of literary theory and its technical terminology, which curb the critic's innate sensitivity to literature as a reader. He believed that the objective scientific method can do little but repeat established opinions in the field, and therefore it is only a subjugation to disciplinary norms.

⁸⁵ C. T. Hsia, “‘Zhuinian’ Qian Zhongshu xiansheng--jian tan Zhongguo gudian wenxue yanjiu zhi quxiang ‘追念’钱钟书先生——兼谈中国古典文学研究之趋向 [In ‘memory’ of Mr. Qian Zhongshu: also on the tendency in Chinese classical literary studies],” *Qiu shui* 秋水, no. 6 (June 1979): 21.

⁸⁶ Qian Zhongshu 钱钟书, *Tan yi lu* 谈艺录, Buding ben 补订本 [Revised edition] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局, 1987), 50; quoted in Hsia, “‘Zhuinian’ Qian Zhongshu xiansheng--jian tan Zhongguo gudian wenxue yanjiu zhi quxiang ‘追念’钱钟书先生——兼谈中国古典文学研究之趋向 [In ‘memory’ of Mr. Qian Zhongshu: also on the tendency in Chinese classical literary studies],” 21.

C. T. Hsia further attacked the objective method with a caricature of a scholar studying Classical Chinese literature in the US. As a student in graduate school, this scholar does not know the Chinese language well enough and has not read a sufficient number of primary texts in Chinese literature. He “only begins to read Chinese carefully after selecting a dissertation topic and exhausts two years’ efforts in reading through Du Fu.” In his dissertation, he applies the scientific method to evaluate the quality of Du Fu’s poetry:

This Doctor’s starting point is a hypothesis that Du Fu, or alternatively, *Journey to the West*, is very great. With the critical method he borrows, unsurprisingly he proves that Du Fu or *Journey to the West* is very great. In fact, with his method, he can also prove that any famous Chinese poet or novel is very great.

这位博士的出发点是假定杜甫，或《西游记》非常伟大。他借用的批评方法果然证明了杜甫或《西游记》非常伟大，其实用他的方法，他也可以证明任何中国名诗人，名小说，都非常伟大。⁸⁷

In C. T. Hsia’s view, the reason why a literary scholar does not follow their most intimate personal reaction in reading is because of the false pursuit of “objectivity” and “science.” He made this connection repeatedly in his debates: In 1963, criticizing Prusek’s attachment to “objectivity,” C. T. Hsia wrote that this notion of objectivity in Prusek’s “appears to mean uncritical compliance with the reigning opinion.”⁸⁸ He wrote again in 1976, of the “Doctor” who uses a “scientific” method to prove that Du Fu is indeed very great:

This kind of criticism... is novel on the outside, but its essence is very conservative. It does not dare refute the previous opinion. It only aims to prove, with tedious analysis, that the previous opinion is correct. Such a critic does not trust their own judgment...

⁸⁷ Hsia, “‘Zhuinian’ Qian Zhongshu xiansheng--jian tan Zhongguo gudian wenxue yanjiu zhi quxiang ‘追念’钱钟书先生——兼谈中国古典文学研究之趋向 [In ‘memory’ of Mr. Qian Zhongshu: also on the tendency in Chinese classical literary studies],” 17.

⁸⁸ Hsia, “On the ‘Scientific’ Study of Modern Chinese Literature: A Reply to Professor Prusek,” 431.

这种批评.....外表虽新奇，本质非常保守；它不敢推翻前见，它的企图是用繁琐的分析来证明旧见是对的，这样的批评家，并不信赖自己的判断力.....⁸⁹

He quoted the words of a Chinese colleague in linking the superior subjective method to renowned British and American critics, including Cleanth Brooks:

The only basis of traditional criticism is common sense. The qualification of a critic is nothing more than their knowledge, reading experiences, sensibility, and insight. In the field of English literature, which we are relatively more familiar with, critics such as Arnold, A. C. Bradley, Eliot, Leavis, and Cleanth Brooks are like this. The reading method of a critic has no essential difference from the reading method of a common person. One of the main objectives of his work is to help readers appreciate and know literature, seek various kinds of happiness in literature, and seek the experience of life and its meaning.

“传统批评的基础不外乎常识，批评家的条件只是知识与阅读经验、感受力、和洞察力而耳。在我们比较熟悉的英国文学范围中，阿诺德（Arnold）和布莱德雷（A. C. Bradley）是这样，爱略特（Eliot）、利维斯（Leavis）和布禄斯（Cleanth Brooks）也如此。批评家的读法与常人的读法并无本质上的分别，他的工作的主要目标之一是帮助读者欣赏和了解文学，在文学中找寻各种快乐，找寻人生体验与意义。”⁹⁰

At this point, it would seem that the ideological opposition of the scientific vs. subjective methods was well established. The scientific method came out of the political left, whereas the subjective impressionistic method was aligned with the liberalism of the Cold War period and was fortified by a critical method excavated from classical Chinese poetic commentary. But this opposition collapsed when Yan Yuanshu denounced impressionistic criticism from a position within American literary studies and New Criticism. In 1976, writing for the literary supplement

⁸⁹ Hsia, “‘Zhuinian’ Qian Zhongshu xiansheng--jian tan Zhongguo gudian wenxue yanjiu zhi quxiang ‘追念’钱钟书先生——兼谈中国古典文学研究之趋向 [In ‘memory’ of Mr. Qian Zhongshu: also on the tendency in Chinese classical literary studies],” 18.

⁹⁰ Sun Shuyu 孙述宇, “Jiu shu xin du daoyan 《旧书新读》导言 [Preface to *Reading Old Books in a New Way*],” *Xinya shuyuan xueshu niankan* 新亚书院学术年刊 [New Asia College Academic Annual] 17 (September 1975): 34–35; quoted in Hsia, “‘Zhuinian’ Qian Zhongshu xiansheng--jian tan Zhongguo gudian wenxue yanjiu zhi quxiang ‘追念’钱钟书先生——兼谈中国古典文学研究之趋向 [In ‘memory’ of Mr. Qian Zhongshu: also on the tendency in Chinese classical literary studies],” 16.

of the *China Times* in Taipei, Yan Yuanshu criticized C. T. Hsia's promotion of the approaches used in classical poetic commentary. He argued that the revival of impressionist criticism would undermine literary studies, because the development of scholarship should strive towards "precision" (*jingque* 精确), not a confusing lot of ambiguous terms.

With this thesis, Yan Yuanshu and C. T. Hsia clashed on the concept of the "common reader." C. T. Hsia conceived of the common reader as someone that does not talk with the terminology of literary theory and only voices their personal impression, and he modeled the work of the literary critic on this common reader. For Yan Yuanshu, however, nothing is more difficult to grasp by the common reader than the subjective impression of the literary critic, because that impression is based on value-loaded adjectives, which a reader without sufficient training in literary studies would not comprehend to begin with. In other words, while C. T. Hsia claimed that "scientific analysis" alienates the common reader, Yan Yuanshu claimed that "subjective impressions" are more alienating. He thoroughly objected to the passage on classical poetry by Qian Zhongshu, which C. T. Hsia had quoted and praised. Yan Yuanshu wrote:

Yan Yuanshu 颜元叔 (also romanized as Yen Yuan-shu, 1933-2012)

Born in Nanjing to a military family of the Kuomintang, Yan Yuanshu graduated from the Foreign Languages and Literatures department of National Taiwan University in 1956. He received a PhD in English from University of Wisconsin, before returning to Taipei and teaching at his alma mater. He was the chair of the department, the founder of the Comparative Literature program and of the journals *Chung-Wai Literary Monthly* and *Tamkang Review*. In a number of articles in the 1960s and 1970s, he introduced American New Criticism to the Chinese readership and used it to study a range of classical and contemporary literary works. Through these articles, he was credited for canonizing the modernist poet Wai-lim Yip and novelist Wang Wenxing. In the 1980s and 90s, he also taught in Guangzhou. He died in Taipei.

Hsia Chih-ting said in praise: "This kind of poetic commentary is not something that a common person can write." A common person cannot write, because a common person will likely ask, what do you mean by "risky and rushed"? What do you mean by "frozen and heavy"? What do you mean by "an element"? What

do you mean by “the movement”? What do you mean by “the body of the air”? Do they have any definition? Or are they just murky and abstruse? Those words are beautifully written, but their meaning is hard to grasp. Any scholarship, in order to advance, must become more and more precise, and the requirement of precision particularly applies to the use of terminology. A precise terminology demonstrates the advanced level of this scholarship; an abstruse terminology only shows the backwardness of this scholarship. I wonder if we can say the following: Qian Zhongshu’s abstruse terminology only shows that his literary thinking remains at the imprecise stage. The reason why the *shihua* and *cihua* cannot become literary criticism is because they don’t have a precise system of terminology.

夏志清赞美地说：“这种诗评，不是普通人能写出来的。”普通人不会写。普通人也许要问，所谓“险急”，所谓“凝重”，所谓“分子”，所谓“运动”，所谓“气体”，究竟何所指？他们究竟有没有一定的界说？还是朦朦胧胧？晦晦涩涩？辞藻倒写得漂亮，意思却是难以捕捉。任何学问要进步，总是要愈来愈精确，而精确之要求，特别在于术语。精确的术语体系，显示该项学问的进展；晦涩的术语体系，只是显示这种学问的落伍。我们是不是可以这样说：钱钟书的晦涩术语，只足以表示他的文学思维，还留在不精确的阶段。中国诗话词话之不能成为文学批评，正是由于没有精确的术语体系。⁹¹

Yan Yuanshu suggested that adopting a scientific method does not mean shutting literary criticism off from a non-academic audience, but will open it up to them. This is because at the core of Yan Yuanshu’s scientific method is a procedure of proving with evidence. The proof, he believed, will add transparency to the argument of the critic:

[*Shihua* and *cihua*] do not produce a proof, and consequently you cannot ascertain its truthfulness. This is comparable to mathematical calculations: By only showing you the final result, it demands that you accept the answer, but you are thinking that you cannot accept the answer unless you see the process of calculation.

（诗话词话）不求证，因此你无法确定它的真假。譬如演算术，它只给了你一个答数，便要求你承认为正确答案，你却心想要是能见到演算的过程，才好确定真伪。⁹²

⁹¹ Yan Yuanshu 颜元叔, “Yinxiangzhuyi de fubi 印象主义的复辟 [The restoration of impressionism],” *Wenyi* 文艺, no. 84 (June 1976): 120–21.

⁹² Yan Yuanshu 颜元叔, 123.

This call for a proof in literary criticism overlaps with Průšek's view of *A History*, that the book only asserts the similarity between a Chinese author and a western one without explaining why. That said, even though both Yan Yuanshu and Průšek relied on the word “scientific” to justify their proposed methods of literary analysis, there are substantial differences between them concerning how exactly the scientific method should play out in practice. Průšek's emphasis on authorial intent, social history, and literary history is absent in the New Critic Yan Yuanshu, whose interest, after all, was close reading. What Yan Yuanshu wanted was a more conscious and concrete effort in validating one's interpretation with textual evidence when one performs close reading.

C. T. Hsia wrote back to Yan Yuanshu in *China Times*. With biographical details on his own studies at Yale with the New Critics, he painted a far more complex picture of what American New Criticism had been. He approved of certain strands of it while distancing himself from other strands. He returned to a quote of W. K. Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks in the 1957 *Literary Criticism: A Short History*:

The true critic will strive to build his impressions up into laws. His impressions will be subjective and personal—how could they be otherwise?—but because he will try to refer them to principles he will move away from mere impression toward objectivity.⁹³

C. T. Hsia's position was that the interpretation of literature cannot but contain subjective opinions. “Proof” in the mathematical sense is not applicable, especially not in the case of a critic whose responsibility is to produce literary judgment. It was from this point of view that he

⁹³ Hsia, “Quan xue pian--zhuan fu Yan Yuanshu jiaoshou 劝学篇——专覆颜元叔教授 [An exhortation to learning: a special reply to Professor Yan Yuanshu],” 134; William K. Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks, *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (New York: Knopf, 1957), 658.

mocked the imaginary scholar of Du Fu who “proves” the validity of aesthetic judgment with difficult concepts and convoluted methods.

In his response to Yan Yuanshu, C. T. Hsia conceded that the systematic analysis of a literary work beyond the impressionistic sketch is useful to “beginners,” that is, students new to literature and criticism. “To insiders,” however, “it is too long-winded,”⁹⁴ because to an interlocutor who is already trained in Chinese literary history, the two characters “risky and rushed” suffices to communicate an opinion and do not require a lengthy analysis. He hence proposed that a great advantage of Qian Zhongshu’s impressionistic criticism is stylistic economy. C. T. Hsia wrote, again identifying Anglo-American criticism with Classical Chinese literature: “The poetic criticism of Classical Chinese poets and T. S. Eliot are both concise and not tedious.”⁹⁵ Here, economy, a crucial aesthetic principle that undergirded the success of countless classical writers as well as T. A. Hsia’s passion for Lu Xun, is applied to the evaluation of the methodology of literary criticism itself. The impressionistic approach to criticism is here considered valuable because it can produce critical writings that are also stylistically succinct. The aesthetic criterion established and sustained by the critic is self-referential.

The problem of authority also returned in C. T. Hsia’s debate with Yan Yuanshu. In the debate with Průšek, Průšek agreed with C. T. Hsia on some of his remarks but criticized C. T. Hsia for not attempting to prove them. Yan Yuanshu expressed similar sentiments in 1976:

In fact, to talk about literature, *shihua/cihua* is also a method. It has its strengths and shortcomings. The strength is that, when it is well said, it is very comprehensive and smooth. When it is not well said, it is just a biased opinion. But the more serious shortcoming is that it doesn’t produce a proof, and consequently you cannot ascertain its truthfulness. This is comparable to mathematical calculations: By only showing you the final result, it demands that

⁹⁴ Hsia, “Quan xue pian--zhuan fu Yan Yuanshu jiaoshou 劝学篇——专覆颜元叔教授 [An exhortation to learning: a special reply to Professor Yan Yuanshu],” 132.

⁹⁵ “中国古代诗人和艾略特评诗皆要言不繁。” Hsia, 133.

you accept the answer, but you are thinking that you cannot accept the answer unless you see the process of calculation. (Therefore, we can also say, impressionism is a “credit criticism.” You must first put your trust in the authority of the critic, and then you will come to trust his views.)

其实，谈文学，诗话词话也是一种方法，它有长处，也有短处，长处是说的好的时候，非常圆融，说得不好的时候，只是片面之见；而更严重的短处是它不求证，因此你无法确定它的真假。譬如演算术，它只给了你一个答数，便要求你承认为正确答案，你却心想要是能见到演算的过程，才好确定真伪。（于此，我们也可以说，印象主义是一种“信用批评”。你必须先信任批评者的权威，而后便信任起来他的见地。）⁹⁶

Literary critics struggle for influence. This is evident when a young critic challenges the views of the senior scholars in the discipline, or when intellectuals from different institutional backgrounds and ideological positions contend the validity of their judgments. Under such circumstances, there are a few different ways to convince the audience and establish authority: One way, which Yan Yuanshu proposed, is to transparently show the process of reasoning and the evidence collected. The ideal close reader executes this method. Even when the knowledge of the historical background, literary history, and the biography of the author is limited, the close reader is firmly supported by their textual evidence and the analytical process through which they organize textual evidence into an argument. C. T. Hsia’s approach is more elusive. By invoking aesthetic categories long established in the critical convention, he directly spoke through the voice of the authority, thereby demonstrating that he was an insider worthy of his audience’s trust. He created an impression for himself as the authority. The second method requires as much work as the first, if not even more work, since it is necessary to be familiar with a large number of texts and with the adjectives that have labeled them historically.

⁹⁶ “Yinxiangzhuyi de fubi 印象主义的复辟 [The restoration of impressionism],” 123.

This issue of prior reading experience looms over C. T. Hsia's larger argument. It exposes an internal contradiction in his methodology: On the one hand, C. T. Hsia believed that an ideal critic should think independently of theoretical frameworks and write without jargon, because this is what the common reader does; on the other hand, this critic must possess a vast knowledge of the great works of literature written historically, which a common reader by definition does not possess. Furthermore, if this critic wants to speak succinctly with their peers, who share the vast knowledge, they would rely on aesthetic categories, which can only be used correctly if the critic is well-versed in the history of literary criticism, and it is even less likely that a common reader will have such a background. In effect, C. T. Hsia did not champion the common reader as much as he claimed. The common reader is more of a strategic construct whose function is to legitimize the use of subjective opinions in literary criticism by academically trained scholars. In the other aspects of a literary critic's work, he did not want a critic to read like the common reader.

The Cold War divide does not sufficiently explain the Hsia/Průšek debate, first of all because C. T. Hsia's relation to New Criticism was complex and not entirely positive. While he espoused some dimensions of New Criticism, his methodology contradicted other dimensions of it, which enabled Yan Yuanshu to critique C. T. Hsia from a position within New Criticism and within American literary studies. In the 1976 articles, C. T. Hsia showed a more evident support for Classical Chinese literary criticism and recognized New Criticism only to the extent that it overlaps with Classical Chinese literary criticism. Second, on the methodological difficulties of the impressionistic approach, Průšek's critique was in many instances identical to that of Yan Yuanshu, even though the two men represented institutions on the opposite sides of the Cold War. The similarity in Průšek's and Yan Yuanshu's opinions demonstrates that a portion of the

methodological controversy surrounding *A History* arose from disagreements that are not political. Indeed, regardless of what position one argues for, there are issues to resolve, possibly more fundamental, concerning the way one's argument is constructed. It is futile to debate the content of the disagreement if each party's view is constructed through radically different means, between which no common protocol has been established to certify their validity.

