

Red Discipline

A Shandong Professor, Honglou meng, and the
Rewriting of Literary History in the Early P.R.C.

**Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades
am Fachbereich Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften
der Freien Universität Berlin**

November 2012

**vorgelegt von Marie-Theres Strauss
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List of Abbreviations

BDRC	<i>Biographical Dictionary of Republican China</i> (Boorman, Howard L. (ed.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1968)
CCP	Chinese Communist Party (Zhongguo gongchandang 中國共產黨)
CCPCC	Chinese Communist Party Central Committee (Zhong-Gong Zhongyang 中共中央)
CHC	<i>The Cambridge History of China</i> , John King Fairbank, Denis Twitchett (eds.), Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1979 – ongoing
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi 中國人民政治協商會議, abbr.: Zhongguo zheng-xie 中國政協)
CPSUCC	Communist Party of the Soviet Union's Central Committee
ECCP	<i>Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644-1912)</i> , 2 vols. (Hummel, Arthur (ed.), Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943)
GDR	German Democratic Republic (former East Germany)
GMD	Guomindang, a.k.a. Kuomintang 國民黨 (National People's Party)
HSSP	<i>Hu Shi sixiang pipan</i> 胡適思想和批判 (Criticisms of Hu Shi thought), Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1955
NPC	National People's Congress (Quanguo renmin daibiao dahui 全國人民代表大會)
PKU	Peking University (Beijing daxue 北京大學)
Shanda	Shandong daxue 山東大學 (Shandong University)
Wenlian	Quanguo wenxue yishujie lianhehui 全國文學藝術界聯合會 (All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles)

Introduction

One of the cornerstones of traditional fiction and as such one of the focal points of literary history courses taught in China today is the eighteenth-century novel *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢 (Dream of the Red Chamber). The student of classical Chinese literature has little trouble locating a regular universe of secondary scholarship on this particular mid-Qing novel: the average Chinese bookstore usually dedicates an entire separate shelf or section to its study, many of the classic commentaries still dating from the first half of the twentieth century. Some years ago, to get an overview of the topic and preferably contextualize it within the Chinese literary tradition, I stumbled upon (and was grateful for) a tome entitled *Zhongguo gudai wenxueshi jiaocheng* 中國古代文學史教程 (Chinese classical literary history course) in a bookstore in Beijing. Flipping to the chapter on *Honglou meng* and expecting nothing, I read the following passage:

In sum, *Dream of the Red Chamber* reveals two aspects in terms of content, one being the showcasing of the irrevocable final collapse of feudal society through the rise and fall of the Jia family; the second one being the display of the author's rebellious spirit and the hopes of the period as shown through the love story between Jia Baoyu, Lin Daiyu and Xue Baochai.¹

Whatever had come to my mind when thinking about *Honglou meng* previous to this discovery, it generally was not that the novel portrayed the “irrevocable final collapse of the feudal class” or that the author demonstrated his “rebellious spirit” in depicting a love triangle between three privileged and poetic cousins. What then, I asked myself, do these terms mean exactly, and why – of all possible interpretations – are they the ones that stuck in official literary historiography?

As I gradually found out, these strange-sounding connotations have their origin in a national event of the mid-1950s: the *Honglou meng*-Campaign of 1954/55. Lasting just a few months in fall and winter, its main target at the start was a well known literary scholar, Yu Pingbo 俞平伯 (1900-1990), who had written an essay on the novel and failed to read it according to the new Marxist-Leninist criteria. His failure was picked up and commented on by two young university graduates in an article of their own, which

¹ Ouyang Zhenren 歐陽禎人 (ed.). *Zhongguo gudai wenxueshi jiaocheng* 中國古代文學史教程 (Chinese classical literary history course) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2007), 344.

eventually led to the start of a nation-wide campaign criticizing both the individual Yu Pingbo and his work, but also the wider realm of reading and writing about the novel in general.

Unlike the Yan'an period of the 1940s or the Cultural Revolution, the *Honglou meng*-Campaign of 1954 has received fairly little attention in scholarly publications. This is not only because its duration was relatively short, but also because it eventually merged with and shifted into another campaign whose target is rather more well-known, namely the Anti-Hu Shi-Campaign of 1954/55. When reading up on the period in the *Cambridge History of China*, the only publication mentioned relating to the *Honglou meng*-Campaign is an essay written by a certain Lu Kanru 陸侃如, entitled “Hu Shi fandong sixiang jiyu gudian wenxue yanjiu de duhai 胡適反動思想給予古典文學研究的毒害” (The poison instilled by Hu Shi's reactionary thought in the research of classical literature) and originally published in the organ of the Chinese Writers Union, *Wenyibao* 文藝報 (Literary Gazette). I decided to make this my point of departure: who was this Lu Kanru and why was he writing such an essay for *Wenyibao* at the time?

As one delves into the fabric of the *Honglou meng*-Campaign, the sheer mass of other textual material – campaign essays, policy texts, criticisms and self-criticisms, commentaries, essay compilations – soon becomes overwhelming. Lu Kanru, as it turned out, was not a random example of someone participating in a campaign who happened to write an essay that for no particular reason ended up being quoted in the *Cambridge History of China*. Rather, he was a rather well-known figure in the academic field at the time, the vice-president of Shandong University that stood, more or less coincidentally, at the center of the campaign: the two young men who had incited the campaign with their article criticizing Yu Pingbo had graduated from Shandong University just a year previously. During their time as students, they had taken classes in classical literary history with both Lu Kanru and his wife, Feng Yuanjun 馮沅君. Their incriminating essay had been first published in *Wenshizhe* 文史哲 (Literature, History, Philosophy), a nationally prominent journal for the humanities that was run by Shandong University and that Lu Kanru had participated in establishing.

In terms of how this campaign shaped literary historiography and criticism at the time, it also soon became clear that the linear model of campaigns being stringently

organized top-down structures with politicians directing what everyone had to say and write also proved partially wrong. Much of what was going on in terms of argument was the result of a process of trial and error, during which much was said that sounded technical and repetitive. A closer look, however, revealed a real concern with literary issues amidst a sea of socialist jargon, especially during the initial phase of the *Honglou meng* campaign before it turned into the more elaborate and stereotypical Anti-Hu Shi-Campaign. It is therefore the aim in the present thesis to try and somewhat isolate the *Honglou meng*- from the Anti-Hu Shi-Campaign, as the arguments presented in the former were more strictly concerned with literary questions than in the latter case. Isolating the two is not without difficulties, as there are merging and overlappings both on the chronological and the topical level. However, the goal of the present text is to isolate the more literary from the generally ideological as much as possible, for without this separation, it becomes close to impossible to isolate the field of literary studies (i.e., criticism and historiography) which is the central protagonist of this thesis.

* * *

In his seminal *Les Règles de l'Art* (The Rules of Art), the French sociologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) narrates the structure and evolution of the literary field in nineteenth-century France. He does this mainly by sketching the intellectual (and artistic) contributions and social backgrounds of several individuals who characterized that era. Three of these were: (1) Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880), whose *L'Éducation sentimentale* (1869) serves as Bourdieu's backdrop for both the description of a typical literary product of the time, as well as of the social networks that made up the world of its author, (2) Émile Zola (1840-1902), whose involvement in the Dreyfus-affair with the publication of his pamphlet "J'accuse..." (1898) marked the birth of the modern, politically conscious intellectual, and (3) Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), who led the bohemian lifestyle out of necessity rather than choice, and whose disposition and marginal economic existence were the reasons for his lifetime status as "the unaccepted artist".

