

# 文艺理论选编

Selected Papers on Art and Literature

细言等著

李杰 王红蕾 朱琳琳 阳帆 编译  
黄铭忠 陈艳 臧志成 曹阳



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本书由下列人员合作完成,大致分工如下:

About the Skill of Lu Xun's Novel、Red Clothes 等章节由李杰编译;

Red Clothes、On Composition 等章节由王红蕾编译;

The Tiger is the Human、When Writing Historical Play, You should Study the History and Analyze the Social Classes 等章节由朱琳琳编译;

On Thingking and Style of Tan Xianzhu's "Story of Han Dan"、Life and Art of Mei 等章节由阳帆编译;

Life and Art of Mei、On Different Shools of Pintan 等章节由黄铭忠编译;

From the Origin of Labouring Songs、The Beauty of Labor 等章节由陈艳编译;

Someone Who was screwed to the Songs will be Followed、On the National Style and Local Style of Music 等章节由臧志成编译;

The Beauty of Labor、So Brave, So Loyal 等章节由曹阳编译。

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## About the Skill of Lu Xun's Novel

Xi Yan

The novel in China arose almost simultaneously with, but perhaps a little earlier than, that in the West. A direct time comparison is difficult because early Chinese novels differ from their Western counterparts in a number of ways, such as authorship, the use of verse, the intended audience, the motives of the author, and the perceived literary value of the result. Nevertheless, there are many similarities in the process by which the Chinese and Western novels as literary genres arose, became accepted and flourished.

This essay will examine the history of the development of the Chinese novel, identify the historical, political, cultural and economic influences which applied to this development and compare and contrast this development with that of the Western novel.

Early Chinese literature existed for many centuries BC. Early writings were primarily Confucianist and Daoist doctrines, written in the classical language. These were followed and augmented by historical records, also in the classical language. From as early as the Six Dynasties period (220—589), classical language short stories have been written in the ZHIGUAI and zhiren genres. These were essentially fiction, although classified at the time as historical, for want of a better label. The earliest known writings not in the classical language are the BIANWEN or transformation texts dating from the 8th century. The Song dynasty (960—1279), saw the development of stories in the vernacular language. Being primarily short stories, they lacked the characterisation and plot necessary to be considered as novels. These vernacular short stories continued to be popular during and beyond the birth and

maturity of the true novel.

From the early 14th century there started to appear printed copies of historical texts in the vernacular language, often augmented by fictional embellishments. The most notable example of this is *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* in its various versions, undergoing revision both before and after emerging in its most popular novel form. These were the beginnings of the fictional novel, but it wasn't until the 16th century that the novel had developed to the point where the direct ties to historical writings were broken, genuinely original works came to be written, and the genre as we now know it came to be. This is not to undermine the creative talent of the early authors who turned historical records or disjointed legends into full length creations which to this day retain their value as literary works. The Chinese novel can thus be defined as a full-length fictional story in the vernacular language, providing a complex plot and strong characterisation.

Major influences on the development of the novel in China include the popularity of vernacular short stories, the popularity of drama, changing economic circumstances, the spread of basic literacy in general and the development of the elite literati culture. It could be argued that these are all interrelated and therefore difficult to identify as either cause or effect. These will be discussed more in the following section.

It is worth noting here that as far as the Chinese situation is concerned, the rapid spread and development of the printing industry during the early 16th century may not have influenced directly the development of the novel itself because, at this time, the novel in China tended to be part of the literati culture only. However the spread of printing and publishing cannot be ignored as a feature of the popularity of vernacular short stories. Similarly, and for the same reasons, the spread of basic literacy (i. e. the improvement of the literacy of the masses) may not have had a direct bearing on the genesis of the Chinese novel, but it too would have allowed a wider audience for vernacular short stories. Another potential influence notable

by its absence is the influence of Western ideas. Chinese literature remained basically free from Western influence at least until the 19th century, by which time the Chinese novel was well established in its own right.

In comparing the development of the Chinese novel with that in Western literature, there are several aspects to be considered. Some of these highlight similarities, but mostly there exist some differences which can be identified. The aspects considered below are the timing of the development, the subject matter used by the authors, the various influences upon the development and the motives driving the individual authors.

The Chinese novel is generally considered to have first appeared in the mid to late 14th century with the original version of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, attributed to Luo Guanzhong. This gradually developed into a late 16th century maturity, represented by *Journey to the West* and *Jin Ping Mei*. Western equivalents are perhaps a little more difficult (for this author) to identify, but contenders include the writings of Boccaccio (in vernacular Italian rather than Latin), Malory (in Early Modern English) and Cervantes (in Spanish) in the 14th, late 15th and early 17th centuries respectively. It is generally accepted that the Western novel came of age in the 17th century, just a little after the Chinese novel (Wikipedia; Ropp, 310—311).