The Hsia/Průšek debate is a lesson on the methodological difficulties of literary judgment. It is also a reminder that modern Chinese literary studies was conscious of these difficulties from the beginning, and because some of these difficulties are still waiting to be resolved, there is a vantage point in our field to resolve them.

The Uses of Feelings

It is my main argument in this chapter that aesthetic categories are a potentially exclusive mode of judgment that works to defend the conventional opinions of authorities. The impressionistic approach to style, which relies on the use of conventional aesthetic categories, also suffer from a lack of transparency. Its terminology is not defined and can make sense to an interlocutor only after they have consumed a significant number of texts in the given tradition; it is good at identifying and establishing relations, but cannot collect evidence for those relations or analyze them. Such an approach is prevalent in the history of literary criticism globally and is also prevalent in the modern and contemporary time, although its risks have been identified and debated. In the next chapter, we will see that an evidentiary linguistic approach to Chinese literary style was developed to compensate for the inadequacies of the conventional aesthetic categories, by intellectuals who nonetheless highly valued Classical Chinese literature.

It is not the goal of this chapter or the dissertation to argue that the impressionistic approach should be dispensed with, however. The conversation-starting and community-building function of aesthetic judgments is conducive to criticism, even though its conditions are not easy to meet. In this conclusive section of the chapter, I will show some examples from the Hsia brothers archive where a conversation was created and proved productive.

In 1951, C. T. Hsia's turn to Chinese studies from English had to do with practical economic needs. Political scientist David N. Rowe gave him a job when he needed one, to compile *China: An Area Manual* "for the reference of American soldiers" in the Korean War.⁹⁷ In this manual, literature was but one small section, and C. T. Hsia was also asked to work on culture and geography. Similarly, in the late 1950s, when T. A. Hsia's visiting scholar visa was about to expire, George E. Taylor, a China historian and director of the Far Eastern and Russian Institute at the University of Washington, extended an offer to him as a research associate. T. A. wrote to his brother: "Taylor wants to study communist China. I can help him in this regard." He then proposed a research topic on the League of the Leftist Writers in the 1930s.⁹⁸ In sum, both brothers, trained in English literature, were first hired by social scientists to study the history and society of modern China. Reconciling their interest in literature and the realistic need in Cold War America, they built a career in Chinese literary studies.

The brothers were troubled by the marginal status of literature in the enterprise of area studies. A methodological consciousness grew, so as to help them distinguish their work from the work of the social scientists dominating the field. The objection to scientific thinking in literary studies was one result of this methodological consciousness. T. A. wrote to his brother,

⁹⁷ Hsia, *Zhongguo xiandai xiaoshuo shi* 中国现代小说史 [A History of Modern Chinese Fiction], xxi.

⁹⁸ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, *Xia Zhiqing Xia Ji'an shuxin ji* 夏志清夏济安书信集 [Collected letters between C. T. Hsia and T. A. Hsia], 2019, 4:108 (Letter 414).

invoking Shih-hsiang Chen: “In private conversations, Shih-hsiang Chen also said that he disliked those people who considered themselves a researcher of the social sciences and believed in ‘scientific methods.’ There are such people among his colleagues...”⁹⁹ After all, social science research cannot be based on the subjective judgments of the researcher, whereas a degree of interest in personal feelings has always been internal to literary criticism, in its various conventions. It is worth returning to the line from Brooks and Kimsatt which C. T. Hsia quoted: “The true critic will strive to build his impressions up into laws. His impressions will be subjective and personal—how could they be otherwise?—but because he will try to refer them to principles he will move away from mere impression toward objectivity.”¹⁰⁰

It is never easy, however, to move from impressions into objectivity. If the function of aesthetic categories is to build interpretive communities that share the same understanding of the same literary works, in C. T. Hsia’s debates with both Průšek and Yan Yuanshu, we see that the aesthetic categories failed their purpose. His interlocutors did not give a positive answer to the question, “this book is X, don’t you agree?” They did not join the community. But this does not mean that the aesthetic categories cannot invite others into the community. The intended readership of the Hsia brothers works in the 1950s and 60s was American. *A History* was not written for Průšek or Yan Yuanshu after all, but for an English-language audience who, even if they knew something about China, were not readers of Chinese literature. In 1962, having written an article on Qu Qiubai, T. A. Hsia shared the article not only with C. T. but also with C. T.’s first wife, Carol Bulkley. C. T. said: “Carol read your ‘Qu Qiubai’ and was greatly

⁹⁹ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 4:438 (Letter 497).

¹⁰⁰ Kimsatt and Brooks, *Literary Criticism: A Short History*, 658.

impressed by your style.”¹⁰¹ T. A. responded: “Carol’s reaction is very important to me, because my article is not written for specialists. I hope that general readers will develop an interest in it.”¹⁰²

Facing this non-specialist American readership, T. A. Hsia’s work on the leftist writers was heavily biographical, studying the experiences and psychologies of the authors based on extensive archival research. In these biographical vignettes, including the one that portrays the late Lu Xun as a disheartened leader of the League, he used adjectives to describe the historical figures’ personality traits and their writing style. I have said that the adjectives are not easily comprehended by readers unfamiliar with the primary texts, but in this case where a critic had to promote authors and works to a foreign audience unable to read the primary texts, T. A. Hsia successfully translated some aesthetic categories into the target language, reproduced his emotional experience of reading the primary texts, and made his opinions relatable. The aesthetic categories were felicitous.

In C. T.’s words, T. A.’s approach to literary criticism is described as a “sympathetic, objective, and detailed portraiture” of a writer in their historical moment.¹⁰³ “You pay attention to concrete details, showing more sympathy than irony, quoting a lot and not manipulating facts with your own opinion.”¹⁰⁴ Mixing historical facts with personal feelings, this approach is so effective that it even turned a critic into an admirer. C. T. wrote of T. A.’s study of Qu Qiubai:

I received the long article “Qu Qiubai” the day before yesterday. I read it in one sitting and felt greatly impressed. This article is more interesting to me than the “Lu Xun” one, because I have never read *Land of Hunger, Red Capital*, or

¹⁰¹ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, *Xia Zhiqing Xia Ji'an shuxin ji* 夏志清夏济安书信集 [Collected letters between C. T. Hsia and T. A. Hsia], 2019, 4:406 (Letter 487).

¹⁰² Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 4:419 (Letter 491).

¹⁰³ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 4:591 (Letter 536).

¹⁰⁴ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 4:402 (Letter 487).

Superfluous Words. The materials you presented in the articles are all new to me. From the early life of Qu Qiubai, to his rough experiences in the Soviet Union, to the confessions in his late years, every paragraph in your article is brilliant and fascinating. ...

The only work of Qu Qiubai that I have read is *Random Notes*, and I thought he was a contemptuous egoist... So I had no good feelings for this person. Only after reading your article did I learn about the pain in his heart...

《瞿秋白》长文前天收到，一口气看完，大为佩服。这篇文章比《鲁迅》那篇文章对我更饶兴趣，因为我根本没看到过《饿乡》《赤都》和《多余的话》，你文章上所 present 的材料对我都是新的，从瞿秋白的早年生活到他在苏联吃苦的经过到他晚年的忏悔，文章段段精彩，引人入胜。.....

我所看过的瞿秋白作品仅是《乱弹》一书，觉得他是目中无人的横人.....所以对此人毫无好感。读了你的文章，才知道他内心的一段苦痛.....¹⁰⁵

Because there will always be conversations where feelings can build bridges but arguments cannot, and because aesthetic judgments have historically been a channel for the reader's emotion, in the criticism of literature, aesthetic categories can serve a social function that is still difficult to be replaced by other modes of analysis. Therefore, although I do not suggest that the impressionist approach to style should be a dominant approach in criticism, any reader—professional scholars too—can always have the impressionistic approach at their disposal.

¹⁰⁵ Wang Dong 王洞 and Ji Jin 季进, 4:402 (Letter 487).

CHAPTER 4: THE LINGUISTIC APPROACH

This chapter tracks the formation of an approach to style that is based on the collection and analysis of textual evidence. This approach relies on linguistic knowledge, in particular the comparative study of grammar; methodologically, it descended from American literary studies and New Criticism; its arrival in the Chinese-speaking academia was the result of US cultural aid to Hong Kong and Taiwan in the Cold War era, and it spread to mainland China in the 1990s. The literary critics who adopted this approach to style were attempting the same task as the critics we have seen in Chapter 3—the decentering of New Literature and the revision of the modern Chinese literary canon. Though the goal was shared, the approaches differed. With the linguistic approach, classical aesthetic categories, long standing in the history of criticism, were linked to the grammatical features of the text and justified with a technical description of those features.

The linguistic critics' justifications are not flawless. Their understanding of language perpetuates certain ideologies that linguists today would typically reproach. Moreover, in the practice of the linguistic approach to style, the identification of the same grammatical feature may still lead to opposing value judgments of that feature, so contradictory aesthetic judgments can very well remain despite the support of textual evidence. Therefore, it is certainly not the claim of this chapter that the linguistic approach is the final solution to the problem of style. But I will argue that, despite its limitations, this strand of criticism has made a contribution with the way it engages with the text, i.e., the understanding that stylistic judgments are grounded in formal characteristics in the text and those characteristics can be described and analyzed to serve as evidence for one's judgment. In this dissertation so far, none of the preceding three approaches to style require the analysis of textual evidence. The ideological and the

impressionistic approaches are often free of evidence, whereas the pedagogical approach, though so close to the text, prefers reticent action and rarely justifies its own editorial choices. In contrast, the linguistic critics who are the protagonists of this chapter performed extensive sentence-level analysis on the canonical works of modern Chinese writing, describing its grammar, sentence patterns, and figures of speech. They compared Chinese grammar to that of other languages. They selected individual sentences from reputable literary works, tore them into pieces, and rewrote them into alternative sentences so as to demonstrate stylistic differences in comparison. The contribution of this approach is that it separates two objects that are often confused in the treatment of style: the textual characteristics and the judgment of those characteristics. With the linguistic approach, regardless of one's value judgment of a style, at least different readers can all agree on what the constituent textual characteristics are for that style. Some of the scholarship I will introduce in the chapter was instantly controversial when it was first published, due to the dissenting nature of its judgment, but its method of textual analysis went on to enjoy a lasting popularity and came to be emulated by another generation of readers.

In Hong Kong in the 1970s, the successful application of linguistic tools to the study of Chinese literary style relied on a unique research topic that proved particularly conducive to the development of the linguistic approach: “Europeanized Chinese language” (*ouhua zhongwen* 欧化中文, or similarly, *xihua zhongwen* 西化中文), that is, the linguistic phenomenon of the Europeanization of the modern Chinese language, especially in terms of grammar. The Europeanization of modern Chinese grammar was not a new topic to study. Relevant discussions began in literary criticism as early as the late 1910s, and comprehensive linguistic studies were carried out in the 1940s. Moreover, as Chapter 1 has shown, similar topics were debated by

writers and scholars in the early PRC too, although they did not adopt a linguistic approach. In Cold War Hong Kong, a British colony serving as an important access point into socialist China, the flourishing translation industry and the study of translation nourished a new wave of scholarship on Europeanization. Compared to prior scholarship on the topic, the work that came out of Cold War Hong Kong could be differentiated by its extensive engagement with the grammar of both Chinese and English, but even more importantly it stood out for its canon critique of New Literature. The Hong Kong critics maintained that some of the best-known works of New Literature, for example, the prose of Hu Shi and Zhu Ziqing, is marred by this grammatically Europeanized language; this language is believed to be redundant, confusing, and unartistic; consequently, however significant the social and political roles these works have played historically, from the viewpoint of basic linguistic standards, they do not qualify as good writing in the Chinese language.

Following the work of these critics, in this chapter, I confine my discussion of “style” to the linguistics of writing, which concerns vocabulary, grammar, sentence patterns, sentence cohesion, and figures of speech. The first question I seek to answer is practical. How exactly does the linguistic approach to style work in practice? Which properties of the text do I look at if I want to study literary style as a linguistic phenomenon? In this sense, I also hope that this chapter can be pedagogical. It can provide some basic examples and common concepts for my readers to begin to attempt a linguistic analysis of style in their own reading.

The other questions I mean to ask are historical. The biographies, memoirs, and travel itineraries of the critics I introduce in this chapter will demonstrate that, even though a method of criticism can be applied in any context, the origin of that method was from one unique context. Since the established tradition of Chinese literary criticism on style did not require textual

evidence and textual analysis, how and why, then, did the linguistic approach appear in the 1970s? This chapter will reconstruct multiple channels of influences between the US, Hong Kong, and Taiwan in the Cold War era, intellectually and economically. It is this transregional network that brought new approaches to literary criticism to the Chinese-speaking academia, enabling the development and dissemination of a new method to study the old problem of style. In this sense, the formation of the linguistic approach is a story of the Cold War.

The central figure of this chapter is the poet Yu Guangzhong, who spent his formative years at the National Taiwan University, studied in the US, and then taught at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. In his long literary career, Yu Guangzhong was a persistent challenger of New Literature. In the 1950s, as a university student, he was a follower of Liang Shiqiu, a scholar and writer of the May Fourth generation;¹ but Yu Guangzhong ultimately did not build his literary career taking shelter in the works of the great authors before him. From his early involvement in intellectual debates in journals and literary societies in the 1960s, to his teaching of modern Chinese literature in Hong Kong a decade later, and to the editing of anthologies in the late 1970s and beyond, Yu Guangzhong criticized the New Literature of the May Fourth period and demanded attention to alternative trends in Chinese writing set by younger authors.

Yu Guangzhong's effort of canon revision began in the early 1960s when he published several essays to criticize the so-called "May Fourth style" of vernacular writing (*Wusi shi de baihua* 五四式的白话) in a journal in Taiwan. This chapter will begin with an outline of his

¹ On Yu Guangzhong's relationship to Liang Shiqiu, see Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), "Wenzhang yu qian'e bing gao 文章与前额并高," *Lianhe wenxue* 联合文学 [Unitas Literary Magazine] 3, no. 7 (May 1987): 54-57.

early work, and go on to examine the methodological changes in his literary criticism in the rest of his career, before it concludes with a brief case study of the reception of Yu Guangzhong's literary criticism in the mainland. The first section of the chapter on his early literary criticism in the Taiwan journal does not concern the linguistic approach. On the contrary, it demonstrates Yu Guangzhong's attachment to the impressionistic approach before he

Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (also romanized as Yu Kwang-chung, 1928-2017)

Yu Guangzhong said that he had four creative enterprises: poetry, essay, translation, and literary criticism. Born in Nanjing, he relocated and changed schools several times during the Sino-Japanese and Civil Wars before moving to Taiwan in 1950. His first book of poetry was published in 1952, at the age of 24, and in the same year he graduated from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures of National Taiwan University. He earned an MFA from Iowa Writers' Workshop and was twice a Fulbright scholar in the United States. Yu Guangzhong wrote prolifically in both verse and prose and published consistently from the 1950s till the last years of his life. He is regarded as one of the most important Chinese poets of the twentieth century. As a scholar, he taught both Chinese and English literatures at various universities in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States.

turned to the linguistic path. Nonetheless, I will spend some time on this earlier period, not only because it forms an illuminating methodological comparison with his later work, but also because it is illustrative of some of Yu Guangzhong's most important critical views, from which he never turned away, and which will allow for a more contextualized understanding of his later linguistic criticism.

Taipei: *Literary Star* and Yu Guangzhong's Early Criticism of May Fourth

Wenxing 文星 (hereafter *Literary Star*) was a magazine based in Taipei and ran monthly from 1957 to 1965. Its founder and publisher was the son of Kuomintang's top journalism officer, who also owned a bookstore called The Literary Star.² In the first two decades after the

² Tao Hengsheng 陶恒生, "Liushi niandai chubanjie de qipa 六十年代出版界的奇葩——文星书店 [Literary star book store: a rare case in the publishing field of the 1960s]," *Zhuanji wenxue* 传记文学 81, no. 2 (August 2002): 33-35.

war, the bookstore, which sold foreign-language titles, was an attraction for young intellectuals interested. The monthly journal similarly introduced western art, science, and philosophy to this readership, featuring, on the cover of every issue, a portrait of a renowned foreign figure, beginning with Ernest Hemingway on the initial issue. The ideological position of the journal radicalized in the early 1960s, when its editorial board was chaired by a controversial figure, Li Ao 李敖 (1935-2018), who, at that time, was vocally advocating for a western-style modernization of Chinese society. Facing the neo-Confucianism in post-war Taiwan, the journal *Literary Star* became a battlefield for Li Ao to fend off an older generation of intellectuals who remained attached to traditional Chinese political thought.³ The result of the confrontation was that the journal doubled its sales and became a “fashion” among its young, educated readership.⁴

Yu Guangzhong’s engagement with *Literary Star* also took place in a period of ideological transition. In 1957, when he was teaching English at the National Taiwan Normal University, he became the editor of the poetry page of *Literary Star* and, in addition, began to publish literary criticism in it. In 1958, he left Taiwan to study at the Iowa Writers’ Workshop. In 1961-62, he was embattled by the criticism and debates surrounding his long poem, *Sirius, the Dog Star* (*Tianlangxing* 天狼星) which, as he said in a memoir in the 1980s, was the catalyst that separated him from modernism in literature.⁵ In other words, in the early 1960s, despite his studies in American literature and American literary theory, Chinese classicism became a major

³ Li Ao 李敖, “Gei tan zhongxi wenhua de ren kankan bing 给谈中西文化的人看看病 [Diagnosing the illness for people who are talking about Chinese versus Western cultures],” *Wen xing* 文星, no. 52 (February 1962): 9–17.

⁴ Tao Hengsheng 陶恒生, “‘Bu an paili chupai’ de Wen xing zazhi ‘不按牌理出牌’的文星杂志 [*Literary star*, a magazine that does not play its cards by the rules of the game],” *Zhuanji wenxue* 传记文学 82, no. 1 (January 2003): 12.