Each of these three individual mindsets was embedded in and influenced by a socio-economic field that over time generated autonomous spaces of literary production, as well as an ever-recurring wave of vanguard producers, who upon their consecration as artists or intellectuals (and thus their entrance into the establishment of cultural

production) were superseded by the next generation of the avant-garde. In such a world, symbolic and economic capital remained at opposite ends of the social stratum until consecration as part of the establishment had occurred and it was time for yet another “literary upheaval”.

Economic disparities and resulting ideological variations were the causes of a multi-layered power struggle within the field, in which the advantage of extant economic capital could aid in the attainment of symbolic capital, but was no longer a necessary prerequisite for participation in literary and intellectual production.² However, as Bourdieu further shows, literary and artistic production were to a considerable degree also dependent on those constituents of the field which enabled public production and distribution, such as publishing houses, galleries, magazines and newspapers, which all tried to conform the writer or artist to their respective status and will. Consequently, the literary and artistic autonomy of the field relied not only on the potential diversity of its products, but also on the actual diversity of agents and institutions committed to support and promote these products, and on the accessibility of related networks to cultural producers.

Within this type of field, which Bourdieu maintains is essentially the same in the West today as in the nineteenth century, the intellectual holds a specific and prominent position as the defender of the autonomy of the field and its alleged universal values against powers potentially endangering or dominating it:

The intellectual is constituted as such by intervening in the political field in the name of autonomy and of the specific values of a field of cultural production which has attained a high degree of independence with respect to various powers (and this intervention is unlike that of the politician with strong cultural capital, who acts on the basis of a specifically political authority, acquired at the price of a renunciation of an intellectual career and values).³

The intellectual must be, above all, apolitical, so that he may use his position of independence to criticize those specific laws of politics that run counter to the universal

² To make his point, Bourdieu juxtaposes the two cases of Flaubert and Baudelaire: while the former was financially self-sufficient and thus never depended on his success as a writer to make a living, the latter spent his entire life struggling to survive economically. Nevertheless, despite the harrowing circumstances in which he was forced to live his life, Baudelaire was posthumously seen as the precursor of the Symbolist avant-garde.

³ Pierre Bourdieu/Susan Emanuel, transl. *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 129.

values of justice, freedom and disinterestedness which the literary field claims to uphold, both in creation and criticism.

Without the protection of and by the intellectuals, the autonomy of the field of cultural production can easily be destabilized. This means in turn that its products quickly degenerate from independent efforts developing and responding to earlier *cultural* products into a mere representation (or reflection) of *political and social* products, i.e., products that are outside their “original” sphere of generation and influence. In other words, the boundaries between “pure” art and intellectualism on the one side and politics and economics on the other are blurred. And it is here that the difference between what Bourdieu terms a “field” and, by contrast, an “apparatus” becomes distinct.

The apparatus, unlike the field, is an integrative (to the point of censorship and other content manipulation) and rigidly hierarchical system of production, which denies systemic autonomy to any of its constituents. This means that all forms of production are subject to an ideology decided upon by the upper levels of an all-encompassing entity, in this case the state and its government. Because such a system leaves no room for free-ranging competition (whether of ideas or of agents), and thus for the evolution of self-contained subsystems regulating themselves largely independently of the dominant sphere of state politics, it usually also prevents the conditions for vanguard dynamics to develop. One might understand the function of the apparatus as *streamlining* its products from above according to predefined ideological standards, as well as through agents and institutions established by the (political) elite that cater to the system’s overall requirements. The function of the field, by contrast, is to diversify these standards, agents and institutions by constantly redefining the rules of entry into the establishment via the dynamism of an ever-evolving, independent avant-garde, both in production and in distribution.

From this, it should be but a small step to conclude effectively that what we are dealing with when we talk about the “field of literary historiography and criticism” in the early P.R.C., is actually part of an “apparatus”. The output of research into traditional literature was, after all, mainly motivated by the new Marxist-Leninist ideology, which it was forced to accord with regardless of resulting anachronisms in historiography. As for the structures governing cultural output in both Stalinist Russia and Maoist China, it has

been convincingly argued that a rigid hierarchical system was in place with politicians at the top defining the standards for production on all levels.⁴ It is indeed hard to maintain that there existed in China an independent caste of intellectuals that “guarded” literary production against the intrusion of “unrelated” influences – the intellectuals as a group were rather very much a part of these unrelated influences, of the “apparatus” as a whole. It was, in fact, the main purpose of the apparatus to integrate them into the hierarchical system that controlled cultural production from the vantage point of Party politics. So far, so good.

Applying these definitions to the production and development of literary historiography and criticism in the early P.R.C. *as historians*, however, we are faced with the question: how do we read the *outcome* of literary criticism as generated by an apparatus as opposed to by a field, especially if we are not doing a comparative and ethical analysis of two regions with different political backdrops and, broadly speaking, resulting value systems? Is it really that easy to maintain that every academic publication within the regulated and restricted atmosphere of the apparatus was dictated from above and didn’t spur its own, professionally specific, and to some extent independent discussion? Did literary concepts and considerations of Chinese critical traditions play no role whatsoever in the debates on how to read the literature of the past? And even if they did not, is it an effective argument to maintain that literary criticism and historiography produced by an apparatus-like system are negligible in assessing a nation’s intellectual history?

The fact is that many books and articles on the literary tradition were written and published during the first decade of the P.R.C. The period from 1949 to 1960 was not yet as dismissive of the literary tradition as the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) would be. And the agents of academic output - the intellectuals at the universities and research institutes - had yet to learn to conform to the standards set from above. As Douwe Fokkema already observed in the early sixties, the struggle to conform to new standards was an ongoing process in the fifties, and literary historians and critics met with a task

⁴ Cf. Lorenz Bichler. “Sowjetische Ideologeme und ihre Rezeption in Literaturtheorie und Belletristik in der Volksrepublik China“, Ph.D. thesis (1994). (Heidelberg: Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, 1999). In his description of the workings of the field, Bichler draws on a model first devised by Hans Günther in his *Die Verstaatlichung der Literatur. Entstehung und Funktionsweise des sozialistisch-realistischen Kanons in der sowjetischen Literatur der 30er Jahre* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1984).

that was on some level even more challenging than that facing contemporary writers and artists:

While the writer of fiction and poetry can escape politics to a certain extent or be vague about it, the author of a comprehensive work of literary criticism or literary history must inevitably juggle with the ever changing official line on literature. Thus, a literary history of 1953 is almost bound to be found defective five years later, and a theoretical exposition written during the heyday of the Hundred Flowers cannot possibly have taken the drastic reversal of literary policy of the second half of 1958 into account.⁵

One can imagine that written literary histories in particular, which were often used as informal textbooks in university classes, could evoke critical response even years after they were initially published. And while such late criticisms were certainly almost always due to policy changes on the upper level, they had the power to call into question basic assumptions about Chinese culture and literary exegesis and generate yet another paradigm shift in what was seen as the new literary criticism. So what do we make of a corpus of published literary criticism that developed mainly due to political - rather than literary - incentives?