Paul Ropp succinctly summarises the similarity of subject matter development in Western and Chinese novels as:

“In both cultures there has been a general development from shorter to longer works, from an earlier emphasis on myths and folk tales to a later emphasis on the individual experience and observations of particular authors. As fiction became more sophisticated and self-conscious in both cultures it also evolved from an earlier tendency to endorse wholeheartedly the society's common values and moved instead to a more ironic stance that questioned or criticised the dominant values of the civilisation.”



Historically however, literature was substantially different in China from in the West. Early Western written literature was primarily religious in nature whereas in China, and for a much longer period, in addition to the religious doctrines, literature was motivated by a desire to record history.

The heading here may better be stated as influences and coincidences since it is not necessarily clear which of the following had a direct influence on the development of the novel, which were influenced by the development of the novel and which were mere coincidental developments. Of course, most of the following are interrelated, and thus proving a cause and effect relationship is fraught with difficulty. Nevertheless it is generally accepted that in both China and the West, the development of the novel was associated with urbanisation, commercialisation, the development of the publishing industry and increased literacy [Hegel, 230—231]. Hegel continues to identify the rise of a distinct middle class as a driving factor for the development of the Western novel, but not paralleled in the development of the Chinese novel, which tended to be more written for and by the literati. Further, while it seems too much of a coincidence to not be able to attribute some of the development of the Western novel to the invention and development of the printing press in the middle of the 15th century, printed material had existed in China for many centuries before then, and while the publishing industry may have expanded, perhaps along with the general economic and commercial expansion of the time, this seems to have had no great influence on the Chinese novel, which was much less widely distributed than other printed materials. In fact it could be argued that the mature Chinese novel's particular personal and intimate character within the elite literati arose in spite of the availability of widespread publishing. On the subject of literacy, it is hard to conclude that widespread improvements in literacy had no direct bearing on the development of the novel in the West but, it as already indicated, in the Chinese situation the influence, if any, was not because of a larger potential audience, but an in-

direct influence related to the lack of jobs available to the growing highly educated elite literati, thus resulting in a larger pool of potential authors. Another aspect of literacy that is hard to ignore is the transition from the use of the difficult classical language to the vernacular in several forms of fictional writing. This move occurred in the West (the move from Latin or Middle English to vernacular Italian and Early Modern English respectively) as well as in China. A further aspect of literacy that does highlight a difference between China and the West is the early motivation for literacy. In the West literacy was historically motivated by religion—from the Middle Ages, literacy was a pre-requisite for religious callings. By contrast, in China from the 7th century onwards, the desire for literacy was motivated by economic and political aspirations, the Imperial Examinations provided wealth and status to those who succeeded and were awarded jobs in the government.

A final aspect to be considered is that of the motive for writing. Just what drove authors to write these novels? The subject matter, of both Chinese and Western fiction in general, indicates that the prime twin motives of the authors were to instruct and to entertain. That this is particularly true in the Chinese situation is demonstrated by Confucian values permeating plots, often resulting in the demise of the tyrant or unfaithful and a happy ending for the hero and heroine. However other motives can be identified based on the lack of tangible rewards available to authors. Martin Huang writes:

“The glaring disparity between what a novelist could gain materially from his work and the amount of energy and time he had to invest in writing (few eighteenth century novelists produced more than one novel) calls attention to the special gratification that a novelist must have derived from this otherwise unrewarding labour”.

This indicates that perhaps a sense of redemption can be identified as a driving motive for the Chinese novelist. Further, to some extent in the West, primarily during the early stages of the novel's development, but to a much greater extent in Chi-

na, until as recently as the 20th century, the novelist suffered from a relatively low social status. In this situation one might identify a sense of rebellion as a motivational force in putting brush to paper. The novelist is putting his creative energy into something that he may cherish in spite of the criticism and low social standing that results.

While the Chinese novel developed in parallel with, although a little in advance of, its Western counterpart, and there are many similarities to be identified in these developments, there are as well some substantial differences between the two. The similarities can be summarised as the use of the vernacular language in written work, the similarity of subject matter, the (initially anyway) low social status afforded writers of fiction, and the general influence of economic and commercial growth. The differences can be summarised as the previous history of literature in general, the different nature of the influence of improving literacy, the effect of the development of the publishing industry and, to a lesser extent, the motivation of the author.

When I was young I, too, had many dreams. Most of them came to be forgotten, but I see nothing in this to regret. For although recalling the past may make you happy, it may sometimes also make you lonely, and there is no point in clinging in spirit to lonely bygone days. However, my trouble is that I cannot forget completely, and these stories have resulted from what I have been unable to erase from my memory.