⁵ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Yishi duoshao haojie--qian shu wo yu Xianwen zhi yuan 一时多少豪杰——浅述我与《现文》之缘,” in *Xian wen yin yuan* 现文因缘, ed. Bai Xianyong 白先勇 (Pai Hsien-yung) (Taipei: Lian jing 联经 [Linking], 2016), 50.

source of his poetic inspiration, which was directly reflected in his literary criticism of the period.

This espousal of Chinese classicism would seem to contradict the westernizing aspirations of the journal's editor-in-chief, but, anchored in post-war Taiwan's academic modernist movement, Yu Guangzhong was nevertheless a member of the young westernized intellectual circle and had more camaraderie with Li Ao than with the neo-Confucianists. A number of thematically related essays of literary criticism by Yu Guangzhong were published in *Literary Star* from 1962 to 64. The main thesis of these articles was that the New Literature of the May Fourth period was plagued by a literary language that is "impoverished and monotonous" (*pinfa he dandiao* 贫乏和单调).⁶ Yu Guangzhong attributed this disappointing literary language to the fact that the intellectuals of the May Fourth period were overwhelmingly concerned with politics and the needs of the masses and not so much with artistry; in order to overcome this literary language, he spoke in favor of a partial revival of Classical Chinese in contemporary writing.

A representative essay from this period was published in the August 1964 issue, titled "The Phoenix, the Crow, and the Quail" (*Feng ya chun* 凤·鸦·鹑) -- a word play on the three section titles of the *Classic of Poetry*, the *Airs*, the *Court Hymns*, and the *Eulogies* (*Feng ya song* 风·雅·颂). The article was one contribution to a roundtable discussion on the language of modern Chinese writing, which concerned the question of whether contemporary writers should only use the vernacular language, cleansed of any elements of Classical Chinese, or they can also freely deploy resources from classical literature. This question was dubbed "the problem of the

⁶ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), "Feng ya chun 凤·鸦·鹑 [The phoenix, the crow, and the quail]," *Wen xing* 文星, no. 70 (August 1, 1963): 26.

mixing of *wenyan* and *baihua*” (*wen bai jiaza wenti* 文白夹杂问题). In the roundtable, Yu Guangzhong took the latter position. The vernacular language, he argued, is appropriate for practical communications, whereas literature demands a more sophisticated language:

We may as well divide the aim of language use into the two poles of pragmatics and aesthetics. The former includes correspondences, announcements, reports, lectures, and so on. ... In the realm of pragmatics, we should believe that the utmost virtues are the convenience of communication and the ease of comprehension. ... But in the realm of aesthetics, each masterpiece is a permanent statue, not a consumable good like a toothpaste or toilet paper. Art must be permanent. It is neither the news of the day nor the antique of the past year. Its language must be as solid as granite, as brilliant as fire. Colloquial vocabulary and grammar are after all limited, and that is especially the case for the *baihua* of our time and place. Who can guarantee that today’s *baihua* will not become a dead language one hundred years from now?

我们不妨把运用语言的目的，划分为实用的和美感的两极。前者包括通信、布告、报道、演说等等。.....在实用的范围，我们应该以便利传达，以简单明了为至上美德。.....可是在美感的境界，每一篇杰作都是永恒的雕塑，不是牙膏或者草纸一类的消耗品。艺术必须持久，它不是今天的新闻，也不是去年的古董。它的语言必须坚实如花岗岩，灿烂如火。口语的字汇和语法究竟有限，此时此地的白话尤其如此。百年后，谁能保证今天的白话不变成“死文字”呢？⁷

To achieve this solid and brilliant artistic language Yu Guangzhong turned back to Classical Chinese. Writing in a semi-classical style of his own, he objected to the total vernacularization of the literary language:

The absolute unification of spoken language and writing is not only impossible but also not ideal. Writing obtains vigor and rhythm from the spoken language, whereas the spoken language learns organization and taste from writing. A little elasticity is maintained between the two of them. They are different, but precisely because of that, they excite each other and complement each other.

绝对的语文合一，不但不可能，而且不理想。文字向语言吸收活力和节奏，语言向文字学习组织和品味，两者之间保持一点弹性，相异适足以相激相荡，相辅相成。⁸

⁷ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), 25–26.

⁸ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), 28.

The formulation of this claim was meant to be highly confrontational, because, in making such a claim, the critic took issue with the linguistic ideology of New Literature. In other words, because linguistic reform is the core of the legitimacy of New Literature, when Yu Guangzhong questioned the quality of the language of New Literature, he would be shaking New Literature at its foundation. In this way, he dislodged the literary canon and called for new prospects in

Chinese writing:

In the May Fourth period, in order to emancipate Chinese literature from the stiff, hollow, and bloodless *wenyan* writing of the time, the frontrunners of New Literature had no other way but to raise the claim for *baihua* literature. Against that kind of sick and gloomy backdrop, any “anti-traditionalist” claim is refreshing and pleasant, as well as urgently needed.

... ..

In the present day, the vernacular language movement has reached a comprehensive success, but the accomplishment of New Literature is not too great. Now that *baihua* has completed the task of popularization, it should start catching up as literature. Obviously, contemporary *baihua* lacks richness and subtlety. It is the mission of our generation of writers to find nutrition in other kinds of writing so as to cultivate the life of *baihua*. Modern poetry, modern fiction, and the modern essay are now making an effort towards this direction. We must admit: Xu Zhimo’s poetry, Bing Xin’s essays, and Ba Jin’s fiction have all retired and become literary history. We must transition from the age of vernacularization to the age of aestheticization.

在五四的时代，新文学的先驱们，为了要把中国文学从当时那种刻板、空洞、贫血的文言文中解放出来，不得不提出白话文学的主张。在那种病态百出，暮气沉沉的背景下，任何“反传统”的主张都是清新可喜的，也是急需的。

.....

到了今天，白话的运动已经获得普遍的成功，可是新文学的成就并不大。白话既已达成大众化的任务，它也应该向文学看齐了。很显然地，目前的白话尚未臻于丰富精美的境界。如何向其他类型的语文汲取营养，以壮大白话的生命，正是我们这一代作家的任务。现代诗，现代小说，现代散文正朝着这个方向努力。我们必须承认：徐志摩的诗，冰心的散文，巴金的小说，已经

退休到文学史里去了。我们必须自大众化的时代进入艺术化的时代。⁹

In this effort to decenter New Literature, Yu Guangzhong even offered a revisionist reading of Hu Shi, the “father” of modern vernacular writing, highlighting the Hu Shi’s conditional acceptance of the classical language:

For example, Hu Shi, the main proponent of *baihua* literature, also said in “An Expository of *Baihua*”: “It does no harm to throw in a few words of *wenyan*.” In “A Constructive Theory of Literary Revolution,” he further explained: “In a situation where *wenyan* is necessary, we will use it to facilitate writing...”

以提倡白话文学的主帅胡适自己为例，他在《白话解》里也曾经说过，“不妨夹杂几个文言字眼”。在《建设的文学革命论》中，他更说，“有不得不用文言的，便用文言来辅助”.....¹⁰

Yu Guangzhong’s overall opinion of Hu Shi, however, was rather negative. The problem was essentially the relationship between artistic production and the masses (*dazhong* 大众). This ideological criticism was expressed more explicitly in another article titled “Surrounded by the Tunes of the Chu State, Talking about Literature,” published in *Literary Star* in July 1962. The article was part of a collective response by intellectuals in Taiwan to a Hong Kong opera film of *The Butterfly Lovers*, which gained massive viewership that summer. Yu Guangzhong criticized the film by first criticizing the masses’ taste:

⁹ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), 26.

¹⁰ The quote here is from Hu Shi’s letter to Qian Xuantong in the January 1918 issue of *New Youth*, in which Hu Shi mentioned having written an article titled “An Expository of *Baihua*.” The letter reads:

“吾曾作《白话解》释白话之义，约有三端：

(一)白话的“白”，是戏台上“说白”的白，是俗语“土白”的白。故白话即是俗语。

(二)白话的“白”，是“清白”的白，是“明白”的白。白话但须要“明白如话”，不妨夹杂几个文言的字眼。

(三)白话的“白”，是“黑白”的白。白话便是干干净净没有堆砌涂饰的话，也不妨夹入几个明白易晓的文言字眼。”

See Hu Shi 胡适 and Qian Xuantong 钱玄同, “Tongxin: lun xiaoshuo ji baihua yunwen 通信：论小说及白话韵文 [Letters: on fiction and vernacular verse],” *Xin qingnian* 新青年 [New Youth] 4, no. 1 (January 1918): 77; Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Feng ya chun 凤·鸦·鹑 [The phoenix, the crow, and the quail],” 26.

The masses don't understand art. At least two kinds of people will challenge this view of mine: The first kind is the followers of "plebeian literature" and the second kind is the Communist Party. Both claim that literature should become massified, but the former believes that literature should be easy to understand, accessible, and liked by the masses, and the latter believes that literature should serve the workers, peasants, and soldiers, and show class consciousness. The representative of the former is Hu Shi, and the representative of the latter is Mao Zedong. To compare Hu Shi to Mao Zedong is certainly inappropriate. I respect and admire Hu Shi, and I support his democratic political theory, but I do not agree with his democratic literary theory...The masses don't understand literature. Or, one can say, the masses don't care about literature at all. This is an undebatable phenomenon.

大众不懂艺术。至少有两种人会反对我这看法：一种是“平民文学”的信徒们，一种是共产党。两者都是主张文学应该大众化的；只是前者以为文学应该平易近人，应该为大众所喜爱，后者以为文学应该为工农兵服务，应该表现阶级意识。前者的代表是胡适，后者的代表是毛泽东。胡毛相提并论，当然是不伦不类的。我敬爱胡适，我赞成他的政治民主论，但不同意他的文学民主论。.....大众不懂文学。或者说，大众根本不在乎文学，是一种无可争论的现象。¹¹

In this comment, Mao Zedong and Hu Shi were juxtaposed and assigned into the same category of the ideology of literature. Historically, however, Mao and Hu Shi certainly did not belong to the same category. Chinese Marxist writers affiliated with the League of Left-Wing Writers had campaigned for "the massification of literature and the arts" in the 1930s and 40s. This leftist project of "massification" considered the "May Fourth-style *baihua*" a bourgeois literary language belonging to the "learned men and Europeanized youth,"¹² and therefore wanted to part ways with the May Fourth-New Cultural Movement and its version of literary production. On the other hand, Hu Shi, skeptical of Marxism but welcoming of the notion of a

¹¹ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), "Chu ge si mian tan wenxue 楚歌四面谈文学 [Surrounded by the tunes of the Chu state, talking about literature]," *Wen xing* 文星, no. 69 (July 1, 1963): 40. This article and the other film criticism on the July 1963 issue of *Literary Star* merit a more thorough cultural historical examination. Taiwan's reaction to the film's popularity should be understood in the context of the Cold War cultural politics of Chinese-language film production in Hong Kong, and in relation to a prior mainland production of *The Butterfly Lovers* (1954, Shanghai Film Studio).

¹² Shi Tie'er 史铁儿, "Puluo dazhong wenyi de xianshi wenti 普洛大众文艺的现实问题 [The realistic question of proletarian literature]," *Wenxue* 文学 1, no. 1 (1932): 10.

literature for the masses, defended the “May Fourth-style *baihua*” on the grounds that it was already sufficient for the masses. He saw no need for an additional linguistic revolution by the Marxist writers to further massify vernacular writing.¹³ These were the two lines of argument for “mass literature” in modern Chinese literary history; in a way, they reflected the opposing theories of democracy from the two ends of the Cold War divide. That said, in the 1963 article against massification, Yu Guangzhong slotted them under one category, albeit admitting the “inappropriateness.”

But the convenience of the comparison of Hu Shi to Mao Zedong is that it allows Yu Guangzhong to position his own opinion in contrast to the two men, a third opinion, which forbids the democratization of the arts entirely. Yu Guangzhong’s thesis in *Literary Star* articles was that the underwhelming language style of New Literature is caused by the political agenda of its writers, by their desire to make literature serve a mass readership. Rejecting both the Marxist and non-Marxist literary theories of the masses, he exalted the difficulty of classicism and modernism, and saw no problem in confining the arts to the learned men.

On this issue of the relationship between literature and the masses, one particular context could offer additional clues to understanding Yu Guangzhong’s viewpoint, that is, the national language movement in post-war Taiwan. The island had a particularly complex linguistic topology: Since premodern times, local ethnic groups and mainland migrants had been speaking different languages; Japanese occupation up until 1945 implemented a Japanese language policy; by the time the Kuomintang gained control in Taiwan, residents on the island could speak their own dialects or Japanese, but often did not know modern Chinese which is based on Mandarin.

¹³ Hu Shi 胡适, “Dazhongyu zai naer 大众语在那儿 [Where is the massified language to be found],” in *Hu Shi quanji* 胡适全集 [The complete works of Hu Shi], vol. 4 (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe 安徽教育出版社, 2003), 577.

The Nanjing government, aware of the need of language education in the former colony, mobilized forces from its existing “National Language Promotion Committee” to teach Taiwanese people Chinese.¹⁴ In 1946, “Taiwan Provincial Committee of National Language Promotion” (Taiwan sheng guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui 台湾省国语推行委员会) was dispatched to the south.

As Chapter 2 of the dissertation has shown, modern Chinese literacy pedagogy, especially in the early years, was based on the reading of New Literature works; in post-war Taiwan, the “National Language” to be taught was the language of New Literature. This connection is already clear from a bureaucratic viewpoint, because the various Committees of National Language Promotion created by the Kuomintang in the early- to mid-twentieth century always consisted of personnel who either participated in or were heavily indebted to the New Culture Movement of the 1910s and 20s. A large number of committee members had ties to the Chinese Department of Peking University.¹⁵ With the end of Japanese rule in Taiwan, the Chinese department of Taiwan University compiled an anthology-type textbook, edited by Xu Shoushang, then head of the department. The textbook included works by leftist writers such as

¹⁴ Huang Yingzhe 黄英哲 (Huang Ying-che), “Wei Jiangong yu zhanhou Taiwan ‘guoyu’ yundong (1946-1968) 魏建功与战后台湾‘国语’运动 (1946-1968) [Wei Jiangong and the ‘national language’ movement of post-war Taiwan (1946-1968)],” *Taiwan wenxue yanjiu xuebao* 台湾文学研究学报, no. 1 (2005): 79–107; Huang Mei-e 黄美娥, “Shenyin, wenti, guoti--zhanhou chuqi guoyu yundong yu taiwan wenxue (1945-1949) 声音·文体·国体——战后初期国语运动与台湾文学 (1945-1949) [The voice, the form of writing, and the form of state: the national language movement in the early post-war period and Taiwan literature (1945-1949)],” *Dongya guannianshi ji kan* 东亚观念史集刊, no. 3 (December 2012): 232 n14; Xu Yue 徐钺, “Wenxue geming shiqi de ‘guoyu’ yu ‘baihua’: yi Hu Shi yu Li Jinxi wei zhongxin 文学革命时期的‘国语’与‘白话’——以胡适与黎锦熙为中心 [The ‘national language’ and ‘vernacular language’ in the period of the literary revolution: centering on Hu Shi and Li Jinxi],” *Wenxue pinglun* 文学评论, no. 2012(4) (July 2012): 137.

¹⁵ Huang Yingzhe 黄英哲 (Huang Ying-che), “Wei Jiangong yu zhanhou Taiwan ‘guoyu’ yundong (1946-1968) 魏建功与战后台湾‘国语’运动 (1946-1968) [Wei Jiangong and the ‘national language’ movement of post-war Taiwan (1946-1968)],” 100n32; Huang Mei-e 黄美娥, “Shenyin, wenti, guoti--zhanhou chuqi guoyu yundong yu taiwan wenxue (1945-1949) 声音·文体·国体——战后初期国语运动与台湾文学 (1945-1949) [The voice, the form of writing, and the form of state: the national language movement in the early post-war period and Taiwan literature (1945-1949)],” 235.

Lu Xun, Guo Moruo, and Xia Yan, although it was abolished after the civil war due to the censoring of those authors. A similar textbook that came out in 1947 was edited by the chair of the Taiwan Provincial National Language Promotion Committee, Wei Jiangong (魏建功 1901-1980), with a selection of texts by Yuan Ren Chao, Ye Shengtao, Lao She, Cao Yu, Lu Xun, Hu Shi, etc.¹⁶

In 1963, Yu Guangzhong wrote in *Literary Star* that the contemporary Chinese essay genre suffered from several stylistic faults. One of the problems he enumerated was that the style of the essay is overly “bland” (*dan* 淡) and “plain” (*su* 素). Yu Guangzhong associated this style with the national language movement:

Because they are too enthusiastic about the national language movement, or because they have been teaching middle and elementary school Chinese for too long, these authors hallucinate that every reader is the target of national language education. Moreover, they want all writers, including poets, to only write in a *baihua* as plain as a noodle soup whose soup is just boiled water....When they see a word of *wenyan* in other people’s essays, these writers would get so upset as though they have found sand - no, a dead fly - in a bowl of steamed rice. They hallucinate that this mixing of *wenyan* and *baihua* is the pitfall of essay writing.