“Literary criticism” in its most general definition can be understood as a discipline of textual discourse: regardless of the potentially narrow nature of its defining parameters, its basic characteristic is its textual immanence. At heart, literary criticism consists in writing texts about other texts, both literary and theoretic. In terms of the scope of its possible content, both “literature” as well as its “theory” are nearly boundless. Mostly, accepted theoretic contents are themselves the products of a discursive structure within their area of origin, which does *not* exclude exterior (political, economic, social, etc.) influences. In fact, the mere concept of separating the spheres of influence on textual production makes little sense, unless one wanted to impose a judgment on the validity and explanatory force of a text within an exclusively defined framework. As products within more than one specific context, however, texts depend largely on circumstances that have less to do with objective value than with the authority of the traditions which they either stand in or try to break with.

⁵ Douwe Fokkema. *Literary Doctrine in China and Soviet Influence, 1956-1960*. (London/The Hague/Paris: Mouton, 1965), 216.

It has been argued that post-1949 Chinese literary criticism had little to do with the academic discipline as it evolved in the West, which prided itself on its relative autonomy from exterior fields of power (as we have seen in the case of Pierre Bourdieu's "literary field").⁶ But for the reasons stated above and for the purpose of this thesis, there is no benefit in evaluating the foundations of modern Chinese criticism by measuring schools of thought in East and West against one another. A theoretical discourse which follows the path of mainstream political ideology and produces textual output that is used in a context of academic literary studies can still be referred to as producing "literary criticism". The main task of the historian therefore is not necessarily to inquire whether the critical canon of the early P.R.C. deserved to be designated as such, but rather how the production of what was *then understood* to be literary criticism and historiography actually worked.

For that very purpose, this thesis is based on the assumption of an existing "field" of literary historiography that had its own developmental process, but was at the same time encompassed in a larger apparatus. The apparatus did, in fact, set most of the ground rules and establish some of the main themes, but it did not itself produce critical output – that was still a task mainly left to the designated "experts" of the field, the academics at universities and other institutions of research and higher learning. Towards the end of the fifties, the relationship between "expertise" (zhuan 專) and "redness" (hong 紅) increasingly tensed, while the rules of acceptance into the academic establishment were somewhat continuously redefined. However, despite attempts to the opposite effect, this thesis will show that in the 1950s it was still not entirely possible to dethrone the academic authorities of literary historiography in favor of a completely "unliterary" view of traditional literature in the P.R.C.

Studies of the academic and/or artistic field of the early P.R.C. are generally attributable to either one of two "camps": the first, represented by Barbara Mittler's approach to the art of the Cultural Revolution, seeks to integrate what has been judged

⁶ Lorenz Bichler, for example, refers to Chinese literary theory as inherited from the Stalinist Soviet tradition of the 1920s and 1930s as a form of "instrumentalized theory" (instrumentalisierte Theorie), meaning that literary theory and criticism were not ends in themselves, but served the "higher" political purpose of justifying and consolidating the regime (Bichler, *Sowjetische Ideologeme und ihre Rezeption in Literaturtheorie und Belletristik in der Volksrepublik China 1999*, 4, 22, and *passim*). While this observation is certainly accurate, I would argue that it does not explain why the discourse on literature taking place in China at the time (for one purpose or another) should not be treated as literary criticism in the sense that it was an existing field with an inherent complex logic and manifold functions.

as a period of political extremism into a continuous developmental process, thereby to some extent rendering “positive” certain art forms and practices that have overwhelmingly been dismissed by previous Western secondary scholarship as products of ideological indoctrination.⁷ The second is represented by Michael Schoenhals’ rendition of the language of Chinese politics, which basically assumes that ideological language has seeped through so much of Chinese cultural practice that its power and influence are impossible to break.⁸ Though both of these approaches undoubtedly have their merits and are necessary and valuable contributions to their respective fields of study, the present thesis does not attempt to position itself in either camp. Rather, it tries to break with the idea of creating a meta-level of ethical judgement when writing about the early P.R.C., and attempts to observe the field as closely and in as much detail as is digestible.

For this purpose, the present thesis is structured into three large chapters, each dealing with a particular aspect of the field of literary historiography and criticism as it emerged in mainland China in the 1950s. The main event and reference point of the all three chapters is the *Honglou meng*-Campaign of 1954/55:

Chapter 1, “A Shandong Professor”, traces the academic origins and career of Lu Kanru from the Republican period into the later 1950s. It seeks, as the only detailed biographical approach to the field, to understand the generation targeted by the *Honglou meng*-Campaign, specifically in terms of their previous educational, political and work experiences. Lu Kanru, in this sense, is a model protagonist who stands for a peer group of his generation. At the same time, he is treated very much as an individual protagonist, as his career may well have had symptomatic traits, but it was also decidedly the result of his own personal choices and preferences, a fact which would initially play out in his favor, but later also secure him a spot in the negative limelight in the aftermath of the *Honglou meng*-Campaign.

Chapter 2, “Honglou meng”, is focused on the actual *Honglou meng*-Campaign, which had a transformative impact – in some domains irrevocably so – on the field of literary history and criticism by systematically targeting and thus discarding crucial

⁷ Cf. Barbara Mittler. *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012) (forthcoming).

⁸ Cf. Michael Schoenhals. *Doing Things with Words in Chinese Politics: Five Studies*. (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, 1992).

elements of the Republican legacy, while at the same time introducing new linguistic and argumentative practices. The main thread of this chapter is still the intellectual itinerary of Lu Kanru, also because one of its principal interests lies in the area of intersection between the individual and the campaign. The main strategy of this chapter is focused on quantity: while providing a chronological timeline and highlighting particular aspects of the campaign (such as for example generational tensions and the different campaign genres and migratory patterns of texts within these genres), it aims above all to give a sense of the texture of the campaign. This includes showing the massiveness and inherent repetition of its literary production, intermittently *ad nauseam*.

Chapter 3, “Red Discipline. The Rewriting of Literary History”, tried to unravel the results of how literary historiography was being conducted in the early P.R.C., also in an attempt to assess the impact of the *Honglou meng*-Campaign on literary historiography. It therefore presents some of the themes and topics that literary historians were working with at the time, of which the most significant revolved around the question: “What is realism?” This chapter is based on close readings of literary histories that were mainly written in the post-1949 period, considering them to be ambivalent products. More than Chapters 1 and 2, this chapter zooms out of the close perspective on individuals and singular texts in order to concentrate on peer groups within the literary field. In terms of material evidence, it jumps between several exemplary texts of the literary historiographic genre in an effort to trace arguments in the progression of time. As such, it presents an overview of a short period within the evolution of modern Chinese literary historiography and brings together its shaping influences, i.e., campaigns, individuals and arguments, so as to leave the reader with an impression of the process, rather than with an all-encompassing explanation of the field.