For more than four years I used to go, almost daily, to a pawnbroker's and to a medicine shop. I cannot remember how old I was then; but the counter in the medicine shop was the same height as I, and that in the pawnbroker's twice my height. I used to hand clothes and trinkets up to the counter twice my height, take the money proffered with contempt, then go to the counter the same height as I to buy medicine for my father who had long been ill. On my return home I had other things to keep me busy, for since the physician who made out the prescriptions was very well-known, he used unusual

drugs: aloe root dug up in winter, sugar-cane that had been three years exposed to frost, twin crickets, and ardisia ...all of which were difficult to procure. But my father's illness went from bad to worse until he died.

I believe those who sink from prosperity to poverty will probably come, in the process, to understand what the world is really like. I wanted to go to the school in N city perhaps because I was in search of a change of scene and faces. There was nothing for my mother to do but to raise eight dollars for my travelling expenses, and say I might do as I pleased. That she cried was only natural, for at that time the proper thing was to study the classics and take the official examinations. Anyone who studied "foreign subjects" was looked down upon as a fellow good for nothing, who, out of desperation, was forced to sell his soul to foreign devils.

Besides, she was sorry to part with me. But in spite of that, I went to North and entered the school; and it was there that I heard for the first time the names of such subjects as natural science, arithmetic, geography, history, drawing and physical training. They had no physiology course, but we saw woodblock editions of such works as *A New Course on the Human Body* and *Essays on Chemistry and Hygiene*. Recalling the talk and prescriptions of physicians I had known and comparing them with what I now knew, I came to the conclusion those physicians must be either unwitting or deliberate charlatans; and I began to sympathize with the invalids and families who suffered at their hands. From translated histories I also learned that the Japanese Reformation had originated, to a great extent, with the introduction of Western medical science to Japan.

These inklings took me to a provincial medical college in Japan. I dreamed a beautiful dream that on my return to China I would cure patients like my father, who had been wrongly treated, while if war broke out I would serve as an army doctor, at the same time strengthening my countrymen's faith in reformation.

I do not know what advanced methods are now used to reach microbiology, but at that time lantern slides were used to show the microbes; and if the lecture ended early, the instructor might show slides of natural scenery or news to fill up the time. This was during the Russo-Japanese War, so there were many war films, and I had to join in the clapping and cheering in the lecture hall along with the other students. It was a long time since I had seen any compatriots, but one day I saw a film showing some Chinese, one of whom was bound, while many others stood around him. They were all strong fellows but appeared completely apathetic. According to the commentary, the one with his hands bound was a spy working for the Russians, who was to have his head cut off by the Japanese military as a warning to others, while the Chinese beside him had come to enjoy the spectacle.

Before the term was over I had left for Tokyo, because after this film I felt that medical science was not so important after all. The people of a weak and backward country, however strong and healthy they may be, can only serve to be made examples of, or to witness such futile spectacles; and it doesn't really matter how many of them die of illness. The most important thing, therefore, was to change their spirit, and since at that time I felt that literature was the best means to this end, I determined to promote a literary movement. There were many Chinese students in Tokyo studying law, political science, physics and chemistry, even police work and engineering, but not one studying literature or art. However, even in this uncongenial atmosphere I was fortunate enough to find some kindred spirits. We gathered the few others we needed, and after discussion our first step, of course, was to publish a magazine, the title of which denoted that this was a new birth. As we were then rather classically inclined, we called it *Xin Sheng* (New Life).

When the time for publication drew near, some of our contributors dropped out, and then our funds were withdrawn, until finally there were only three of us left, and we were pen-

niess. Since we had started our magazine at an unlucky hour, there was naturally no one to whom we could complain when we failed; but later even we three were destined to part, and our discussions of a dream future had to cease. So ended this abortive New Life.

Only later did I feel the futility of it all; at that time I did not really understand anything. Later I felt if a man's proposals met with approval, it should encourage him; if they met with opposition, it should make him fight back; but the real tragedy for him was to lift up his voice among the living and meet with no response, neither approval nor opposition, just as if he were left helpless in a boundless desert. So I began to feel lonely.

And this feeling of loneliness grew day by day, coiling about my soul like a huge poisonous snake. Yet in spite of my unaccountable sadness, I felt no indignation; for this experience had made me reflect and see that I was definitely not the heroic type who could rally multitudes at his call.

However, my loneliness had to be dispelled, for it was causing me agony. So I used various means to dull my senses, both by conforming to the spirit of the time and turning to the past. Later I experienced or witnessed even greater loneliness and sadness, which I do not like to recall, preferring that it should perish with me. Still my attempt to deaden my senses was not unsuccessful—I had lost the enthusiasm and fervour of my youth.

In Sohu Hostel there were three rooms where it was said a woman had lived who hanged herself on the locust tree in the courtyard. Although the tree had grown so tall that its branches could no longer be reached, the rooms remained deserted. For some years I stayed here, copying ancient inscriptions. I had few visitors, there were no political problems or issues in those inscriptions, and my only desire was that my life should slip quietly away like this. On summer nights, when there were too many mosquitoes, I would sit under the locust tree, waving my fan and looking at the specks of sky

through the thick leaves, while the caterpillars which came out in the evening would fall, icy-cold, on to my neck.