由于过分热心地进行国语运动，或长期教授中小学的国语或国文，这类作者竟幻觉一切读者都是国语教育的对象，更进一步，要一切作家（包括诗人）只写清汤挂面式的白话文。.....在别人的散文里看到一个文言，这类作者会像在饭碗里发现发现一粒沙，不，一只苍蝇，那么难过。她们幻想这种“文白不分”是散文的致命伤。¹⁷

¹⁶ Mei Jialing 梅家玲 (Mei Chia-ling), “Zhanhou chuqi Taiwan de guoyu yundong yu yuwen jiaoyu--yi Wei Jiangong yu Taiwan daxue de guoyuwen jiaoyu wei zhongxin 战后初期台湾的国语运动与语文教育——以魏建功与台湾大学的国语文教育为中心 [National language movement and the literacy education: centering on Wei Jiangong and the national language-literature education of Taiwan University],” *Taiwan wenxue yanjiu ji kan* 台湾文学研究集刊, no. 7 (February 2010): 142–43.

¹⁷ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Jiandiao sanwen de bianzi 剪掉散文的辫子 [Cutting the hair queue for the essay genre],” *Wen xing* 文星, no. 68 (June 1, 1963): 6. For a translation of this article, see Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Cutting Off the Prose Braids,” in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Literary Taiwan*, ed. Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, Michelle Yeh, and Ming-ju Fan, trans. Valerie Levan (Columbia University Press, 2014), 240–43.

The point of contention here is that Yu Guangzhong, as he stated in “The Phoenix, the Crow, and the Quail,” separated literature from the functional use of a language. While his poetry and literary criticism were both profoundly inspired by both Classical Chinese and European literature, the fact that many people could not even read in Chinese (or did not speak Standard Modern Chinese that is based on Mandarin) fell out of his scope, along with the question of how those people could engage with literature. The national language movement was then reduced to a syllabus of texts written in “impoverished and monotonous” Chinese. He urged that those works be taken off the list.

In this context, Yu Guangzhong’s criticism of the “May Fourth style” was characteristically youthful, that is, it is motivated by the ambition that the next generation of writers, of which he was a member, could enter and ascend the literary field. In another influential essay, titled “Lower the Flag of May Fourth to Half-staff!” (下五四的半旗!) and published on May 1, 1964 in *Literary Star*, he pronounced May Fourth dead, but narrated its funeral from a first-person plural point of view, “we.” This “we” most clearly marked the motif of generational succession. The symbolic funeral of the literary canon is at once the stage where the younger generation of writers enter the scene, marching “amid the sounds of the golden bugle and silver drums of *modern* literature and art,”¹⁸ lauding the eventual passing of the “old grandmother” of the New Cultural Movement. In retrospect, Yu Guangzhong’s hope for generational succession did materialize. “The age of aestheticization” arrived with the

¹⁸ My italic. Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Lower the Flag to Half-Mast for May Fourth!,” in *The Columbia Sourcebook of Literary Taiwan*, ed. Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, Michelle Yeh, and Ming-ju Fan, trans. Valerie Levan (Columbia University Press, 2014), 244–46; Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Xia Wu Si de banqi! 下五四的半旗! [Lower the flag of May Fourth to Half-staff!],” *Wen xing* 文星, no. 79 (May 1, 1964): 196.

international success of the Taiwan modernists. In 1989, Yu Guangzhong edited a 15-volume anthology of Chinese writing in Taiwan, titling it as a sequel to the 1935 *Compendium of Chinese New Literature*; a further anthology came out in 2003 for works written after 1989.¹⁹

Concerning methodology, Yu Guangzhong's literary criticism from the period of *Literary Star* did not utilize textual evidence. "Cutting the Hair Queue for the Essay Genre," for example, categorizes four types of essay styles, but there is no quotation of textual examples of those styles. The article mentions the names of four modern Chinese writers, but eleven pre-modern Chinese writers and seventeen foreign writers or thinkers who do not write the kind of essay that the article is critiquing. The only block quote in the article is in English, an example of bad academic prose quoted by Bertrand Russell in his essay "How I Write" (1956),²⁰ that is, in a radically comparative move, the critic uses an English passage to illustrate a style in contemporary Chinese, of which no Chinese quote is presented. Similar is the method of analysis in "The Phoenix, the Crow, and the Quail." The criticism of the impoverished and monotonous style of May Fourth writers is delivered without textual analysis, whereas a block quote from an eleventh-century poet is used to demonstrate the aesthetic accomplishment of classical literature.

Moreover, aesthetic categories from classical Chinese literary criticism are prevalent in the *Literary Star* articles. The critic relies on the adjectives to characterize the literary works and writers he likes or dislikes. On the styles of essays in modern Chinese writing, he writes that

¹⁹ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), ed., *Zhonghua xiandai wenxue daxi: Taiwan 1970-1989* 中华现代文学大系：台湾一九七〇——一九八九 [Compendium of Chinese modern literature: Taiwan, 1970-1989] (Taipei: Jiu ge chubanshe 九歌出版社, 1989).

²⁰ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), "Jiandiao sanwen de bianzi 剪掉散文的辫子 [Cutting the hair queue for the essay genre]," 5-6; Bertrand Russell, "How I Write," in *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell*, ed. Robert E. Egner and Lester E. Denonn (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 37.

some are “too heavy and too garish,” while others are “too bland and too plain”;²¹ comparing Chinese essayists to English writers, he writes that Qian Zhongshu is “sharp and spicy like Swift,” Liang Shiqiu is “humorous and approachable like Lamb,” and Li Ao is “sober and vibrant like Russell.”²² In another article on Tang poetry, he praises the poetic society around Han Yu by comparing it to European artistic movements: “If one is to describe them with the adjectives from European art, then one can say that this school of poets possesses, concurrently, the absurdity and perfunctoriness of the Baroque and the mysteriousness and horror of the Gothic.”²³ In these various ways, Yu Guangzhong’s literary criticism in the early 1960s exemplify the impressionistic approach to style.

In sum, Yu Guangzhong’s early literary criticism did not describe the formal characteristics of the language style he fought against. Although he sought to establish a system of stylistic criteria, through which good writings could be distinguished from the “impoverished and monotonous” ones, there was not a method of engagement with primary texts with which to argue directly why some texts are better than others. In the next two decades, a linguistic approach would mature in his scholarship to provide textual examples for the stylistic hierarchy he intended to construct. The rest of this chapter will outline the development of this approach.

Hong Kong: “On Zhu Ziqing’s Essays”

In 1974, Yu Guangzhong joined the faculty of Chinese University of Hong Kong (hereafter CUHK). The rest of the 1970s was a particularly productive period for his scholarship

²¹ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Jiandiao sanwen de bianzi 剪掉散文的辫子 [Cutting the hair queue for the essay genre],” 6.

²² “犀利而辛辣”; “诙谐而亲切”; “清醒而明快.” Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), 5.

²³ “兼有巴洛克 (Baroque) 的怪诞和敷衍, 葛德式 (Gothic) 的神秘和震悚。” Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Xiangya ta dao baiyu lou 象牙塔到白玉楼 [From the ivory tower to the white jade hall],” *Wen xing* 文星, no. 77 (March 1, 1964): 48.

on modern Chinese language and literature. A dozen articles were published, including four influential single-author studies on major writers of the Republican period: Dai Wangshu, Guo Moruo, Wen Yiduo, and Zhu Ziqing.²⁴ Comparing the Hong Kong articles to the articles on *Literary Star* a decade before, many of the claims were similar, and the critic's preference for a classically inclined writing style was also unchanged. However, the new articles departed from the prior ones in two significant ways. The first is the way the critic engaged with primary text, specifically, his turn to the analysis of grammar and rhetoric. Second, concurrently with the methodological shift, the content of Yu Guangzhong's criticism of New Literature zoomed in on one specific feature of its language style, that is, grammatical Europeanization. The new approach to text analysis and the new thematic focus were complementary. A good example to illustrate the methodological and thematic changes is a controversial and well-read article from this period, one of the single-author studies, first published in 1977 in *Chung Wai Literary Monthly* and titled "On Zhu Ziqing's Essays" (*Lun Zhu Ziqing de sanwen* 论朱自清的散文).

Yu Guangzhong was teaching classes on modern Chinese literature when he came up with the single-author studies. Literary scholar Yvonne Sung-sheng Chang and Yu Guangzhong's biographers all suggest that the studies directly resulted from his teaching.²⁵ Even

²⁴ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), "Lun Zhu Ziqing de sanwen 论朱自清的散文 [On Zhu Ziqing's essays]," *Zhong wai wenxue* 中外文学 [Chung Wai Literary Monthly] 6, no. 4 (September 1, 1977): 4–22; Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), "Wen Yiduo de san shou shi 闻一多的三首诗 [Three poems by Wen Yiduo]," in *Qing qing bian chou* 青青边愁 [Homesick Border Blues] (Taipei: Chun wenxue chubanshe 纯文学出版社, 1977), 187–96; Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), "Ping Dai Wangshu de shi 评戴望舒的诗 [On Dai Wangshu's poetry]," in *Qing qing bian chou* 青青边愁 [Homesick Border Blues] (Taipei: Chun wenxue chubanshe 纯文学出版社, 1977), 157–86; Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), "Xin shi de pingjia--chouyang ping Guo Moruo de shi 新诗的评价——抽样评郭沫若的诗 [The evaluation of new poetry: commenting on a sample of poems by Guo Moruo]," in *Qing qing bian chou* 青青边愁 [Homesick Border Blues] (Taipei: Chun wenxue chubanshe 纯文学出版社, 1977), 197–212.

²⁵ Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, *Literary Culture in Taiwan: Martial Law to Market Law* (Columbia University Press, 2004), 221n19; Fu Mengli 傅孟丽, *Zhuyu de haizi--Yu Guangzhong zhuan* 茱萸的孩子——余光中传 (Shanghai: Yuandong chubanshe 远东出版社, 2006), 106.

though, as a literary critic, Yu Guangzhong renounced the canon of New Literature, when he became a teacher of Chinese literature, that canon remained on the syllabus. An earlier and shorter version of the essay appeared in a magazine in Hong Kong in July and August, before the final version, third times the length, was published on *Chung Wai Literary Monthly*.²⁶

“On Zhu Ziqing’s Essays” begins with a direct rejection of prior positive assessments of Zhu Ziqing’s works, quoting a long line of aesthetic categories that have been used to praise Zhu Ziqing’s style.²⁷ The critic then declares those aesthetic categories inaccurate. Turning to linguistic tools, the critic presents a technical analysis of Zhu Ziqing’s literary language. Based on this analysis, he judges the essayist’s style banal, redundant, and Europeanized, hence replacing the conventional aesthetic categories with his new, less positive ones.

One of the focal points in his grammatical analysis was the use of the particle *de* 的. The particle, absent in Classical Chinese, serves complex functions in modern Mandarin, one of which is to connect a noun to its preceding modifier. In Yu Guangzhong’s analysis, a short quote from an essay by Zhu Ziqing, merely four words long but containing a pattern of repetition of the *de*’s, receives a long censure:

(f) “the bent willow’s sparse shadows”

The failing of example (f) is self-evident. With so many *de*’s in a row, no one can understand what is modifying what. When a string of three or four adjectives piles up disorderly on top of a noun, the syntax is stiff, and its rhythm is rigid. This is a major flaw of New Literature in sentence constructions. Flaubert [sic] once said:

²⁶ Shan Dexing 单德兴 (Shan Te-Hsing), *Cong wenhua lengzhan dao lengzhan wenhua: Jinri shijie de wenxu chuanbo yu wenhua zhengzhi* 从文化冷战到冷战文化：《今日世界》的文学传播与文化政治 [From the cultural Cold War to the Cold War culture: the literary communication and cultural politics of *World Today*], 97.

²⁷ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Lun Zhu Ziqing de sanwen 论朱自清的散文 [On Zhu Ziqing’s essays],” September 1, 1977, 5.

“The adjective is the enemy of the noun.”²⁸ Something for all writers to consider carefully.

(六) 弯弯的杨柳的稀疏的倒影

例六之病一目了然；一路乱“的”下去，谁形容谁，也看不清。一连串三四个形容词，漫无秩序地堆在一个名词上面，句法僵硬，节奏刻板，是早期新文学造句的一大毛病。福罗贝尔所云：“形容词乃名词之死敌，”值得一切作家仔细玩味。²⁹

In this example, the impressionistic sketch is still present in the adjectives “stiff” and “rigid,” but the impressionistic critic is quickly overtaken by a not-so-impressionistic urge to exhaustively unpack the miniscule units of the literary language. Furthermore, the urge of unpacking is fulfilled by a linguistic terminology, such as “adjective,” “noun,” “syntax,” and “to modify.” It is linguistics that provides the critic with the abstract vocabulary that enables him to expand a quote of four words into a paragraph-long analysis.

Yu Guangzhong identifies several other instances of misused *de*'s in Zhu Ziqing's most reputable essays, for example:

“The oars gurgled and we began to taste, splashing a rose-colored history, Qinhuai River's flavor.”

Only after a careful analysis can one understand that the “flavor” [the authors] taste is “the flavor of Qinhuai River” and that Qinhuai River is splashing something, which is “history.” What kind of “history”? “Rose-colored history.” This is truly an unnecessary complication. Asking for trouble. But overcomplication is not the only failing of this sentence. It is also ambiguous, because it admits several different readings. It can mean “we began to taste the flavor of the Qinhuai River which was splashing a rose-colored history.” It can also mean “we began to taste the Qinhuai River which was historical and was splashing rosy colors.”

²⁸ It is a quote from Voltaire, not Flaubert. “L’adjectif est l’ennemi du substantif.” Attributed to Voltaire by Arthur Schopenhauer. Arthur Schopenhauer, “Authorship and Style,” in *Essays of Schopenhauer*, trans. Sara Hay Dircks (Auckland, N.Z.: Floating Press, 2010), 56.

²⁹ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Lun Zhu Ziqing de sanwen 论朱自清的散文 [On Zhu Ziqing's essays],” September 1, 1977, 17.

于是桨声汨——汨，我们开始领略那晃荡着蔷薇色的历史的秦淮河的滋味了。

仔细分析，才发现朱自清和俞平伯领略的“滋味”是“秦淮河的滋味”，而秦淮河正晃荡着一样东西，那便是“历史”。什么样的“历史”呢？“蔷薇色的历史”。这真是莫须有的繁琐，自讨苦吃。但是这样的句子，不但繁琐，恐怕还有点暧昧，因为它能不止一种读法。我们可以读成：我们开始领略那“晃荡着蔷薇色的历史”的“秦淮河”的“滋味”了。也可以读成：我们开始领略那“晃荡着蔷薇色”的“历史的秦淮河”的“滋味”了。³⁰

These examples and their analysis are pitted against Zhu Ziqing's own belief in the vernacularization of literature. Yu Guangzhong quotes a passage from a 1947 book co-authored by Zhu Ziqing and Ye Shengtao, a study guide for middle schoolers: "Using *wenyan* words in *baihua* writing is a method that is indeed not very suitable and even diminishing of its effect... The ideal *baihua* writing is pure. *Baihua* writing, at present and in the future, should aim at writing purely."³¹ Yu Guangzhong's textual analysis, on the other hand, aims to demonstrate that good writing does not come out of the pursuit of pure *baihua*. On the contrary, pure *baihua* injures literature, making it protracted, redundant, confusing. All of this does not differ from the critic's thesis in his 1960s essays, but textual examples and linguistic analysis are now provided in places they were not.

A triangular relationship surfaces, in the linguistic analysis, between colloquial Mandarin, Classical Chinese, and European grammar, as the three linguistic bases for the literary language of modern China. By measuring the relative proximity of a writer's language to these three positions, the style of any writer can be accessed linguistically. Under this framework, Yu Guangzhong's assessment of the language of New Literature is that it is overly Europeanized and

³⁰ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), 17–18.

³¹ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), 15.

lacks a healthy dose of Classical Chinese. The tension between Europeanization and classicism is evident in the analysis I am quoting below:

<i> “We can see, by the shore, on an empty boat, one or two dots of monotonous, exhausted, wavering, and unsettled lamp light.”

I call this a “pre-descriptive” sentence. Between the verb “to see” and the object “lamp light” stand four modifying phrases: “by the shore and on the boat,” “one or two dots of,” “monotonous and exhausted,” and “wavering and unsettled.” I call it a “pre-descriptive” sentence because all the modifiers in the sentence are placed before the noun. Of all the early writers of New Literature, at least half habitually used lengthy and overcomplicated pre-descriptive sentences.... We can change it into a “post-descriptive” sentence by moving at least two of the modifiers to the end of the sentence:

<ii> “We can see, by the shore, on an empty boat, one or two dots of lamp light, monotonous, exhausted, wavering and unsettled.”

Chinese syntax cannot afford too many pre-descriptive modifiers. Classical Chinese writing primarily uses post-descriptive sentences and rarely uses pre-descriptive sentences. Below is a sentence from *Chronicles of the Grand Historian*:

<iii> “Li Guang was tall, with ape-like arms. His expertise in archery was a natural talent.”

If an author of New Literature were to write it, it might become a lengthy pre-descriptive sentence:

<iv> Li Guang was a tall, ape-armed, and naturally-talented-in-archery hero.

Typical Chinese syntax is originally very loose, free, and full of elasticity. Once it is Europeanized into a post-descriptive sentence, it becomes stiff, rigid, and formulaic.