The main narrative direction of these three chapters is chronological. Chapter 1 takes the reader from the early days of the Republican era to 1953, the year in which Sovietization of Chinese higher education reached its peak. A concurrent narrative direction inherent to the text moves from a primarily empirical dimension, in which individuals, institutions and events are the focus of attention, to the world of texts and their changing meanings. Along with the chronological direction, as the reader will notice, the narrative’s trajectory moves – dynamically so, it is to be hoped – from confusing pluralism, as it was prevalent in the Republican era, to standardized orthodoxy, especially in the aftermath of the *Honglou meng*-Campaign. These directions

derive from choices that were made related to how to use and organize the available sources. Naturally, these choices are not the only possible ones, and that is the main reason why each chapter dedicates a considerable part of its initial sections to discussing the problems of sources and narratives. While making the materials and the narrative architecture behind each chapter as visible and as transparent as possible, these discussions also aim to provide pointers to alternative uses based on the same (as well as additional) materials.

In its most basic essence, when stripped off all its verbiage and arguments, the present thesis is about the archive behind the writing of literary history. Its main goal, especially in Chapters 2 and 3, is not so much to exhaust this vast archive – which for now is not possible anyway, since its most crucial parts are confidential and thus inaccessible to the researcher – but rather to highlight and bring into motion already available yet previously dormant documents and test their historiographic uses. As such, this thesis does not aspire to be conclusive, preferring to leave open the question if campaign literature and socialist literary history and criticism are worth a close or any other kind of reading in the first place. Rather, it is motivated by the haptic urge to make palpable the fragile trajectories of all those ideas, concepts and arguments that end up in stylistically suave and argumentatively smooth texts printed on the glossy pages of bulky and solidly bound volumes on Chinese literary history on display in lofty libraries and quality bookstores, and so also in the minds of many readers.

Chapter One. A Shandong Professor

A school of a hundred people certainly cannot be run well if it does not have a leading group of several people, a dozen or more, which is formed in accordance with the actual circumstances (and not thrown together artificially) and is composed of the most active, upright and alert of the teachers, the other staff and students.

--- Mao Zedong⁹

In the fall of 1954, the year of the campaign revolving around the *Dream of the Red Chamber* which will be the focus of the next two chapters, Lu Kanru was almost 51 years old. Married to the renowned writer and fellow literary historian Feng Yuanjun, he was vice-president of Shandong University and as such at the peak of his academic life and career. Only a few years later, in 1957, he would be labeled a “rightist” at the start of the Anti-Rightist-Campaign in Shandong province, and subsequently be stripped of his positions. Though he would continue to work and teach at Shandong University, his days of prominence and status would then definitely be over. As with many of his peers, his suffering would only intensify during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 70s, also because of the slow and painful death of his wife in 1974 due to colon cancer. He would finally die in relative isolation as a result of stroke and two years spent partially paralyzed in the hospital bed in late 1978. Full rehabilitation was only granted to him posthumously in 1979, and he therefore lived the latter part of his life as an outsider, someone who had been branded by the political circumstances of his day and never regained his former positions.

The present chapter is an attempt to retrace Lu Kanru’s steps before 1954, so as to gain some insight into the way in which an academic individual interacted with the institutions that shaped his education and professional career in the eventful times of

⁹ “Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership” (June 1, 1943), Selected Works, vol. III, 118-19. Available on Marxists.org, URL: <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/red-book/ch16.htm> (last accessed: July 21, 2012).

the Republican period and the first years of the People's Republic. The main goals of this chapter are therefore:

- to provide some biographical information on the individual Lu Kanru whose perspective holds the main text together,
- to retrace his individual itinerary from the beginnings of his intellectual formation up to its peak in the mid-1950s, and finally,
- to render palpable through this individual itinerary the academic landscape of the early PRC, especially its continuities and fissures vis-à-vis the Republican legacy.

As such, this chapter is not so much a biography of an individual. Rather, its purpose is to highlight the institutional development of a specific individual, from his undergraduate days to his more mature years as a professor with a well-established reputation. It attempts to show how the discipline of classical literary studies emerged and evolved, but also how its evolution formed and “disciplined” the academic Lu Kanru eventually became. The chapter's principal interest thus lies in the area of intersection between the individual and the institution. Moreover, this chapter leads us to the threshold of the process, initiated in 1954, of streamlining – not always softly – what due to different legacies “had been thrown together artificially” (see Mao Zedong above), and what in due time would morph into an environment that again felt natural to all those involved.

This chapter, *A Shandong Professor*, consists of four main sections, entitled respectively:

1. *The Problem of Sources*
2. *The Problem of Narratives*
3. *A Republican Education*
4. *A Socialist Profession*

While the former two sections focus on the methods of this chapter's research and composition, the latter two provide an introduction to the professional and intellectual development of Lu Kanru, a Republican-trained literary historian of the PRC who tried (and eventually failed) to be both: red and expert.

1. The Problem of Sources

It is perhaps stating the obvious that historians attempting biographical accounts can only write about subjects that are documented by sources, both written and oral: without them, the subjects would simply remain silent. At times, these subjects are not prominent, but would have been historically prone to silence had not a specific event occurred which resulted in their documentation. One famous example is perhaps the sixteenth-century Italian miller Menocchio, the protagonist of Carlo Ginzburg's *Il formaggio e i vermi* (*The Cheese and the Worms*), a subject who would have remained silent had it not been for his trial documents in the wake of the Inquisition.

In terms of writing the biography of a modern academic, the problem of silence is often indebted to the profession of the subject: traditionally, academics do not write autobiographies, nor are they much the focus of biographies. The only exceptions are people engaged in somewhat excessive self-advertising and/or intellectually remarkable as well as public figures. A good sinological example would be John King Fairbank who wrote an autobiography (John King Fairbank. *Chinabound. A Fifty-Year Memoir*. New York: Harper and Row, 1982), and due to his involvement in Sino-American diplomacy and his shaping of modern historiography on China was also the subject of several monographs and articles (most notably Paul M. Evans. *John King Fairbank and the American Understanding of Modern China*. New York: Blackwell, 1988).¹⁰

Different from Fairbank and other public scholars, however, most academics can only be faintly grasped through their institutional persona and their academic publications. Academic publications, however, are often opaque in terms of autobiographical revelations – with Festschriften edited by or for the biographee occasionally offering some rare gleanings on intellectual affiliations, especially those

¹⁰ An even more prominent and context-relevant example, albeit one of an academic entrepreneur turned high-level diplomat, is Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962), who left hundreds of articles, poems and speeches from his long career as a scholar, social reformer and diplomat. Moreover, he kept a diary on and off throughout his life, which was posthumously published by his son. He was also a prolific correspondent, and his exchanges with fellow scholars and students have often made it into canonized collections of intellectual letters. It is therefore not exaggerated to say that Hu Shi “is perhaps the most fully documented Chinese individual of all time.” (Susan Chan Egan and Chih-p’ing Chou. *A Pragmatist and his Free Spirit. The half-century romance of Hu Shi & Edith Clifford Williams*. [Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2009], x). Ironically, one of the positive side-effects of the anti-Hu Shi-campaign – the main focus of chapter 2 of the present thesis – is that “the search for evidence of his ‘crimes’ led to the preservation of many documents which otherwise would surely have been destroyed by friends and relatives fearful for themselves during the horror of the Cultural Revolution in the decade between 1966 and 1976” (Egan and Chou, *A Pragmatist and his Free Spirit. The half-century romance of Hu Shi & Edith Clifford Williams* 2009, xi).

concerning teacher-disciple ties – , whereas the institutional persona can only be assessed through archival sources (official and semi-official correspondence, briefs from faculty meetings, etc.) as well as testimonials, both oral and written, by the biographee and by those he interacted with, such as his students, assistants and other colleagues. Fairbank, to expand on our main example, was the focus of a publication gathering such testimonials by people who studied and worked with him (Paul Cohen and Merle Goldman (eds.). *Fairbank remembered*. Cambridge, Mass.: John K. Fairbank Center for East Asian Research, 1992).