The only visitor to come for an occasional talk was my old friend Chin Hsin-yi. He would put his big portfolio down on the broken table, take off his long gown, and sit facing me, looking as if his heart was still beating fast after braving the dogs.

"What is the use of copying these?" he demanded inquisitively one night, after looking through the inscriptions I had copied.

"No use at all."

"Then why copy them?"

"For no particular reason."

"I think you might write something..."

I understood. They were editing the magazine *New Youth*, but hitherto there seemed to have been no reaction, favourable or otherwise, and I guessed they must be feeling lonely. However I said:

"Imagine an iron house without windows, absolutely indestructible, with many people fast asleep inside who will soon die of suffocation. But you know since they will die in their sleep, they will not feel the pain of death. Now if you cry aloud to wake a few of the lighter sleepers, making those unfortunate few suffer the agony of irrevocable death, do you think you are doing them a good turn?"

"But if a few awake, you can't say there is no hope of destroying the iron house."

True, in spite of my own conviction, I could not blot out hope, for hope lies in the future. I could not use my own evidence to refute his assertion that it might exist. So I agreed to write, and the result was my first story, *A Madman's Diary*. From that time onwards, I could not stop writing, and would write some sort of short story from time to time at the request of friends, until I had more than a dozen of them.

As for myself, I no longer feel any great urge to express myself; yet, perhaps because I have not entirely forgotten the

grief of my past loneliness. I sometimes call out, to encourage those fighters who are galloping on in loneliness, so that they do not lose heart. Whether my cry is brave or sad, repellent or ridiculous, I do not care. However, since it is a call to arms, I must naturally obey my general's orders. This is why I often resort to innuendoes, as when I made a wreath appear from nowhere at the son's grave in *Medicine*, while in *Tomorrow* I did not say that Fourth Shan's Wife had no dreams of her little boy. For our chiefs then were against pessimism. And I, for my part, did not want to infect with the loneliness I had found so bitter those young people who were still dreaming pleasant dreams, just as I had done when young.

It is clear, then, that my short stories fall far short of being works of art; hence I count myself fortunate that they are still known as stories, and are even being compiled in one book. Although such good fortune makes me uneasy, I am nevertheless pleased to think they have readers in the world of men, for the time being at least.

Since these short stories of mine are being reprinted in one collection, owing to the reasons given above, I have chosen the title *Na Han* (Call to Arms).

Two brothers, whose names I need not mention here, were both good friends of mine in high school; but after a separation of many years we gradually lost touch. Some time ago I happened to hear that one of them was seriously ill, and since I was going back to my old home I broke my journey to call on them, I saw only one, however, who told me that the invalid was his younger brother.

"I appreciate your coming such a long way to see us," he said, "but my brother recovered some time ago and has gone elsewhere to take up an official post." Then, laughing, he produced two volumes of his brother's diary, saying that from these the nature of his past illness could be seen, and that there was no harm in showing them to an old friend. I took the diary away, read it through, and found that he had suffered from a form of persecution complex. The writing was most con-



fused and incoherent, and he had made many wild statements; moreover he had omitted to give any dates, so that only by the colour of the ink and the differences in the writing could one tell that it was not written at one time. Certain sections, however, were not altogether disconnected, and I have copied out a part to serve as a subject for medical research. I have not altered a single illogicality in the diary and have changed only the names, even though the people referred to are all country folk, unknown to the world and of no consequence. As for the title, it was chosen by the diarist himself after his recovery, and I did not change it.

Tonight the moon is very bright.

I have not seen it for over thirty years, so today when I saw it I felt in unusually high spirits. I begin to realize that during the past thirty-odd years I have been in the dark; but now I must be extremely careful. Otherwise why should that dog at the Chao house have looked at me twice?

I have reason for my fear.

Tonight there is no moon at all, I know that this bodes ill. This morning when I went out cautiously, Mr Chao had a strange look in his eyes, as if he were afraid of me, as if he wanted to murder me. There were seven or eight others, who discussed me in a whisper. And they were afraid of my seeing them. All the people I passed were like that. The fiercest among them grinned at me; whereupon I shivered from head to foot, knowing that their preparations were complete.

I was not afraid, however, but continued on my way. A group of children in front were also discussing me, and the look in their eyes was just like that in Mr Chao's while their faces too were ghastly pale. I wondered what grudge these children could have against me to make them behave like this. I could not help calling out: "Tell me!" But then they ran away.

I wonder what grudge Mr Chao can have against me, what grudge the people on the road can have against me. I can think of nothing except that twenty years ago I trod on Mr Ku