<i> 我们看见傍岸的空船上一星两星的，枯燥无力又摇摆不定的灯光。

... 是一个“前饰句”：动词“看见”和受词“灯光”之间，夹了“傍岸的空船上（的）”、“一星两星的”、“枯燥无力（的）”、“摇摆不定的”四个形容词；因为所有的形容词都放在名词前面，我称之为“前饰句”。早期的新文学作家里，至少有一半陷在冗长繁琐的“前饰句”中.....如果上述之句子改成 <ii>“我们看见傍岸的空船上一星两星的灯光，枯燥无力，摇摆不定”，则“前饰的”（pre-descriptive）形容词里至少有两个因换位而变质，成了“后饰

的”（post-descriptive）形容词了。中文句法负担不起太多前饰形容词，古文里多是后饰句，绝少前饰句。《史记》的句子：

<iii> 广为人长，猿臂，其善射亦天性也。

到了新文学早期作家笔下，很可能变成一个冗长的前饰句：

<iv> 李广是一个高个子的臂长如猿的天生善于射箭的英雄。

典型的中文句法，原很松动，自由，富于弹性，一旦欧化成为前饰句，就变得僵硬，死板，公式化了。³²

Yu Guangzhong's point here is that sentences <i> and <iv> are Europeanized, whereas sentences <ii> and <iii> sound natural in Chinese, for they break one long sentence into several small sections and place the modifiers at the end. This argument, in fact, needs to be much qualified, because sentences <i> and <iv> are not typical to English either. Colloquial English also places long modifiers after the noun, as an attributive clause. I rewrite Yu Guangzhong's sentence <iv> in English:

<v> Li Guang is a hero who is tall, naturally talented in archery, and has arms like those of an ape.

In this example, standard English style is in fact similar to Yu Guangzhong's conception of the high Classical Chinese style in *Chronicles of the Grand Historian*: Both English and Chinese delay the appearance of the modifiers by breaking them into “post-descriptive” clauses, and both are grammatically capable of doing so. That said, Yu Guangzhong's observation is correct that, in Classical Chinese, a long string of modifiers do not precede a noun. Classical Chinese writers do not produce sentence <iv>. In this regard, linguists agree with what Yu Guangzhong argues in his other essays, “On the Westernization of the Chinese Languages” and “Translation and

³² Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), 19–20. The roman numeral numbering is my addition and not in the original.

Creative Writing,”³³ that the long and multiple-embedded sentence structure came to Chinese in the 1910s and 20s, first appearing in translation, and then spreading to literary writing.

In sum, Yu Guangzhong’s critical writing on modern Chinese literature and translation in the Hong Kong period reflected a stylistic preference that was consistent with his earlier essays on *Literary Star*, but a new method of textual analysis entered his scholarship. This method would allow the critic to identify the textual evidence of his claim and argue for his viewpoint in an elaborate, technical manner, beyond the impressionistic sketch that is based on aesthetic categories. Moreover, he acquired a better degree of specification on his earlier thesis on vernacularization. With the new method of textual analysis, which borrows a linguistic terminology, he attributed certain characteristics of the language of New Literature to European grammatical influence.

How did a critic come to modify his method of criticism? What were his motivations, and what enabled him to do so? I find clues of methodological changes in the critic’s biography. The new method became available as a result of American cultural aid in Hong Kong and Taiwan, with the help of a discipline that Yu Guangzhong had been trained in, translation studies.

USA: Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War Era

The methods of American literary criticism reached Yu Guangzhong through three channels of influences which were enabled by US aid in post-war Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Before identifying and analyzing these channels of influence, I will first provide a brief outline

³³ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Lun Zhongwen zhi xihua 论中文之西化 [On the westernization of the Chinese language]”; Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Fanyi he chuanguo 翻译和创作 [Translation and writing],” in *Yu Guangzhong tan fanyi 余光中谈翻译* [Yu Guangzhong on translation] (Beijing: Zhongguo duiwai fanyi chubanshe 中国对外翻译出版公司, 2002), 30–43.

of the scholarship on Cold War US aid, which has made important contributions to Chinese literary studies in Taiwan as well as to American studies in the US, but is seldom considered by English-language scholarship on Chinese literature.

The impact of US public diplomacy on the literatures of its Asian allies has recently attracted the attention of literary scholars working in both Chinese and English. Among them, scholars in Taiwan have utilized both print and oral historical sources to reconstruct the history of United States Information Service in Hong Kong and Taiwan.³⁴ USIS is an agency established by Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1953 to engage in overseas intelligence and propaganda. In Hong Kong in 1956, the USIS employed more than 100 persons; globally, the agency “stationed 867 Americans abroad and employed 5,716 foreign nationals at posts in 80 countries,” with a budget up to \$6.8 million in one country’s office.³⁵ USIS supported a number of renowned modernist writers who attended the National Taiwan University (hereafter NTU), namely, authors such as

³⁴ Chen Jianzhong 陈建忠 (Chen Chien-Chung), “‘Meixinchu’ (USIS) yu Taiwan wenxueshi chong xie: yi meiyuan wenyi tizhi xia de tai gang zazhi chuban wei kaocha zhongxin ‘美新处’ (USIS) 与台湾文学史重写：以美援文艺体制下的台、港杂志出版为考察中心 [United States Information Services and the rewriting of Taiwan literary history: Focusing on magazine publication in Taiwan and Hong Kong under the US aid of arts and literature]”; Chang, “Taiwan lengzhan niandai de ‘fei changtai’ wenxue shengchan 台湾冷战年代的‘非常态’文学生产 [‘Non-normative’ literary production in Cold War Taiwan]”; Shan Dexing 单德兴 (Shan Te-Hsing), “Lengzhan shiqi de meiguo wenxu zhongyi : jinri shijie chubanshe zhi wenxue fanyi yu wenhua zhengzhi 冷战时期的美国文学中译：今日世界出版社之文学翻译与文化政治 [Chinese translation of American literature in the Cold War era: the literary translation and cultural politics of World Today Press],” in *Taiwan fanyi shi* 台湾翻译史 [History of translation in Taiwan], ed. Lai Ciyun 赖慈芸 (Lai Tzu-Yun) (Taipei: Lian jing 联经 [Linking], 2019), 467–514; Wang Meixiang 王梅香 (Mei-Hsiang Wang), “Lengzhan shidai de Taiwan wenxue wai yi: Meiguo xinwenchu yi shu jihua de yunzuo (1952-1962) 冷战时代的台湾文学外译：美国新闻处译书计划的运作 (1952-1962) [Outward translation of Taiwan literature in the Cold era: the operation of the translation projects of the United States Information Services (1952-1962)]”; Lai Ciyun 赖慈芸 (Lai Tzu-Yun), “San cheng ji: lengzhan shiqi Hu Gang Tai de yiben yu yizhe daqianyi 三城记：冷战时期沪台港的译本与译者大迁移 [A tale of three cities: the great migration of translations and translators in Shanghai, Taipei, and Hong Kong in the Cold War period],” in *Taiwan fanyi shi* 台湾翻译史 [History of translation in Taiwan], ed. Lai Ciyun 赖慈芸 (Lai Tzu-Yun) (Taipei: Lian jing 联经 [Linking], 2019), 553–84; Ouyang Zi 欧阳子 (Ouyang Tzu), “Guanyu Xiandai wenxue chuanguan shiqi de caiwu he zongwu 关于《现代文学》创办时期的财务及总务 [On the finance and administration of *Modern Literature* at the time of its founding]”; Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Ai tan di diao de gaoshou 爱弹低调的高手 [An expert playing low keys],” *Zhongguo shibao* 中国时报 [China Times], August 25, 1983.

³⁵ Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad*, 93.

Bai Xianyong 白先勇 (also romanized as Pai Hsien-yung, 1937-), Wang Wenxing 王文兴 (also romanized as Wang Wen-hsing, 1939-), as well as Yu Guangzhong. These writers all received US funding to study at the Iowa Writers' Workshop (hereafter IWW), and the USIS played a crucial role in securing their funding and travel documents, while helping them publish their writings in English.

Meanwhile, recent work in American studies has researched the global ideological exportation by the US in the Cold War period via its professionalization of “creative writing.”³⁶ Taiwan occupied a unique position in this network of influence. This was not only because, since the 1950s, a sizable cohort of writers including Yu Guangzhong have been recruited from Taiwan to Iowa. More importantly was the administrative role played by writer Nieh Hua-ling in the global network of creative writing. The director of the IWW, Paul Engel, met his future wife Nieh Hua-ling during a visit to Taiwan, which was also facilitated by the USIS in Taipei.³⁷ At Iowa, Nieh Hua-ling pushed for the creation of the International Writing Program.³⁸

In addition to influencing the *literature* of its Asian allies, US cultural diplomacy has also impacted *literary criticism* in those regions. In the postwar period, a unique context for the US funding of international writers is the fact that literary writing and criticism had not yet separated into discrete professions. Poets and writers were themselves critics and scholars. When those poets and writers received funding to study creative writing in the US, they did not just bring home American literary works, but also American scholarship on literature. In the mid-twentieth century, that scholarship meant New Criticism. As illustrated by Paul Nadal in a recent study,

³⁶ Bennett, *Workshops of Empire*; McGurl, *The Program Era*.

³⁷ Richard M. McCarthy, Interview with Richard M. McCarthy, interview by John O'Brien, December 28, 1988, The Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mfdipbib000781/>.

³⁸ Bennett, *Workshops of Empire*, 103–4, 114–15.

Filipino writers went to attend US universities and brought home the “new discipline” of New Criticism, which taught them “how to read” and “how to see [their] world.”³⁹ The cases of Taiwan closely resemble that of the Philippines.

In this context, in the 1960s and 70s, three channels of US influence reached Yu Guangzhong in Taiwan and Hong Kong and would have shaped his approach to literary criticism.

(1) Studying New Criticism at Iowa

Yu Guangzhong was among the many writers from NTU who received a US grant to study in the MFA program at Iowa. His funding was said to come from either the Asia Society,⁴⁰ or the US Congress;⁴¹ the writers who went after him, such as Wang Wenxing, Ouyang Zi, and Bai Xianyong, were the beneficiaries of US State Department funding administered by USIS.⁴² At Iowa, these writers learned New Criticism. Ouyang Zi, who, in addition to writing essays and short stories, also authored a renowned literary criticism volume on Bai Xianyong’s *Taipei People*, recalled in an interview in the 1970s:

My literary criticism papers generally align with the theory and methodology of New Criticism. This is because the instructors and students at the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, back in my time, criticized and interpreted literary works without a consideration of the biographical background of the author (which, instead,

³⁹ Nadal, “Cold War Remittance Economy,” 557.

⁴⁰ Fu Mengli 傅孟丽, *Zhuyu de haizi--Yu Guangzhong zhuan* 茱萸的孩子——余光中传, 49. Pending additional sources, I assume that “Yazhou xiehui” 亚洲协会 means the Asia Society, newly founded in the 1950s by John D. Rockefeller III.

⁴¹ Chang, “Taiwan lengzhan niandai de ‘fei changtai’ wenxue shengchan 台湾冷战年代的‘非常态’文学生产 [‘Non-normative’ literary production in Cold War Taiwan].” The funding likely came from “State Department” (*guowuyuan* 国务院) instead of “Congress” (*guohui* 国会); this may be a mistake or typo in the article.

⁴² Ouyang Zi 欧阳子 (Ouyang Tzu), “Guanyu Xiandai wenxue chuangan shiqi de caiwu he zongwu 关于《现代文学》创办时期的财务及总务 [On the finance and administration of *Modern Literature* at the time of its founding]”; Chen Jianzhong 陈建忠 (Chen Chien-Chung), “‘Meixinchu’ (USIS) yu Taiwan wenxueshi chong xie: yi meiyuan wenyi tizhi xia de tai gang zazhi chuban wei kaocha zhongxin ‘美新处’ (USIS) 与台湾文学史重写：以美援文艺体制下的台、港杂志出版为考察中心 [United States Information Services and the rewriting of Taiwan literary history: Focusing on magazine publication in Taiwan and Hong Kong under the US aid of arts and literature].”

should be the job of the “academic” critics). All we did was to discuss the work based on the work, examining its internal structure. Are the structural components interconnected? In other words, does the artistic form have integrity? This is the method that I got accustomed to, but I also genuinely believe that the analysis and discussion of the work itself can provide the best guidance for readers to appreciate literature and write literature. For this reason, even though I know people have been calling New Criticism outdated, I believe this method will remain effective as long as the artfulness of literature is universally recognized.

我写的文学批评论文，大致符合“新批评”的理论与方法，那是因为爱荷华创作班的师生，当年批评与解析文学作品，并不考究作者的出生背景等等（这是“学院派”的工作），全是就作品论作品，审视其内部结构各成分，是否互相关联，也就是说，艺术形式是否完整。我一方面是习惯了这种方法，一方面也真的相信，对于作品本身的分析讨论，最能指导读者鉴赏文学以及创作文学。所以，尽管有人说“新批评”早已过时，只要文学的艺术性被普遍承认，我想这种方法是永远有效的。⁴³

Upon completing their studies in the US, many of the writers took up academic positions in universities in Taiwan. Yu Guangzhong taught English at Normal University; Wang Wenxing taught at his alma mater, NTU, where he became known for a “slow reading method” that spends several hours of lecture time to teach a few sentences in a novel.⁴⁴ USIS continued to support their writing and scholarship, translating them and publishing them in English to be distributed internationally. This included Yu Guangzhong’s master’s thesis from Iowa, which was published in 1960 as *New Chinese Poetry*.⁴⁵

⁴³ Xia Zuli 夏祖丽, “Yizhi de yinghua: Ouyang Zi fangwen ji 移植的樱花——欧阳子访问记 [Replanted cherry blossom: interview with Ouyang Zi],” 179.

⁴⁴ For an overview of the method, see the published lecture notes of a class he taught on Katherine Mansfield’s “The Doll’s House”: Wang Wenxing 王文兴 (Wang Wen-hsing), *Wanjuwu jiu jiang 玩具屋九讲* [Nine lessons on *The Doll’s House*] (Taipei: Maitian 麦田, 2011).

⁴⁵ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Ai tan di diao de gaoshou 爱弹低调的高手 [An expert playing low keys]”; Shan Dexing 单德兴 (Shan Te-Hsing), *Cong wenhua lengzhan dao lengzhan wenhua: Jinri shijie de wenxu chuanbo yu wenhua zhengzhi 从文化冷战到冷战文化：《今日世界》的文学传播与文化政治* [From the cultural Cold War to the Cold War culture: the literary communication and cultural politics of *World Today*], 54. Also see Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), ed., *New Chinese Poetry*, trans. Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung) (Taipei: Heritage Press, 1960), <https://catalog.lib.uchicago.edu/vufind/Record/3133949>; Lan-hsi Chang Yin,

To be sure, to receive funding from an organization does not mean to subscribe to that organization's agenda. In the context of USIS' activities in Hong Kong and Taiwan, USIS was not able to wield full ideological control over the projects and people they funded. Its employees were tolerated for a certain degree of ideological dissent.⁴⁶ Therefore, to identify the means of assistance by the US government is not to argue that writers who were the beneficiaries of this assistance must have been ideologically shaped by US propaganda. But on the specific issue of the methodology of literary criticism, writers including Yu Guangzhong had their initial exposure to New Criticism from their contact with the American academia, which would not have been possible without US funding that was allocated to serve its Cold War agenda. To quote again from N. V. M. Gonzales, the Philippine National Artist for Literature that is the center of Nadal's study: "How to read was still the problem, and the new discipline [New Criticism] taught me this... I couldn't have learned how to see my world without this training."⁴⁷

(2) Chinese New Critics

The second channel of influence, unlike the first, is the work of Chinese New Critics based in Asia. At the time, two men, respectively based in Hong Kong and Taipei, could be considered the leading Chinese New Critics: Li Yinghao 李英豪 (1941-) and Yan Yuanshu. Both were linked to Yu Guangzhong's social circles. Li Yinghao, who graduated from a Teacher's College in Hong Kong and taught in a village elementary school before becoming an

New Voices: Stories and Poems by Young Chinese Writers (Taipei: Heritage Press, 1961); Luqin Wu, ed., *New Chinese Writing* (Taipei: Heritage Press, 1962).

⁴⁶ Shan Dexing 单德兴 (Shan Te-Hsing), "Lengzhan shiqi de meiguo wenxue zhongyi : jinri shijie chubanshe zhi wenxue fanyi yu wenhua zhengzhi 冷战时期的美国文学中译：今日世界出版社之文学翻译与文化政治 [Chinese translation of American literature in the Cold War era: the literary translation and cultural politics of World Today Press]," 483n26.

⁴⁷ Nadal, "Cold War Remittance Economy," 557.

editor of a literary journal, also published in *Literary Star*.⁴⁸ Yan Yuanshu's case is more relevant, however (see Chapter 3 for more on Yan Yuanshu and New Criticism). Having obtained his PhD in English from Wisconsin, in the late 1960s, he began writing a series of articles that close-read—in the precise sense we now know this word—both Classical Chinese poetry and major modernist poets, including Yu Guangzhong.

These articles by Yan Yuanshu did not rely on a linguistic terminology, but in both form and content, they were precursors to Yu Guangzhong's single-author studies on Republican-era writers such as Zhu Ziqing. The connection is evident, for example, if we look at Yan Yuanshu's 1972 article on the poetry of Wai-lim Yip 叶维廉 (1937-) —another graduate of NTU and IWW. In this article, Yan Yuanshu criticized the poet for abusing the grammatical particle, *de*:

His lines are stuffed with the character “*de*.” The load of *de*'s makes some of the lines clumsy. For example:

Crossing a yellow muddy slope, frostbitten feet (page 5)

If we replace the “*zhi*” with another “*de*”, then this line will have three *de*'s in a total of ten characters.

他的诗行常常塞满“的”字。“的”字太多，使得若干诗行显得笨拙，如：

过黄泥之坡的冻疮的脚——五页

若把“之”换成“的”，十字之内便有三个的字。⁴⁹

In another article from 1970, Yan Yuanshu studied Yu Guangzhong's poetry. Yan Yuanshu quoted a poem by Yu Guangzhong where the trauma of losing the motherland in war is

⁴⁸ Chen Guoqiu 陈国球 (Kwok Kou Leonard Chan), “Xianggang wu liushi niandai xiandai zhuyi yundong yu Li Yinghao de wenxue piping 香港五、六十年代现代主义运动与李英豪的文学批评 [The modernist movement in Hong Kong in the 1950s and 60s and the literary criticism of Li Yinghao],” *Zhong wai wenxue* 中外文学 [Chung Wai Literary Quarterly] 34, no. 10 (March 2006): 7–42; Li Yinghao 李英豪, *Piping de shijue* 批评的视觉 [The vision of criticism] (Taipei: Wen xing shudian 文星书店, 1966).