Lu Kanru, the academic protagonist of the present chapter, was not the Fairbank type of person: to begin with, he did not write an autobiography. Although he published profusely, none of his academic writings say much about him. To some extent, this may be regarded as the result of the institutional process also described in this chapter: the gradual transformation of the Chinese education system from an institution for training government officials into a modern academic community, in which the only thing that counted was rigorous academic work and not the deeds of the individual. By deliberately divorcing their research and publishing activities from the “real world” of politics, China’s new intellectual elite sought to carve out for themselves a new role as the country’s brain power – useful in the long run, but not, as previously required, in the immediacy of everyday governance and administration. With the accession of Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940) as president of Peking University in 1917, this tendency was further epitomized.¹¹

Nevertheless, Lu Kanru’s academic publications reveal an astonishing range of topical expertise: from book-length biographical studies on Qu Yuan through philological studies of China’s earliest narrative poem, *Southeast the Peacock Flies* (Kongque dongnan fei 孔雀東南飛) or the earliest work of literary criticism *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (Wenxin diaolong 文心雕龍), a first authoritative history of Chinese poetry and various other works on literary history, Lu’s publication list also included translations of French historiography and Western sinology and essays on such topics as Western educative theory and studies of early Chinese history and

¹¹ On this process and the consequences for the definition of an academic community, see also Wang Fansen. *Fu Ssu-nien: A Life in Chinese History and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 1-10.

economics.¹² Although his main interest and publication focus was generally on early Chinese literature, the more generalist and politically tinged approach to expertise that was cultivated in the early P.R.C. led him to publish on such subjects as the connection between an author's world view and his creative output or the (in)significance of realism in the Chinese literary tradition by the 1950s.¹³

A good example of how opaque his publications were in terms of autobiographical material is his French doctoral dissertation, entitled *Histoire sociale de l'époque Tcheou* (Social history of the Zhou period), published in Paris by L. Rodstein in 1935. Unlike what one is accustomed to in similar publications today, there is hardly any information in his author's preface (or the acknowledgements) on why he decided to take on a historical (as opposed to a literary) subject, what his working environment was like in Paris and who (apart from his advisors Paul Pelliot and Henri Maspero) helped him during the research and composition process. Without wishing to belittle his undoubtedly advanced French language skills, for example, it would have been interesting to know who polished his manuscript into academically feasible standard French.

As for the option of gleaning some additional information through Festschrift publications: as far as I am aware, no Festschrift was ever published for Lu Kanru, nor did he publish any Festschriften of other academics during his career. There is one exception to the lack of autobiographical material: a compilation of short autobiographical accounts by Chinese scholars of the humanities published in Shanghai in 1997 contains a short text by Lu Kanru copyedited by his former student Gong Kechang 龔克昌.¹⁴ In it, Lu Kanru discusses from a distance of several decades the fact

¹² The collection of his works that until late 2011 was the most comprehensive (if still rather selective) comprises a total of 83 articles and short monographs on 1014 pages. See Lu Kanru. *Lu Kanru gudian wenxue lunwenji* 陸侃如古典文學論文集 (Collection of Lu Kanru's essays on classical literature), Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987. This collection does not include his longer monographs on Chinese literary history and also leaves out many of his early publications from before 1949. What claims to be a complete collection of his and his wife Feng Yuanjun's works, which came out in August 2011, was edited by two of his students, Yuan Shishuo 袁世碩 and Zhang Keli 張可禮, and comprises a total of 15 volumes. See Yuan Shishuo and Zhang Keli (eds.). *Lu Kanru Feng Yuanjun heji* 陸侃如馮沅君合集 (Collected works of Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun), 15 vols., Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 2011.

¹³ For the above examples, see his "Lun gudian zuojia de yuzhouguan he chuanguozuo fangfa de maodun 論古典作家的宇宙觀和創作方法的矛盾" (On the contradictions in the world view and creative method of classical authors) in: Lu 1987, 1-13, and "Shenme shi Zhongguo wenxueshi de zhuliu? 什麼是中國文學史的主流?" (What is the dominant trend in Chinese literary history?), *Wenshizhe* 1954.1 (January), 27-29.

¹⁴ The compilation in question is: Office of the State Council Academic Degree Committee (Guowuyuan xuwei weiyuanhui bangongshi 國務院學位委員會辦公室). *Zhongguo shehui kexuejia zishu* 中國社會科學

that he was able to publish academically starting from a very early age. In the second part of the text, Lu is focused on establishing differences between himself and his former teacher and mentor Hu Shi in terms of their understanding of literature. In other words, the text can be considered as autobiographic evidence, but it is still extremely pointillistic.

In terms of archival materials, there is the difficulty that Lu Kanru's institutional itinerary was rather complex – it included Peking University, Shandong University, the Sorbonne as well as several colleges in southern and southwestern China during the Second Sino-Japanese War, to name but the most prominent – so that a lot of traveling and patient locating and sifting of documents (to perhaps no avail) would be necessary for this kind of approach. The archives that could yield the largest and most important *trouvailles* for biographers of Lu Kanru are the Shandong University and the Shandong Provincial Archives. This is because it was at Shandong University and to some extent also in the political and cultural circles of Shandong province that Lu Kanru became a prominent figure in charge of high-level functions that generated myriads of documents, part of which were preserved in archives.

When I visited Shandong province with the aim of researching said archival resources both on the university and the provincial levels in the summer of 2011, my access to both of these institutions was restricted. In the case of the Shandong University Archives, I was denied access on the official grounds of ongoing construction work that had caused the archives to close over the summer – my inquiry as to their reopening at a later point in time, however, was met with a vague response and the general hint that I should restrict my research efforts to the holdings of the university library. The provincial archives proved slightly more fruitful – I was at least allowed to access the digital catalogue in the reading room of their impressive new site next to the Shandong Provincial Museum in the southern part of the provincial capital, Jinan. Here, however, the fact that the archives had just moved from their old location to the new building across town also accounted for the inaccessibility of any actual documents during the entire duration of my stay.

家自述 (Autobiographic writings of Chinese social scientists), Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 1997. The essays contained therein are all by scholars of the humanities in 20th-century China. Most of them are very short, only about one or two pages of text, and sometimes the texts were put together by a copyeditor from fragments of other texts that would have otherwise gone unpublished. For Lu Kanru's and Feng Yuanjun's contributions, see pp. 483-484 and 574-575, respectively.