⁴⁹ “*Zhi*” is a classical Chinese variant of “*de*.” Yan Yuanshu 颜元叔, “Ye Weilian de ‘ding xiang die jing’ 叶维廉的‘定向叠景’ [Wai-lim Yip's ‘oriented’ succession of images],” *Zhong wai wenxue* 中外文学 [Chung Wai Literary Monthly] 1, no. 7 (December 1972): 76.

compared to toothache.⁵⁰ Yan Yuanshu wrote: “We really can’t compare patriotic indignation or national humiliation to toothache... This is just an unsuitable simile.”⁵¹ Six years later, in “On Zhu Ziqing’s Essays,” Yu Guangzhong also called Zhu Ziqing’s simile inappropriate. On an instance where Zhu Ziqing compares “a little girl” to “flowery branches,” Yu Guangzhong wrote: “Not only is the language of this sentence shallow and superficial, but its simile is also unfitting. In general, little girls are innocent and naive. It is inappropriate to compare them to flowery branches.”⁵²

(3) Translation Studies in Hong Kong

But Yu Guangzhong’s comparative linguistic approach is still distinct from Yan Yuanshu’s close reading method, and this distinction will be best explained by the third and last channel of US influence—translation studies in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong, then a British colony, was a hub of China-watching for the US and a center for the translation and distribution of American publications in Asia, reaching beyond the South China Sea into Singapore and Malaysia. In particular, the Hong Kong branch of USIS worked directly with a publisher called World Today, which ran a monthly magazine and translated a large volume of American literature into Chinese. Scholar Leo Ou-fan Lee recalled in a 2004 interview that World Today Press shared the same building as the CIA; its budget came from the State Department.⁵³ Writer and translator Stephen Soong 宋淇 (Song Qi, also known as Lin

⁵⁰ “有一个名字剧烈如牙痛/咬一口痛一阵从旧金山到金门。” Yan Yuanshu 颜元叔, “Yu Guangzhong de xiandai Zhongguo yishi 余光中的现代中国意识 [The modern Chinese consciousness of Yu Guangzhong],” *Chun wenxue* 纯文学 7, no. 5 (May 1970): 146.

⁵¹ Yan Yuanshu 颜元叔, 146.

⁵² “花枝招展.” Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Lun Zhu Ziqing de sanwen 论朱自清的散文 [On Zhu Ziqing’s essays],” September 1, 1977, 10.

⁵³ Shan Dexing 单德兴 (Shan Te-Hsing), “Lengzhan shiqi de meiguo wenxue zhongyi: jinri shijie chubanshe zhi wenxue fanyi yu wenhua zhengzhi 冷战时期的美国文学中译: 今日世界出版社之文学翻译与文化政治

Yiliang 林以亮, 1919-1996), who ran translation projects at World Today, was searching for competent English-Chinese translators, and his connection at the Taipei branch of the USIS recommended Yu Guangzhong.⁵⁴ Since then, Yu Guangzhong worked free-lance on translation projects of World Today, along with T. A. Hsia and Eileen Chang. Portions of “On Zhu Ziqing’s Essays” was first published in the eponymous magazine of the publisher, *World Today* (*Jinri shijie* 今日世界), before the full article came out in *Chung Wai Literary Monthly* in 1977.⁵⁵

It is World Today Press that, in 1961, published the first systematic translation of American New Criticism in Chinese, predating the works of Yan Yuanshu and Li Yinghao. *Anthology of American Literary Criticism* (*Meiguo wenxue piping xuan* 美国文学评论选) presents a large selection of the works of American critics up to 1951 (see Table 10). The articles were, according to the editor Stephen Soong, mostly handpicked by C. T. Hsia, who also helped obtain copyright.⁵⁶ Brooks, Pottle, Tate, Wellek, and Robert Penn Warren were selected in the volume, although the volume did not label itself “New Criticism” and also included non-New Critics such as Irving Babbitt.

[Chinese translation of American literature in the Cold War era: the literary translation and cultural politics of World Today Press],” 472.

⁵⁴ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Ai tan di diao de gaoshou 爱弹低调的高手 [An expert playing low keys]”; Shan Dexing 单德兴 (Shan Te-Hsing), *Cong wenhua lengzhan dao lengzhan wenhua: Jinri shijie de wenxu chuanbo yu wenhua zhengzhi* 从文化冷战到冷战文化：《今日世界》的文学传播与文化政治 [From the cultural Cold War to the Cold War culture: the literary communication and cultural politics of *World Today*]; Chen Jianzhong 陈建忠 (Chen Chien-Chung), “‘Meixinchu’ (USIS) yu Taiwan wenxueshi chong xie: yi meiyuan wenyi tizhi xia de tai gang zazhi chuban wei kaocha zhongxin ‘美新处’ (USIS) 与台湾文学史重写：以美援文艺体制下的台、港杂志出版为考察中心 [United States Information Services and the rewriting of Taiwan literary history: Focusing on magazine publication in Taiwan and Hong Kong under the US aid of arts and literature].”

⁵⁵ Shan Dexing 单德兴 (Shan Te-Hsing), *Cong wenhua lengzhan dao lengzhan wenhua: Jinri shijie de wenxu chuanbo yu wenhua zhengzhi* 从文化冷战到冷战文化：《今日世界》的文学传播与文化政治 [From the cultural Cold War to the Cold War culture: the literary communication and cultural politics of *World Today*], 97.

⁵⁶ Lin Yiliang 林以亮 (Stephen Soong), *Meiguo wenxue pinglun xuan* 美国文学评论选 [Anthology of American literary criticism], 4.

Table 10: Table of Contents of <i>Anthology of American Literary Criticism</i> (1961, Hong Kong: World Today Press) ⁵⁷				
	Article Title	Author	Source and Year	Translator
1	Tradition and Individual Talent 传统和个人的才真	T. S. Eliot	<i>Selected Essays: 1917-1932</i> , 1932	Hsia Tsi-an 夏济安
2	Romantic Morality: The Real 浪漫的道德之现实面	Irving Babbitt	<i>Rousseau and Romanticism</i> , 1919	Liang Shiqiu 梁实秋
3	Literary Theory, Criticism, and History 文学理论·批评·文学史	Rene Wellek and Austin Warren	<i>Theory of Literature</i> , 1949 (Harcourt)	Chen Wenyong 陈文涌
4	Freud and Literature 佛洛伊德与文学	Lionel Trilling	<i>The Liberal Imagination</i> , 1940	Si Guo 思果
5	What is Poetry 什么是诗?	Frederick A. Pottle	<i>The Idiom of Poetry</i> , 1946	Yue Ling 乐灵
6	The Language of Paradox 诗里面的矛盾语法	Cleanth Brooks	<i>The Well Wrought Urn</i> , 1947	Chih-ting 志清
7	The Three Types of Poetry 诗的三型	Allen Tate	<i>Reactionary Essays on Poetry and Ideas</i> , 1936	Yu Guangzhong 余光中
8	Yeats 叶芝论	Edmund Wilson	<i>Axel's Castle</i> , 1931	Fang Xin 方馨
9	Literature and Biography 文学与传记	Rene Wellek and Austin Warren	<i>Theory of Literature</i> , 1949 (Harcourt)	Tang Wenbing 唐文冰
10	Notes on the Decline of Naturalism 论自然主义小说之没落	Philip Rahv	<i>Image and Idea</i> , 1949	Qi Wenyu 齐文瑜
11	Hemingway 海明威论	Robert Penn Warren	<i>Kenyon Review</i> , Winter 1947	Eileen Chang 张爱玲
12	The New Criticism 新批评	J. E. Spingarn	<i>The New Criticism</i> , 1910	Wu Luqin 吴鲁芹
13	The Humanist Critic 人文主义的批评家	Douglas Bush	<i>Kenyon Review</i> , Winter 1951	Zhongzi 仲子
14	The Doctrine of Critical Relativism 文学批评的相对论	Frederick A. Pottle	<i>The Idiom of Poetry</i> , 1946	Li Xiang 李湘

⁵⁷ Lin Yiliang 林以亮 (Stephen Soong), *Meiguo wenxue pinglun xuan* 美国文学评论选 [Anthology of American literary criticism].

One of Yu Guangzhong's co-translators of the American literary criticism anthology merits particular attention here—Si Guo 思果, or Frederick Tsai—because Yu Guangzhong's linguistic analysis of style, to be seen in his scholarship in the 1970s, seems most directly aligned with the methodological model in a prior work of Si Guo's. A veteran translator of English literature, renowned essayist in Chinese, and instructor of translation at CUHK, Si Guo published a book-length study on English-Chinese translation in 1972, a widely reprinted pedagogical text that has been considered the theoretical pinnacle of the World Today translation enterprise.⁵⁸ Yu Guangzhong wrote an enthusiastic review of the book in 1973.

The indebtedness of Yu Guangzhong's textual analysis to Si Guo's *Studies in Translation* is both thematic and methodological. Thematically, as in "On Zhu Ziqing's Essays," *Studies in Translation* focuses on the criticism of Europeanized grammar. The book is not a theory of translation but a pedagogical handbook, with examples collected from a decade of teaching, aiming at treating the

Cai Zhuotang 蔡濯堂 (Frederick Tsai Chuo-tang, also known as Si Guo 思果, 1918-2004)

Born in Jiangsu Province, Si Guo dropped out of middle school after a year and became a trainee in a bank at the age of sixteen. He self-studied Chinese and English while working as an accountant and began submitting articles to newspapers in his twenties. Having moved to Hong Kong in 1949, he worked for the editorial department of the Asian edition of *Reader's Digest*. A Catholic, he also taught at the Holy Spirit Seminary in Hong Kong. In the 1960s, he was hired by the Research Center for Translation at the Chinese University of Hong Kong to teach in a non-degree advanced translation program. With Yu Guangzhong and others, Si Guo wrote essays about the Shatin district of Hong Kong, where CUHK was located; their works came to be dubbed "Shatin Literature." In the 1970s, he immigrated to the United States and returned to non-academic jobs in accountancy and real estate. Of his two influential books on translation, *Studies in Translation* (*Fanyi yanjiu* 翻译研究, first edition 1972) was prepared as instructional materials and published after seven years of teaching; *New Studies in Translation* (*Fanyi xinjiu* 翻译新究, 1980) was written in his spare time in the United States. His essays have been used widely in middle and high school textbooks in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

⁵⁸ Shan Dexing 单德兴 (Shan Te-Hsing), "Lengzhan shiqi de meiguowenxue zhongyi: jinri shijie chubanshe zhi wenxue fanyi yu wenhua zhengzhi 冷战时期的美国文学中译：今日世界出版社之文学翻译与文化政治 [Chinese translation of American literature in the Cold War era: the literary translation and cultural politics of World Today Press]," 488n35.

common challenges that translators face. The main challenge, simply put, was that the translator fails to make the translation sound like Chinese and instead produces an Anglicized language. Si Guo stated his position on this issue:

There are two basic approaches to translation. One suggests that a translated text needs to read like Chinese. It needs to retain the literary value of the original text. The other suggests that a translated text is a translated text and does not need to be like Chinese. The primary purpose is to retain the shape of the original text, whereas the literary value is a secondary issue.... I am one of those who believe that translation needs to read like Chinese.

.....

It is often the case that translators are affected by the English language and inadvertently destroy Chinese grammar. Of course, no one will translate “how do you do” into “[a literal translation of the four English words in the original order]. But, very likely, “it is evident that he lied” will become “[a literal translation of the English sentence].” The latter sentence does not follow Chinese grammar, but it can pass as Chinese - the catch is that it can pass as Chinese.

翻译有两种基本的态度。一种主张译文要像中文，要保存原文的文学价值；另一种主张译文就是译文，不一定像中文，主要是顾全原文的字面，原文文学价值再其次。.....我是主张翻译要像中文的人。⁵⁹

.....

翻译的人，往往受英文影响，不知不觉破坏了中文语法。当然我们不会把 how do you do 翻译成“如何做你做”，但极可能把 It is evident that he lied 译成：“这是明显的，他说了谎。”这一句不合汉语语法，但可以混过去——毛病就出在混得过去上。⁶⁰

This criticism of Europeanized grammar is explained with the analysis of grammar.

Studies in Translation collects a large number of example sentences; the author then explains and corrects the erroneous patterns one by one. The following table selects a few examples from the chapter on “sentence patterns”:

⁵⁹ Cai Siguo 蔡思果, *Fanyi yanjiu* 翻译研究 [Studies in Translation] (Hong Kong: Youlian 友联 [Union Press], 1972), 21.

⁶⁰ Cai Siguo 蔡思果, 72.

Table 11. Selected example sentences from Si Guo, <i>Studies in Translation</i>		
Erroneous Anglicized sentence patterns (my translation into English)	Si Guo's comments, edited	Si Guo's correction, if given (my translation into English)
这样的生气，以致…… ⁶¹ ...so angry, that...	This is an English sentence pattern.	
饿困和攻击帝国的京都达三年之久。 ⁶² ...starved, besieged, and attacked the capital of the empire for as long as three years.	The use of the conjunction “and” (<i>he</i> 和) is truly not good. This sentence is hard to correct, because in Chinese two verbs shouldn't be followed by one object. The only solution would be to change the entire structure.	使帝国的京城受饿、受困、被攻达三年之久。 ...made the capital of the empire starved, besieged, and attacked for as long as three years.
发起及控制民族运动 ⁶³ to initiate and to control the nationalist movement	Same as the previous example. Two verbs shouldn't be followed by one object.	发起民族运动，并加以控制 to initiate the nationalist movement and to control it
学生能够，也应该努力研究。 ⁶⁴ A student can, and should study hard.	Two modal verbs shouldn't be followed by one main verb.	学生应该努力研究，这是办得到的。 Students should study hard. This can be done.
来自乡间的青年 ⁶⁵ a young man from the countryside	This isn't a Chinese expression.	乡下青年 a country youth

A year after the first edition of *Studies in Translation*, in 1973, Yu Guangzhong wrote a review of Si Guo's book. He spoke highly of Si Guo's attention to this Europeanized grammatical style of Chinese, calling it a “thorough diagnosis” and “detailed remedy” to “the various symptoms of Europeanized abnormalities.”⁶⁶ In 1974, having just returned from his

⁶¹ Cai Siguo 蔡思果, 179.

⁶² Cai Siguo 蔡思果, 180.

⁶³ Cai Siguo 蔡思果, 180.

⁶⁴ Cai Siguo 蔡思果, 180.

⁶⁵ Cai Siguo 蔡思果, 180.

⁶⁶ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Biantong de yishu 变通的艺术 [The art of flexibility],” in *Yu Guangzhong tan fanyi 余光中谈翻译 [Yu Guangzhong on translation]* (Beijing: Zhongguo duiwai fanyi chubanshe 中国对外翻译出版公司, 2002), 61. “《翻译研究》针对畸形欧化的种种病态，不但详为诊断，而且细加治疗。”

second sojourn in US, Yu Guangzhong moved to Hong Kong and joined the faculty of CUHK, where Stephone Soong chaired the Research Centre for Translation and Si Guo was teaching.

Previously, Yu Guangzhong was trained as a scholar of English; at CUHK, he was for the first time a professor of Chinese. In a series of articles written in the late 1970s, Yu Guangzhong laid out a systematic critique of grammatical Europeanization in modern Chinese writing, which he called “westernized Chinese.”⁶⁷ This critique expanded the scope of Si Guo’s *Studies in Translation* on three aspects. First, Yu Guangzhong stressed that the grammatical westernization of the Chinese language was not just a problem of translation but has already affected all realms of language use in Chinese, including texts written in Chinese, and including the everyday language in newspapers and television.⁶⁸ Second, he argued that the historical condition for grammatical westernization is the linguistic reform that was synchronous with the emergence of New Literature since the late 1910s, for which Yu Guangzhong surveyed the arguments of Qian Xuantong, Lu Xun, and Fu Sinian.⁶⁹ All three felt strongly that the Chinese language needed a thorough revision: Qian Xuantong wanted China to speak Esperanto; Lu Xun “hard-translated” European writings via Japanese; Fu Sinian proposed to keep using Chinese characters but write them in European syntax. Although none of these radical proposals materialized in practice, Yu

⁶⁷ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Lun Zhongwen zhi xihua 论中文之西化 [On the westernization of the Chinese language]”; Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Cong xi er bu hua dao xi er hua zhi 从西而不化到西而化之 [From westernized but not digested to westernized and digested],” in *Fenshuiling shang* 分水岭上 [On the watershed] (Taipei: Chun wenxue chubanshe 纯文学出版社, 1981), 135–57; Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Zaoqi zuojia bi xia de xihua zhongwen 早期作家笔下的西化中文 [Westernized Chinese language in the writing of early writers],” in *Fenshuiling shang* 分水岭上 [On the watershed] (Taipei: Chun wenxue chubanshe 纯文学出版社, 1981), 123–34; Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Ai Zhongwen zhi shiwei 哀中文之式微 [An elegy to the decline of the Chinese language],” in *青青边愁* (Taipei: Chun wenxue chubanshe 纯文学出版社, 1977), 81–84.

⁶⁸ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Cong xi er bu hua dao xi er hua zhi 从西而不化到西而化之 [From westernized but not digested to westernized and digested].”

⁶⁹ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Lun Zhongwen zhi xihua 论中文之西化 [On the westernization of the Chinese language].”

Guangzhong argued that they provided the impetus to the grammatical changes that currently afflict Chinese writing. Thirdly, and most importantly for the study of literary style, Yu Guangzhong proposed that grammatical Europeanization is major artistic flaw of New Literature in the “May Fourth style.”