In terms of what I was able to glean from going through the keyword-searchable catalogue, though (note: an index card catalogue no longer exists in the new Shandong Provincial Archives), extant documents relating directly to Lu Kanru include internal communication on his and Feng Yuanjun's work contracts at Shandong University (professors at the time could only be hired with the permission of the provincial CCP committee whose statements of approval, as it turns out, are kept in the provincial archives), documents which list his memberships in various provincial-level cultural and political associations during the 1950s and 60s (such as the CCP-run "cultural education committee" [wenhua jiaoyu weiyuanhui 文化教育委員會], the Shandong provincial-level *Wenlian*, the East China branch of the CWU and the CPPCC), and even the occasional document revealing provincial-level criticism by CCP educational administrators of Lu's "bourgeois academic standpoint" in the aftermath of the Anti-Rightist-Campaign of the late 50s.¹⁵

In more general terms, other materials from the Shandong provincial archives concerning intellectuals in the 1950s include fairly regular updates/reports/surveys on the general "situation" or "problem of the intellectuals", written and submitted by government organs, educational institutions and the likes.¹⁶ Generally, the impression one gets from a survey of the available documents is that the intellectuals received quite some attention by the local Party organs at the start of the P.R.C., and that the long-term

¹⁵ It should be noted that it is generally impossible to locate and view documents from any of the public criticism campaigns of the 1950s in the archives, so I naturally did not find anything related to Lu's labeling as a "rightist" between 1957 and 1959. The document in question, entitled "The bourgeois academic standpoint of the Chinese department professor Lu Kanru" (Zhongwenxi jiaoshou Lu Kanru zichanjieji xueshu guandian 中文系教授陸侃如資產階級學術觀點), dates from 1960 and was thus perhaps spared from the (probably at least in part) chronology-based censure system of the digital catalogue. See: CCP East China Normal College Chinese Department General Branch Committee, 1960. [A032-01-0036-006].

¹⁶ For the period from 1952 through 1959, examples of this kind of document are: Shandong Provincial Education and Culture Department (Shandong sheng wenjiaoting 山東省文教廳), 1952. "The situation of the intellectual thought reform movement" (Zhishifenzi sixiang gaizao yundong qingkuang 知識份子思想改造運動情況) [A029-02-0035-009], Shandong Provincial Education and Culture Department, 1954. "On the situation of implementing intellectual policies" (Guanyu zhixing zhishifenzi zhengce de qingkuang 關於執行知識份子政策的情況) [A029-02-0041-011], CCP Party Group of the Shandong Provincial Cultural Bureau (Zhong-gong Shandong sheng wenhuaju dangzu 中共山東省文化局黨組), 1955. "Report on the situation of the intellectuals" (Guanyu zhishifenzi de qingkuang baogao 關於知識份子的情況報告) [A027-02-0002-003], or Shandong Normal College (Shandong shifan xueyuan 山東師範學院), 1959. "Final report on the problem of the intellectuals (draft)" (Guanyu zhishifenzi wenti de zongjie baogao (caogao) 關於知識份子問題的總結報告(草稿)) [A030-01-0013-011].

goal was indeed to foster loyal CCP members among them.¹⁷ But of course it is difficult to make any more assertive statements without first reading these documents carefully.

Some of the materials kept in the otherwise inaccessible Shandong University Archives – or at least digests based on archived documents – have luckily been made available in several publications since the 1980s: 1. *Shandong Daxue xiaoshi ziliao* 山東大學校史資料 (Documents on the history of Shandong University), 8 volumes, compiled by the Shandong University History editing group (Shandong Daxue xiaoshi bianxiezu 山東大學校史編寫組) [Jinan: Shandong Daxue, 1981-88]; 2. *Shandong Daxue xiaoshi, 1901-1966* 山東大學校史, 1901-1966 (History of Shandong University, 1901-1966), also compiled by the Shandong University History editing group [Jinan: Shandong Daxue, 1986];¹⁸ and 3. *Shandong Daxue da shiji, 1901-1990* 山東大學大事記, 1901-1990 (Chronicle of events at Shandong University, 1901-1990), compiled by the Shandong University Archives (Shandong Daxue dang'anguan 山東大學檔案館) [Jinan: Shandong Daxue, 1991].

Publication 1 contains some original documents (official speeches), but mostly personal reminiscences of university members from different periods, including letters of readers reacting to these personal reminiscences by correcting or expanding on them. It also contains biographies of Shandong University's most famous members of faculty: in volume 6, pp. 52-56, there is one of Lu Kanru. Publication 2 also contains a few materials on Lu Kanru, such as a) poor quality pictures of him and Feng Yuanjun (p. 6), of their colleagues, and of academic activities; b) a rather detailed history of Shandong University, including a substantial chapter on the university's restructuring between 1949 and 1958 (with an integrated organigram). Publication 3 is what it claims to be: a chronicle of events at Shandong University between 1901 and 1990 – it therefore also contains such information as the exact date Lu Kanru was named vice-president, as well

¹⁷ Documents like: CCP Party Group of the Shandong Provincial Bureau of Hygiene (Zhong-gong Shandong sheng weishengting dangzu 中共山東省衛生廳黨組), 1955. "Preliminary thoughts on Party building among the intellectuals" (Guanyu zai zhishifenzi zhong jiangang de chubu yijian 關於在知識份子中建黨的初步意見) [A034-01-0169-014], or: CCP Shandong Provincial Recovery Hospital Committee (Zhong-gong Shandong sheng Kangfu yiyuan weiyuanhui 中共山東省康復醫院委員會), 1956. "On the plan of fostering Party members from among the intellectuals" (Guanyu zai zhishifenzi zhong fazhan dangyuan de jihua 關於在知識份子中發展黨員的計劃) [A035-01-0021-016] corroborate this impression.

¹⁸ I would like at this point to extend my sincere gratitude to Anatoly Detwyler who during his own research stay in China in 2011/12 was kind enough to purchase these two publications for me online and send them to my home in Berlin.

as the date the Anti-Rightist-Campaign was started at the university. On some of these more “uncomfortable” events, however, it also remains somewhat vague, giving barely more than the most general information and leaving out many details. Thus, for example, the campaign criticizing Yu Pingbo and *Honglou meng* in 1954-55 is barely mentioned at all.

All three publications should be used cautiously, as they are focused on highlighting (through a strong Party lens) the glories – rather than the adversities – that Shandong University experienced throughout its history. Aside from the elliptic tendencies observed in publication 3, one good example is Lu Kanru’s biography included in publication 1: basically, it is a hagiography (Lu Kanru loved literature, was a patriot, opposed the Gang of Four, etc.) which lists the most important stations of his academic life as well as his major publications. Yet, despite their obvious limitations, all three of these publications are invaluable in that they provide the historian with some solid data on and a good sense of the institutional aspect of Shandong University’s history. Thus, information that tends to be fragmentary from the perspective of both oral and written individual accounts can be efficiently contextualized and supplemented due to the institutional framework provided in these publications.

One important archival trouvaille was made in the academic journal *Xin wenxue shiliao* 新文學史料 (Historical materials on new literature), which included in one of its 2004 issues seventeen diary entries by Lu Kanru during his time as head of the library of Shandong University in the early 1950s. Edited by Li Jianfeng 李劍鋒, these diary entries provide historians with a window into the work routines of Lu Kanru at Shanda at the very start of the P.R.C. Since the entries were taken from a collective public diary, this archival source also documents how communication took place on the micro-level within the new institutional structures, specifically in terms of what could be said and how.¹⁹

In terms of testimonials, Lu Kanru was never given the same treatment as Fairbank. As far as I am aware, no “Lu Kanru Remembered” type of volume containing

¹⁹ It is not quite clear where the diary was kept prior to Li Jianfeng’s editing activities. The seventeen entries are preceded by a short description of what the diary looked like and how it was maintained, but in terms of its general whereabouts, Li merely states that the heads of the Shandong University sciences and humanities library (Shandong Daxue wenli fenguan 山東大學文理分館), a certain Guo Guangwei 郭光威 and He Liguang 何立光, turned up with the diary (presumably at the university library) on March 12, 2009, without giving any further information. Cf. (Li 2009, 191).

collected testimonials related to his life and work has been published thus far. Luckily, however, a few of his and Feng Yuanjun's former students are still alive and it was during my stay in Jinan in the summer of 2011 that I had a chance to interview three of them: 1. retired professor for modern literature and literary theory at Shandong University Guo Yanli 郭延禮 (*1937) was Feng Yuanjun's assistant at the Shanda literature department until 1965 following his graduation in 1959; 2. retired professor of classical Chinese literature Zhang Keli 張可禮 (*1935) was a student at Shandong University between 1958 and 1965, and is one of the two main editors of the 2011 15-volume compilation of Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun's complete works; and 3. retired professor of classical Chinese literature Yuan Shishuo (*1929) was also an assistant of Feng Yuanjun's and knew Lu Kanru well, as he studied under them at Shandong University from 1949. He is the other main editor of the complete works of Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun, and his wife, Yan Rongxian 嚴蓉仙, is the author of one of the most important secondary sources on Feng and Lu (see below).

Mainly due to the aforementioned publications 1 and 2, we know more or less who Lu Kanru's main colleagues were at Shandong University, specifically for the period analysed in the present thesis. But because of the inaccessibility of the university archives, we do not have a sense of such details as the fluctuation among the faculty (except for the most prominent positions, such as department heads or school presidents) or how many students Lu Kanru taught per annum, and who these students were. Work contracts, registration data and yearbooks from this era, if still extant, could provide some systematic data in this regard. Despite their age and the many decades that lie between then and now, my interviewees were still able to recall several of Lu's students, as well as some helpful details on many of his colleagues, though not on a systematic basis.

The same applies to Lu Kanru's connections outside the university: due to a lack of systematic sources, it is difficult to tell how his contacts were with other literature departments across the country (if he had any), or who he was in touch with on the local, provincial and national levels of cultural and political organization. Though we are able to catch some glimpses (we know, for example, that he was a rather high-ranking member of the Shandong branch of the September Third Society [Jiusan xueshe 九三學社], a "democratic" Party, and can thus conjecture that he was in touch with other

members of that organization, including perhaps even Yu Pingbo in Beijing), but they are still far from systematic (we do not know, for example, when he joined the September Third Society or who may have asked him to join).

After expanding on the primary sources available on Lu Kanru, including their limitations, it must be pointed out that Lu Kanru has been the subject of at least two modern biographies and has an extensive appearance in a biography written about his wife, Feng Yuanjun. The problem with these secondary sources is, however, that it is for the most part extremely difficult to retrace their links to the available primary sources. The main reason for this is that they are often devoid of academic references and annotations.

Perhaps the most reliable, but undeniably also the shortest, of these biographical works is the one written in 1983 by two of Lu's students, Mou Shijin 牟世金 and Gong Kechang 龔克昌.²⁰ Like the biography included in publication 1 above, it focuses the main stations of Lu's academic career as well as his publications. However, the chronology is more detailed and the two authors Mou and Gong also deal extensively with the contents of some of Lu Kanru's main publications, including his general views on literature and literary historiography. As such, it is more of a chronology-cum-intellectual biography providing only a few details and anecdotes from Lu's life. Basically, Mou and Gong rely on Lu Kanru's publications and the informal data made accessible through their teacher-student connection.

By contrast, the least reliable of these accounts is the one by Xu Zhijie 徐志傑 entitled *Lu Kanru he Feng Yuanjun* 陸侃如和馮沅君 (Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun), which was published in 2006 by the Jinan-based Shandong huabao chubanshe. Xu Zhijie, one should know as a reader of his study on Lu and Feng, is actually a sports reporter and not an expert on literary studies or the composition of academic biographies. This explains to some extent the lack of references and of ambition as far as accuracy and comprehensiveness are concerned. Thus, in terms of people's dates of birth, the timelines of their acquaintances, and the academic situation of the 1930s and 40s, Xu's

²⁰ Mou Shijin and Gong Kechang. "Lu Kanru zhuanlüe 陸侃如傳略" (Short biography of Lu Kanru), *Jinyang xuekan* 晉陽學刊 1983.5: 81-88.

book is not always reliable.²¹ But clearly, as a Shandong University alumnus, Xu Zhijie had access to primary sources, some of which he includes (in full length) in his narrative (cf. p. 1 of Han Qing's 韓青 preface). Moreover, he was able to personally talk to some of Lu Kanru's colleagues and acquaintances during his research, such as, for example, the late philosopher and historian Ren Jiyu 任繼愈 (1916-2009) (cf. postface, p. 240). Therefore, despite its unreliable nature, Xu's book is still a useful secondary source.

Equally unreferenced, but certainly more reliable is Yan Rongxian's biographical account of the life of Lu Kanru's wife, Feng Yuanjun. Entitled *Feng Yuanjun zhuan* 馮沅君傳 (Biography of Feng Yuanjun), it was published in 2008 by the Beijing-based Renmin wenzue chubanshe. According to her postface (pp. 370-374), Yan Rongxian's interest in Feng Yuanjun is related to her husband, Yuan Shishuo, who was one of Lu and Feng's prominent students (and one of my interviewees). After Feng Yuanjun's death in 1974, Yuan and Yan remained in close contact with Lu Kanru, who in the last months of his life urged Yuan to write a biography of Feng Yuanjun. Yuan being swamped with work, Yan Rongxian took over the project – despite the fact that as a trained expert in film theory, she did not know much about literature at the beginning. Before his death, however, Lu Kanru provided her with first-hand materials, which greatly facilitated her research of the field. Moreover, she spent a good deal of time interviewing Lu and Feng's friends and colleagues. The resulting biography is therefore a mine of information – it includes lengthy quotations, photographs, images of archival documents, etc. Although it is not focused on Lu Kanru, it provides the reader with some glimpses of Feng Yuanjun's husband as well as their life as a married couple.

As mentioned previously, while drafting this thesis, the most extensive compilation of Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun's works, edited by Yuan Shishuo and Zhang Keli, was published by Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe. Though the available table of contents does not mention a biographical study of Lu and Feng contained in this collection, it is probable that the introduction contains a some information related to their lives and careers. Unfortunately, as of July 2012, I have not yet been able to access this publication.

²¹ For a short yet fierce critique of the book, see Zhang Nugong 張弩弓. "Xu Zhijie xiansheng, hai shi xie nin de qiuping ba! 許志傑先生,還是寫您的球評吧!" (Mr Xu Zhijie, why don't you stick to your soccer commentary!), on: Zhang Nugong's personal blog 張弩弓博客 (entry of July 2, 2009), URL: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_606059ff0100di2h.html (last accessed: July 24, 2012).