The methodological shift took place in Yu Guangzhong’s criticism. In “Westernized Chinese in the Works of Early Twentieth-century Authors” (1979), for example, Yu Guangzhong discussed six authors: Lu Xun, Zhou Zuoren, Xu Zhimo, Shen Congwen, He Qifang, and Ai Qing.⁷⁰ The article is divided into six sections. Each section begins with a quote. After allowing his reader to inspect the quote, the critic reveals the author of the quote and analyzes the quote in relation to the overall writing style of that author. Similar to Si Guo’s approaches in *Studies in Translation*, the quotes are “examples of the bad,”⁷¹ selected to illustrate the prevalence of Europeanized grammar. The structure of this article most clearly reflects the new method: Literary criticism begins with an excerpt of the primary text; criticism is nothing but the analysis of certain kinds of telling details in the primary text. This approach to criticism replaced the old approach, evident in Yu Guangzhong’s work in *Literary Star* in the mid-1960s, where no primary text is quoted or given an explicit analysis of, even though the critic’s main claim was largely unchanged from the 1960s to the 1970s.

Interlude: A Brief Historiography of Europeanized Chinese Grammar

Before concluding this chapter with a case study of the reception of Yu Guangzhong’s criticism in mainland China in the 1990s, I am turning to a brief historiography of the debates

⁷⁰ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Zaoqi zuojia bi xia de xihua zhongwen 早期作家笔下的西化中文 [Westernized Chinese language in the writing of early writers].”

⁷¹ Cai Siguo 蔡思果, *Fanyi yanjiu* 翻译研究 [Studies in Translation], 13.

about Europeanized Chinese grammar in the first half of the twentieth century. The goal is both to contextualize Si Guo and Yu Guangzhong's critique and to use this history to elucidate the unique character of the linguistic approach to style.

Discussions about the Europeanization of Chinese grammar began in the late 1910s and have not rested since then. Opinions typically fall under one of two categories: One position commends Europeanization as a useful means to develop the Chinese language, whereas the other equates Europeanized grammar to redundancy, confusion, and aesthetic impurity, and therefore cautions against it. Crucially, however, both positions are built on grammatical analysis. In other words, critics can agree on the description of the objective linguistic characteristics of Europeanization, but this will not lead to a resolution of the conflicting value judgments of those characteristics. The linguistic approach can identify textual evidence in a way that is independent from the judgment of the evidence, which is its advantage, but is also where its limits lie.

Two rounds of discussion from the early Republican period, involving renowned writers of the New Culture Movement, can be said to have laid the groundwork for the debates on Europeanization. The first round of discussion was inaugurated by Fu Sinian in 1918-19 and developed by Zheng Zhenduo and Mao Dun (using birthname Shen Yanbing) in 1921.⁷² These men were proponents of Europeanization, Fu Sinian being the most radical. They argued that Classical Chinese grammar had technical limitations that prevented modern Chinese people from

⁷² Fu Sinian 傅斯年, "Zenyang zuo baihua wen? 怎样做白话文? [How to write baihua?]," *Xinchao* 新潮 1, no. 2 (1919): 26-39; Yan Bing 雁冰, "Yutiwen Ouhua zhi wo guan (1) 语体文欧化之我观 (一) [My views on the Europeanization of vernacular writing (1)]," *Xiaoshuo yue bao* 小说月报 [Fiction monthly] 12, no. 6 (1921): 56; Zhen Duo 振铎, "Yutiwen Ouhua zhi wo guan (2) 语体文欧化之我观 (二) [My views on the Europeanization of vernacular writing (2)]," *Xiaoshuo yue bao* 小说月报 [Fiction monthly] 12, no. 6 (1921): 122; "Yutiwen Ouhua de taolun 语体文欧化的讨论 [Discussions on the Europeanization of vernacular writing]," *Wenxue xun kan* 文学旬刊, no. 7 (1921): 1-2.

expressing certain new feelings and thoughts, and by borrowing foreign grammar, Chinese language could be expanded to do what it had not been able to. They faced the criticism that Europeanized grammar is difficult to understand by Chinese readers, but they contended that the difficulty could be overcome with education. The second round of discussion was the famous feud between Lu Xun and Liang Shiqiu on “hard translations” (*ying yi* 硬译).⁷³ In 1929, Liang Shiqiu criticized Lu Xun’s translation of Soviet literary theorist Anatoly Lunacharsky via Japanese: “Who can understand such a bizarre sentence structure? ... The Chinese language is different from foreign languages. Some sentence patterns do not exist in Chinese... [When we translate] we may as well change the structure of the sentences.”⁷⁴ Lu Xun, in response, also pointed to the limitation of Chinese syntax. Introducing new sentence patterns into Chinese is not necessarily damaging, he suggested, but could instead develop and expand the Chinese language.⁷⁵

In a 1939 article, Zhu Ziqing, chair of the Chinese Department of Peking University as well as the wartime National South-West Associated University, reviewed these prior discussions and attempted a few instances of preliminary linguistic analysis of the Europeanized

⁷³ Scholarship on “hard translation” is abundant. For example, Carlos Rojas, “Translation as Method,” *Prism* 16, no. 2 (October 1, 2019): 221–35, <https://doi.org/10.1215/25783491-7978483>.

⁷⁴ Liang Shiqiu 梁实秋, “Lun Lu Xun xiansheng de ‘ying yi’ 论鲁迅先生的‘硬译’ [On Mr. Lu Xun’s ‘hard translations’],” *Xinyue* 新月 [The crescent] 2, no. 6–7 (1929): 193–96.

⁷⁵ For Lu Xun’s response to Liang Shiqiu, see Lu Xun 鲁迅, “Ying yi yu wenxue de jieji xing 硬译与文学的阶级性 [Hard translations and the class nature of literature],” in *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 [The complete works of Lu Xun], vol. 4 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 2005), 199–227.

Other sources on Lu Xun’s hard translations include Lu Xun 鲁迅, “Guanyu fanyi de tongxin 关于翻译的通信 [An Exchange on Translation]”; Lu Xun 鲁迅, “Wanxiao zhi dang ta shi wanxiao (shang) 玩笑只当它玩笑 (上) [Jokes are only jokes (1)],” in *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 [The complete works of Lu Xun], vol. 5 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 2005), 547–52; Lu Xun 鲁迅, “Da Cao Juren xiansheng xin 答曹聚仁先生信 [Reply to Mr. Cao Juren’s letter],” in *Lu Xun quanji* 鲁迅全集 [The complete works of Lu Xun], vol. 6 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文学出版社, 2005), 78–81.

language style.⁷⁶ In favor of Europeanization, Zhu Ziqing fended off the common objections with nuanced arguments. This can be said to be the beginning of the linguistic approach to Europeanization, but it was the linguist Wang Li—Zhu Ziqing’s mentee—that executed the first mature linguistic study. Also teaching at the South-West Associated University during the war, Wang Li compiled his lecture notes into a multi-volume study of modern Chinese grammar, which came out in 1943 with a preface by Zhu Ziqing. The book, now known as two separate titles, *Modern Chinese Grammar* (*Zhongguo xiandai yufa* 中国现代语法) and *Theory of Chinese Grammar* (*Zhongguo yufa lilun* 中国语法理论), devoted one chapter to Europeanization and drew up an exhaustive list of Europeanized patterns that had become common expressions in Mandarin. At the beginning of the chapter, the linguist explained his general position:

Wang Li 王力 (born Wang Xiangying 王祥瑛, courtesy name Liaoyi 了一; 1900-1986)

Born in Guangxi province, Wang Li studied with linguist Yuen Ren Chao at Tsinghua University. He received his doctoral degree from the University of Paris with a dissertation on Cantonese dialects. In the 1950s, he was teaching at the linguistic department of Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou when the reorganization of higher education brought the department to Beijing and integrated it into the Chinese department of Peking University. He remained at PKU for the rest of his life, studying both Classical and modern Chinese grammar. He authored many foundational studies and textbooks on Chinese linguistics, including *Chinese Phonetics* (*Hanyu yinyun xue* 汉语音韵学) and *Classical Chinese* (*Gudai hanyu* 古代汉语).

Concerning Europeanized grammar, we don’t need to support it, and we don’t need to oppose it either. Europeanization is an inevitable trend. It is not reversible by human will. That said, in the places where western grammar and Chinese grammar have huge differences, there is no way China [sic] could be compelled to adapt [to western grammar]. As of now, Europeanization has already finished 90 percent of its course; in the future, even if someone ever wanted to make Chinese grammar entirely Europeanized, it would not be possible.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Zhu Ziqing 朱自清, “Xin yuyuan 新语言 [New language],” *Jinri pinglun* 今日评论 1, no. 1 (1939): 15.

⁷⁷ Wang Li 王力, *Zhongguo xiandai yufa* 中国现代语法 [Modern Chinese grammar], vol. 2 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局, 1954), 299–300.

咱们对于欧化的语法，用不着赞成，也用不着反对。欧化是大势所趋，不是人力所能阻隔的；但是，西洋语法和中国语法相差太远的地方，也不是中国所能勉强迁就的。欧化到了现在的地步，已完成了十分之九的路程；将来即使有人要使中国语法完全欧化，也一定做不到的。

In Hong Kong, 1972, the method with which Si Guo approached Europeanization in *Studies in Translation* was evidently in Wang Li's legacy, even though the former was a vocal critic of it while the latter took a detached scientific position. Wang Li was first to analyze the use of the noun modifier and the resulting increase of sentence length; to exemplify this pattern, he selected sentences from the works of New Literature writers; he also performed a syntactic surgery to a line in Xu Zhimo's essay, in the fashion of an editor-pedagogue.⁷⁸ All of these reappeared in the works of Si Guo and Yu Guangzhong. Additionally, one of the most obvious examples of the intellectual lineage between Wang Li and Si Guo is the way specific late imperial vernacular novels are treated as the "authentic" version of the vernacular Chinese language against which the Europeanized variant is compared. Wang Li had written:

We should review Europeanized grammar from a historical perspective and distinguish it from the grammar that China initially had. The grammar of *Dream of the Red Chamber* and *Legends of the Heroic Sons and Daughters* should be distinguished from the grammar of modern books and newspapers.

咱们应该以历史的眼光去看欧化的语法，把它和中国原有的语法分别清楚。
《红楼梦》和《儿女英雄传》的语法和现代书报上的语法有什么不同之处。

⁷⁹

Si Guo wrote:

... to read carefully Classical Chinese prose, poetry, and traditional novels, such as *Dream of the Red Chamber* and *Legends of the Heroic Sons and Daughters*. Only in this way can the quality of translation improve. The translated foreign

⁷⁸ Wang Li 王力, 2:329.

⁷⁹ 2:300.

novels in newspapers and the translated foreign articles in magazines should be avoided, because their translations are overly Anglicized.

.....细读中国的古文诗词、旧小说如红楼梦、儿女英雄传。这样，翻译才有进步。报纸翻译的小说、杂志里的译文不可读，因为译得太英文化。⁸⁰

Si Guo wrote in his study that, because “Chinese grammar is a mess, translators cannot but study a little bit of grammar.”⁸¹ His informant on Chinese grammar seems to have been none other than Wang Li, whose scholarship was published in Hong Kong before 1949 and continued to be available there.

But the conceptual and methodological lineages prove to have little impact on the substantial ideological difference. Wang Li, a main figure in the promotion of *putonghua* in the early PRC, would not have agreed with the avowed traditionalism of Si Guo, who meant to defend the “purity” of the Chinese language. Si Guo wrote in the preface to *Studies in*

Translation:

I borrowed the term “traditionalist” to refer to, in my mind, what is called a “purist” in English. This means people who are very meticulous about words, try their best to achieve purity and correctness, and do not tolerate a language that is neither fish nor fowl. In the UK there was the Society for Pure English, established in 1913, whose members included authority lexicographers and professors of literature. Their goal was to instruct common people to appraise and appreciate English, as well as to instruct the educational institutions to develop and implement the English language.

“国故派”这个名词是我借用的，我心目中它指的是英文所说的 *purist*，就是在文字方面非常讲究，力求纯正，不喜欢不三不四、不伦不类的中文的人；英国有 *The Society for Pure English*，成立于 1913 年，由权威词典学家、文学教授等人组成，目的在指导一般人对英文的鉴赏、欣赏力，并就英文文字应用及发展方面，指导教育当局。⁸²

⁸⁰ Cai Siguo 蔡思果, *Fanyi yanjiu* 翻译研究 [Studies in Translation], 17.

⁸¹ Cai Siguo 蔡思果, 70.

⁸² Cai Siguo 蔡思果, 15.

This demand for purity stands in stark contrast to the arguments against Europeanization that came out of the style reform campaigns of the early PRC (Chapter 1). To recall the views of Lao She and Zhu Guangqian, the Europeanized Chinese language is a sociolect of the bourgeois Chinese class and is alienated from the Chinese masses; in order for literature to serve the Chinese masses, the Europeanized elements need to be cleansed and restored to colloquial modern Chinese. For Si Guo, however, the renunciation of Europeanization is justified, counterintuitively, by how Europeans treat their languages. Specifically, it is justified by how the “authorities” of the English language defend their sociolect against erosion by other variants of the language. Here, Si Guo’s linguistic ideology is a fitting comparison to Yu Guangzhong’s simultaneous espousal of western modernism and Chinese classicism in the 1960s. In both cases, it is the aesthetic and ideological hierarchies constructed by the western modernist enterprise that prompted the Chinese intellectuals to search for resources in the Chinese tradition, with the aim of putting those resources into the construction of a similar type of hierarchy in modern Chinese culture.

To conclude, the main characteristic of the linguistic approach to style is that it is a descriptive tool, and merely a descriptive tool. It cannot determine or affect what kind of value judgment is to be made. The same description can support positive judgments, negative judgments, or even a detached, value-neutral scholarly survey. This tool can facilitate the communication and understanding between readers with different aesthetic commitments, but it cannot determine or change their commitments.

On the issue of Europeanized grammar specifically, the linguistic approach stemmed from Zhu Ziqing and looped back to a critique of Zhu Ziqing. From a literary theorist writing in advocacy of Europeanization, the man turned into an object of the critique of the Europeanized

style. The defense for the essayist, in my view, is that he chose to Europeanize rather than doing it inadvertently. The modernist aesthetic criterion of difficulty is handy here: Just as his colleague Ye Shengtao who wrote diaries and letters in Classical Chinese, for Zhu Ziqing too, and for the writers of their generation, a semi-Classical style was not difficult to achieve. It is the Europeanized style that was the product of effort and creativity, the novel choice that the Chinese language never had. However, for the next generation of writers, for men like Si Guo and Yu Guangzhong, precisely because of the success of the New Culture Movement, they were not trained in classical literature in the same degree of intensity, and their English proficiency was better than that of Classical Chinese. The younger generation was over-exposed on a daily basis to the “malignant”⁸³ growth of the Europeanized style, a style that had been novel fifty years ago but was by then a burden that needed to be broken loose of. This can only be considered an unpredicted excessive success of the agenda of New Culture Movement.

Early-reform PRC: “Finding Faults with the Masterpieces”

In 1992, a literary magazine based in Shanxi Province of the inland northwest invited Yu Guangzhong to be a contributor. The magazine was called *Masterpieces Review* (*Mingzuo xinshang* 名作欣赏) and was selling at 200,000 copies per issue with a target readership of university students.⁸⁴ Every bi-monthly issue contained more than 20 pieces of literary criticism, the majority of which was accompanied by the full text of the literary work being studied. The

⁸³ Yu Guangzhong’s phrasing is “malignant westernization” (*e’xing xihua* 恶性西化). Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Zhongwen de changtai yu biantai 中文的常态与变态 [The normalcy and abnormalcy of the Chinese language],” in *Yu Guangzhong tan fanyi* 余光中谈翻译 [Yu Guangzhong on translation] (Beijing: Zhongguo duiwai fanyi chubanshe 中国对外翻译出版公司, 2002), 152.

⁸⁴ Zhang Renjian 张仁健, “Wo ban Mingzuo xinshang de suo yi za gan 我办《名作欣赏》的琐忆杂感 [Trivial recollections and miscellaneous reflections on my work at *Masterpieces review*],” *Mingzuo xinshang* 名作欣赏 [Masterpieces review], October 1, 2010, 111.

selection of primary texts was broad, ranging from Classical Chinese poetry to modern European fiction, but as the title of the magazine suggests, only canonical authors were included. Li Bai, Du Fu, and Lu Xun appeared in almost every issue.

In the March 1992 issue, the magazine opened a column for Yu Guangzhong and his colleague Huang Weiliang from CUHK, under the title of *Finding Faults with the Masterpieces* (*Mingzuo qiuci* 名作求疵). The editor's foreword spoke in an enraptured tone:

The writing of Mr. Yu Guangzhong from Taiwan struck us like thunder and brought us joy. His sharp views on the arts and his “caustic” and “deleterious” style of criticism gave us an unprecedented feeling of freshness and excitement.

The famous works from the early years of New Literature were naive and shallow, while the formulaic writing of the extreme left was rigid and involuntary. Once these works are placed under the wise eyes of a modern artist, their faults are so self-evident that one can see them without even looking for them. However, for a long time, our literary historians and critics either pretended that they did not see the faults or avoided talking about them...

For this reason, our magazine will open a special column to “find faults.” We will launch our attack on the masterpieces with Mr. Yu Guangzhong's article, “On Zhu Ziqing's Essay”...

.....台湾余光中先生的文章，发聩振聋，令我们欣然色喜。其犀利的艺术见解，“刻薄”“阴鸷”的批评风格，都使我们感到一种从未有过的新鲜和刺激。

其实，无论是早期新文学幼稚、肤浅的名作，还是后来生硬勉强的极左八股，一经现代艺术家慧眼审视，其瑕疵不必“吹毛”而已历历在目。然而，长久以来，我们的文学史家、批评家、却熟视无睹，或讳莫如深。.....

有鉴于此，本刊特辟“求疵”一栏，且以余光中先生《论朱自清的散文》一文率先发起对名作的攻势.....⁸⁵

“On Zhu Ziqing's Essay” dropped a bomb. From July 1992 to January 1993,

Masterpieces Review published article after article by academic critics and non-professional

⁸⁵ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), “Lun Zhu Ziqing de sanwen 论朱自清的散文 [On Zhu Ziqing's essays],” *Mingzuo xinshang* 名作欣赏 [Masterpieces review], no. 2 (March 1, 1992): 31.

readers in response to Yu Guangzhong's criticism of Zhu Ziqing. The opinions were mixed, but Yu Guangzhong made more enemies than friends. Some of the harshest objections to the critic came from readers who were not professional critics, among them a high school student who wrote to the magazine that "I felt nothing but contempt."⁸⁶ The editors also noted that the criticism of Zhu Ziqing "was met with strong reaction among teachers and students of Chinese departments in universities," although they did not specify whether the reaction was positive or negative.⁸⁷ The January 1993 issue was effectively a special issue on Yu Guangzhong. It included eight articles in response to Yu Guangzhong's criticism, three letters from readers, and a handwritten letter from the critic himself. They were supplemented by seven pieces of literary works by Yu Guangzhong, each with its commentary, although the commentaries were all favorable opinions and did not find faults in return.

Yu Guangzhong's literary writings arrived in the mainland in the 1980s to an enthusiastic audience. In the early 1990s, *Masterpieces Review* regularly published Taiwanese modernism and paired it with review articles full of praise. The same journal issue where Yu Guangzhong "found faults" with Zhu Ziqing also included a literary prose by Yu Guangzhong. But the versatile writer's best-known piece in the mainland was indisputably the short poem "Nostalgia" (Xiangchou 乡愁, 1972), whose last stanza reads:

And at present,
Nostalgia becomes a shallow strait,
Me on this side,

⁸⁶ Ji Hua 纪骅, "Yi ge zhongxuesheng de laixin 一个中学生的来信 [A letter from a high school student]," *Mingzuo xinshang* 名作欣赏 [Masterpieces review], no. 1993(1) (January 1, 1993): 24.

⁸⁷ Xu Jingzhou 徐景洲, Zhu Zhongqing 朱仲卿, and Li Yao 李瑶, "Yi shi jiqi qian ceng lang: duzhe laixin xuan deng 一石激起千层浪——读者来信选登 [A stone stirs up a thousand waves: selected letters from readers]," *Mingzuo xinshang* 名作欣赏 [Masterpieces review], no. 4 (July 1, 1992): 125.

Mainland on the other side.⁸⁸

In the early years of the economic reform, the poet's outspoken affection for motherland China overjoyed the PRC readership. This new readership was not aware, however, that the patriotic poet had also written that "the masses don't understand art"; "they don't care about literature at all."⁸⁹ Biographical knowledge would have put Yu Guangzhong in a more inconvenient position, but mainland readers of the time had not yet possessed it.

The ideological difference transpired nonetheless in the debates on "On Zhu Ziqing's Essays." In his article, Yu Guangzhong criticized the frequent use of similes in a few of Zhu Ziqing's reputable pieces, finding them "shallow, facile, and feminine."⁹⁰ He particularly took exception to the fact that similes outnumber metaphors:

Similes are not necessarily worse than metaphors, but metaphors are certainly less direct and more reserved. This is one reason why Zhu's article is shallow and simple.

明喻不一定不如隐喻，可是隐喻的手法毕竟要曲折，含蓄一些。朱文之浅白，这也是一个原因。⁹¹

A reader from Shanxi Province disputed with the assessment, writing to the magazine that,

Mr. Yu blamed that the similes are "feminine," "facile" and "plain" ... but I think it is precisely due to the facile and plain style that Mr. Zhu Ziqing's essays are favorably received by a wide readership. If great authors all use an eccentric and erudite writing style, such that each literary work must be accompanied by a commentary to help the reader understand, then they won't have a lot of readers. This is because the arts and literature are the arts and literature of the people. The unembellished style of Mr. Zhu Ziqing is what is suitable to the taste of most

⁸⁸ This English version is Yu Guangzhong's self-translation. Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), "Yu Guangzhong," in *Frontier Taiwan: An Anthology of Modern Chinese Poetry*, ed. Michelle Yeh and N. G. D. Malmqvist (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 158.

⁸⁹ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), "Chu ge si mian tan wenxue 楚歌四面谈文学 [Surrounded by the tunes of the Chu state, talking about literature]," 30.

⁹⁰ "泛浮、轻易、阴柔." Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), "Lun Zhu Ziqing de sanwen 论朱自清的散文 [On Zhu Ziqing's essays]," September 1, 1977, 9.

⁹¹ Yu Guangzhong 余光中 (Yu Kwang-chung), 9.

people.

余先生指责《荷塘月色》的譬喻“阴柔”“轻易”“浅白”……我却认为正是“轻易”、“浅白”而使朱自清先生的散文受到广大读者的喜爱。倘大作家们用怪异高深的笔墨写作，每发表一篇都需附一篇导读文章方可读懂，那读者一定不会太多，因为文艺是人民大众的文艺，正是朱自清先生笔墨的自然、朴实、才适合了大多数人的口味。⁹²

In this reader's letter, the value judgment inherent to an aesthetic category is being flipped. "Facile" and "plain" are categories conventionally carrying negative connotations, but in the reader's letter they are reclaimed as potentially positive judgments, providing the very justification why Zhu Ziqing is "favorably received by a wide readership." However, even though the reader's value judgment is contradictory to the critic's, the reader has no objection to the critic's linguistic analysis. How many times a simile is used in a paragraph of prose is incontrovertible, and the reader is disputing the judgment of that fact but not the fact itself.

Here lies, in my view, the main contribution of the linguistic approach to style. The contribution is that it separates value judgment from the description of the textual characteristics of style, which are often confused in the ideological and impressionistic modes of stylistic commentary. Granted, value judgment itself is dependent on a preexisting choice of value and hence cannot be altered by the description of formal characteristics alone. But with the linguistic approach, at the time of conflicting aesthetic judgments, it is at least possible to identify whether the disagreement stems from the perception of the objective constituent elements of the text or from the value judgment of those elements. This is what distinguishes the linguistic approach from the other three approaches to style in this dissertation.

⁹² Xu Jingzhou 徐景洲, Zhu Zhongqing 朱仲卿, and Li Yao 李瑶, "Yi shi jiqi qian ceng lang: duzhe laixin xuan deng 一石激起千层浪——读者来信选登 [A stone stirs up a thousand waves: selected letters from readers]," 126.

The linguistic criticism of style is reproducible in a way that cuts cross ideological differences, because the grammatical description of a style can circulate without the critics having to form a consensus on the value of that style. The impact of Yu Guangzhong's literary criticism in *Masterpieces Review* is a telling example of this reproducibility. I will focus on one reader of the magazine from Jiangsu by the name of Xu Jingzhou. In their letter to the editors, this reader imparted a radical view. They did not only dissent Yu Guangzhong's assessment of Zhu Ziqing but mistrusted the validity of literary criticism from Hong Kong and Taiwan entirely: "I cannot help but feel that it is unreliable to read modern literature from the perspectives of Hong Kong and Taiwan, because those kinds of perspectives on literature are always tainted by politics. Hence, they are unconvincing."⁹³ Meanwhile, the reader's specific disagreement with Yu Guangzhong's article includes the criticism that it is "written in a lengthy and dreary way"—a criticism of Yu Guangzhong's style. Moreover, the reader submitted a piece of literary criticism to *Masterpieces Review* and had it published on the same column, *Finding Faults*, next to Yu Guangzhong's article on Wen Yiduo. The reader's criticism emulated the format of "finding faults" and applied it to Chinese socialist literature—the short story, "Lotus Lake" (Hehua dian 荷花淀 1945).⁹⁴ The story is a piece of war literature about the Chinese Communist Party's battle with the Japanese army in a scenic rural area of north China. It is also regularly used in middle school textbooks of the PRC, a part of the textbook canon like Zhu Ziqing's essays, although it is not something that "Hong Kong and Taiwan critics" would have studied. The reader Xu Jingzhou suggested the short story was a great work of art except for the two

⁹³ Xu Jingzhou 徐景洲, Zhu Zhongqing 朱仲卿, and Li Yao 李瑶, "Yi shi jiqi qian ceng lang: duzhe laixin xuan deng 一石激起千层浪——读者来信选登 [A stone stirs up a thousand waves: selected letters from readers]."

⁹⁴ Xu Jingzhou 徐景洲, "Duoyu de hong buding--Sun Li 'Hehua dian' zhi xia 多余的红补丁——孙犁《荷花淀》指瑕 [Redundant red patch: pointing to a flaw in Sun Li's 'Lotus Lake']," *Mingzuo xinshang* 名作欣赏 [Masterpieces review], no. 4 (July 1, 1992): 82.

paragraphs at the beginning, where the author interrupts the flow of the narration with a forced, unfitting description of agricultural labor. Xu Jingzhou also assumed the role of an editor-pedagogue: If only these two paragraphs were deleted, “Lotus Lake” would be a lot better.

The unique attraction of style to Chinese literary criticism in the Cold War era lies in this formula of argumentation that both Yu Guangzhong and Xu Jingzhou demonstrated. It is an ideological criticism delivered in the shape of a formalist argument, a political debate finding a proxy in a discussion about the basic techniques of writing. The critic would take on the role of the editor-pedagogue, a gatekeeper of writing at the fundamental level of literacy, and judge the literary work like a teacher grading a student’s work. This could mean to identify grammatical mistakes, misuses of rhetorical devices, typos and misspellings, or problems in the visual layout of a text; it could also mean to criticize structure and organization; and so on. Having diagnosed these inadequacies, the critic will leave the ideological disagreement unspoken, but the task of the criticism has been completed, since the technical inadequacies already disqualify the text as good writing.

This formula of stylistic criticism is convenient for the criticism of canonical works because canonical works are assumed to be technically refined; particularly, it is convenient for the criticism of the textbook canon because the textbook canon is expected to be exemplary in the basic techniques of writing, such as Zhu Ziqing’s essays, which appear in schoolbooks across the Sinophone world. Yu Guangzhong’s criticism of Zhu Ziqing’s grammatical problems was meant to shake the textbook canon at its foundation.

This dissertation has so far disentangled two things that have been called style. The one is the textual characteristics that are the basis of our perception of the difference between one text from the other, and the other is the judgment of those characteristics. The judgment can be

aesthetic (cold, bitter, lean...) or non-aesthetic (Marxist, bourgeois, Europeanized...), and it is typically inclusive of a value judgment (good or bad, desirable or not desirable). In the ideological and impressionistic approaches to style, we can see most clearly that the judgment of a text is presented to be the inherent quality of the text. This presentation relies on the authority of the critic; as Yan Yuanshu phrased it, it is “credit criticism.” If you trust the critical authority, you will then accept that the critics’ judgment of a text is truly reflexive of an inherent quality of the text. For any reader who does not already possess this authority, it is crucial that they formulate their stylistic judgment in ways that are similar to what have already been said by the critical authority, which often means using aesthetic categories in a similar way. In the last chapter, with the linguistic approach, the aesthetic or non-aesthetic judgment is to a certain extent separated from description of the objective textual characteristics. Nonetheless, the description is still made to serve the critic’s value judgment of the characteristics being described. In general, a salient character observed in the Chinese discourses on style is that the critical authority’s evaluative opinion is presented as if it were an inherent quality of the text being valued. This is a powerful rhetorical strategy that is a recurring trope in literary criticism. To reject this conflation is the first step in the democratization of criticism.

CONCLUSION: DEMOCRATIZING CRITICISM

This dissertation finds that what has been considered “style” in the history of literary criticism can be separated into two categories. The first category is certain characteristics of a text, often formal characteristics; the second category is the judgment of those characteristics, often but not always expressed through adjectives that are meant to reproduce a reader’s emotional reaction to a text. When we talk about style, the two types of information are intertwined. Their conflation is one reason why the idea of style remains so elusive.

The history of the discourses and practices of style in Chinese literary criticism illustrates that literary critics often present their judgment of textual characteristics as if it were an objective quality of the text. When this kind of judgment is accepted by an extended audience—including other critics, critics of a later generation, and non-professional readers—as an intrinsic quality of the text, discussions about style become an occasion where the authority of the critics is infallibly exercised. In those cases, what is considered “style” is the judgment of critical authority; the judgment of the critical authority is what is considered “style.” I am not suggesting that such is the nature of style in literature, but this is a common way in which the concept has been used in literary criticism.

In the earlier chapters of the dissertation, I mentioned that an interpretive community often shares its own system of communication to speak about style. This could be the aesthetic categories specific to a cultural tradition, or a linguistic terminology for grammatical analysis, or an ideological categorization of what is bourgeois and what not, and so on. The problem of these interpretive communities, however, is not that they have their own coded system of communication which may not be accessible to an outsider. It is not a problem that distinct interpretive communities exist, each with its own convention. The problem is the power of the

critical authorities in each interpretive community, which impacts not only the other members of the community but also outsiders wishing to join the community: Whatever the coded system is for a given group of readers, some readers have the means to determine what the correct way is to operate in this system. And here lies the perils of a coded language for aesthetic judgment: The more coded the language for aesthetic judgment is, the more difficult it is to contest the norms that have been produced in this language, and consequently, the more convenient it becomes for the critical authority to inculcate their own values through this language. Those who are wishing to join a group, in order to demonstrate their eligibility for membership in the group, are incentivized to take the judgment of the group's authority as not merely a judgment but the intrinsic quality of the objects under discussion. The current members of the group, too, in order to constantly reaffirm their membership, are incentivized reproduce the authority's judgment, rather than critically reflecting on the opinions of the authority.

It is a quest for a better understanding of the elusive idea of style that led to these conclusions. At the beginning of the dissertation, I suggested that in order to attain a better understanding of style, it would be necessary to first examine the history of the analysis of style; this history now demonstrates that the concept of style has been seated in the center of a high-brow intellectual culture, protected from the participation of a wider audience. Critical authorities know how to talk about style correctly. Since their aesthetic judgment of an object is taken to be that object's style itself, in effect, they control what is the right way to think and talk about style. Discourses about style are an elitist discourse, diligently defending the aesthetic hierarchy that the elite constructs.

However, style is something that any reader can intuitively experience in reading. The existence of the concept does not depend on the judgments of the critical authorities. Therefore,

the remedy to the historical and current problems in the discourses of style need not be the removal of this concept from literary criticism or scholarship entirely. A better remedy would be to make the concept, as well as the methodological frameworks of its analysis, available to a larger public. In other words, the very coded systems and the complex aesthetic hierarchies that have been constructed to safeguard the opinions of the critical authorities should be made transparent; their workings should be laid bare. In this manner, the judgment of the critical authority can be contested directly. The detrimental conflation, which equates the authority's judgment with the intrinsic quality of an artistic object, can also be thwarted. This is what I mean by the democratization of criticism. Rather than quit talking about elusive concepts such as style and aesthetics and judgments, we can now make the tools that generate opinions about these things available to a wider audience.

To democratize the criticism of style would mean that, first of all, the description of the constituent textual characteristics of a style should be separated from the aesthetic or value judgment of that style. Every judgment of style must be taken as judgment only and not an inherent quality of the object under discussion. Consequently, it should be clarified that aesthetic categories themselves are not style; they are words that some people have used to name some styles, and this naming is never universal. Secondly, every judgment of style must require justification. One way to do so is to explicitly state one's criteria of judgment and provide textual evidence for their judgment. Granted, the relationship between aesthetic judgment and its evidential justification is also inconclusive; that is to say, there is not a definite group of textual characteristics that can unfailingly guarantee the sensing of "terse," for instance.¹ Nonetheless,

¹ Frank Sibley, *Approach to Aesthetics: Collected Papers on Philosophical Aesthetics* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 33–50; Ngai, *Our Aesthetic Categories*, 117–19.

without further probing the nature of evidential justification, I still want to underscore the importance of justification. This is because to demand evidential justification is the first step toward destabilizing the conventional opinions of the critical authorities; it is also the only way to move on to a meaningful next step when conflicting aesthetic judgments on an artistic object are colliding, as in the cases of Lu Xun's terseness or the Marxist-Leninist style, discussed in the Introduction of the dissertation. These collisions are nothing uncommon, but they are magnified and made particularly acute in a time of ideological polarization.

For the same reason, ultimately, it will prove beneficial and necessary to have an explicit and concrete definition of style. This is not because I desire a unifying conceptual framework which will forestall the diversity and individuality of aesthetic judgments. On the contrary, it is because only an explicit definition can offer a framework to everyone, with equal degree of ease, to request evidence for other people's judgment and articulate a justification for their own judgment. Only a definition can make this concept quickly available to readers who have not read a large number of primary texts or who have not become well-versed in a specific aesthetic convention. In other words, perhaps counterintuitively, a fixed definition of style will not unify aesthetic judgments; instead, it is a way to begin to loosen the aesthetic judgments that have already been unified.

This definition will then require that style be discussed independently of the value and desire of any specific reader, however seasoned that reader may be. Otherwise, there cannot be a common ground on which different readers can come together, discuss their distinct aesthetic judgments, and justify each judgment in a way that can make sense to others. Therefore, "style" should best be defined as a quality that is located in the characteristics of a text, not in the reader's reaction to those characteristics. Although this dissertation has not defined what style is,

through a history of the analysis of style in literary criticism, it can propose in which direction the work of definition should proceed.

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