Based on this combination of rather uneven sources – published archival materials, oral testimonials and popular biographical accounts – this chapter tries to provide an outline of Lu Kanru’s life, which is sketchy rather than exhaustive. It is sketchy because it is in need of more systematic archival research, but to some extent it is also sketchy because Lu Kanru’s life is somewhat eclipsed by the literary and genealogical prominence of his wife, Feng Yuanjun.²²

2. The Problem of Narratives

Though not exhaustive, the data available for this biographical chapter are still a great many, and thus the question arises of how to organize them into what aspires to become a readable account rather than just a terse chronology of events. More specifically, how to construct a narrative? And with what goal in mind other than merely providing a traditional kind of biography, i.e., linear and factual, but not explicative?

The present chapter sketches out Lu Kanru’s life from its beginnings until the early 1950s, when both the form and content of literature departments were radically reconstructed all over China. Even though structurally very much a chronological account focused on providing basic biographical information on Lu Kanru – which seems to be the most important task at hand since almost nothing has been written on him so far in a Western language –, this chapter is to some extent the result of a contradictory bias: it is at the same time apprehensive of and informed by modern historiographic considerations concerning the scope and limits of the biographical genre. The following passages will take a look at these considerations and discuss the extent to which they are manifest in the account of Lu Kanru’s life as provided in the present chapter.

²² At first only known as the younger sister of philosopher Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 (1895-1990), Feng Yuanjun rose to early fame in Beijing’s literary circles due to her prolific talents as a writer of plays, novels and short stories. Personally even encouraged by Lu Xun to hone her skills, she however soon turned from a career in fiction writing to a career in professional fiction analysis and historiography: after her marriage to fellow scholar Lu Kanru in 1929, she no longer published her own creative work (Yan 2008, 127). The point is, though, that unlike her husband, Feng Yuanjun was a household name within the literary field of her time already before she embarked on an academic career, and it is therefore the case even in China today that her name evokes more recognition and interest than that of Lu Kanru.

Several decades ago, the Italian historian Giovanni Levi came up with a still very useful typology of biographical narratives beyond the chronological prototype, distinguishing four models:²³

1. The prosopographical model: individual biographies are only relevant to the extent that they illustrate the wider social context, the style of an epoch or a class – the individual epitomizes the characteristics of a group. [Pierre Bourdieu, *La misère du monde* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993): a collection of biographically oriented interviews with a large number of socially challenged individuals in the Parisian banlieue, each interview representing, reiterating and reinforcing the main characteristics of the diffuse group that manifests “la misère du monde”]. In this model, the social context is the protagonist, while the individual constitutes but a pixel of the overall image.

2. The contextual model: the social context, the milieu, the environment, the epoch are all factors that help explain the life of an individual, especially in terms of what seems odd and disorienting, different or fragmentary. The idea is that the context (i.e., norms) is rigid, while the individual (i.e., deviance) is flexible. In this model, the context is sometimes also mobilized in order to fill lacunae on the biographee not covered by the immediate primary sources [Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983): in order to explain the bizarre story that took place in sixteenth-century France and revolved around a married man, who after leaving home in order to join the war came back to his wife and was subsequently accused of identity fraud, Davis provides her reader with long digressions into early modern French society and its take on identity; Franco Venturi, *Jeunesse de Diderot* (Paris: Albert Skira, 1939): the reader is given a sense of Diderot’s youth, on which we have little evidence, via the depiction of the social context in which Diderot grew up, which in turn is based on a wide range of extant primary sources].

3. The extreme case model: The social context can only be perceived at its fringes, specifically on the epistemic margins of the mainstream. The social context is seen as rigid and suffocating, and individual liberty is tantamount to isolation [Carlo Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi: Il cosmo di un mugnaio del ‘500* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi,

²³ See Giovanni Levi. “Les usages de la biographie”, in: *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 44.6 (1989): 1325-1336.

1976): an account of a heretic with a very special view of the world and the universe – based on his protagonist’s perspective, Ginzburg reconstructs and shows the limitations of the Catholic Weltanschauung at work in sixteenth-century Friuli].

4. The hermetical model: a biography is always an interpretation because it is impossible to grasp its totality, both on an individual and a societal level [Vincent Crapanzano, *Tuhami. Portrait of a Moroccan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980): Tuhami is an illiterate Moroccan tilemaker who believes himself to be married to a camel-footed she-demon. A master of magic and a superb storyteller, Tuhami lives in a dark, windowless hovel near the kiln where he works. He suffers from nightly visitations by the demons and saints who haunt his life, and he seeks, with crippling ambivalence, his liberation from A’isha Qandisha, the she-demon. Based on actual conversations with Tuhami, Crapanzano’s book, while designed as a biography, is mainly an experiment in interpretive ethnography, drawing on psychoanalysis, symbolism and several other disciplines].

As to the question in which ways and to what degrees these four models outlined by Giovanni Levi have influenced the biographical account of Lu Kanru:

Prosopographical model: The narrative’s main goal is not to provide a detailed account of Lu Kanru’s life. Rather, its main endeavor is to show an individual itinerary within a changing institutional landscape, so as to better grasp what was transformed within this landscape and how. To some extent, it tries to make these changes palpable through the perspective of an individual. More than anything, the chapter *A Shandong Professor* revolves around the areas of a person’s biography in which individual and institution intersect with and shape each other. The to some degree random focus on one Shandong professor has its limitations in the sense that it cannot be assumed that Lu Kanru necessarily epitomizes these institutional changes or how a specific group of intellectuals coped with and was transformed by by these institutional changes. Only a prosopographic strategy in the style of Bourdieu’s *La misère*, i.e., taking into account several individual cases from among Lu Kanru’s colleagues could perhaps reveal the extent to which Lu Kanru is representative of a larger group within a specific field of institution. The present chapter only presents a point of departure – and tests the necessity – for a future prosopographic approach, for which a more comprehensive and systematic access to the sources would be indispensable.

Contextual model: That the institutional context can largely explain the life itinerary of a specific individual is especially valid for academics, whose lives are mainly shaped by faculty and department routines. The institutional context also provides the academic's individual itinerary with a certain logic of action – that Lu Kanru decided to accept a position at Shandong University in the late 1940s, for example, was also dictated by the comparatively quiet and stable working conditions a Shandong institution was able to offer at the time on a national scale. The context also helps fill lacunae as to the individual's routines in his institutional everyday life. Based on the data given in publications 1 and 2, we can for instance reconstruct Lu Kanru's institutional environment and his principal trajectories within Shandong University.

Extreme case model: While Lu Kanru is not a Menocchio, one could still say that during his formative years in the Republican period he developed a mindset which was radically at odds with the mainstream that began to emerge in the early 1950s and increasingly solidified across the Chinese and other departments in the first decade of the P.R.C. It would certainly be exaggerated to compare this type of antagonism with the Inquisition Menocchio was subjected to because of his particular *Weltanschauung*. Still, bearing in mind the processes and consequences of the routinely practiced criticisms and self-criticisms in early P.R.C. academic environments, it is clear that Lu Kanru's was a mild form of an extreme case through the poignantly focused lens of which we can observe the social and epistemic matrix in force at this specific point in time.

Hermeneutical model: Lu Kanru's personal and social ecologies are not as hermetical (for Western readers) as Tuhami's, but even so they are more complex than what appears on the surface of the primary sources. There is a whole dimension of implicit yet tacit knowledge that the historian can only sense without being able to reconstruct it in its full and entangled complexity: some of it because it is elusive or opaque (such as Lu's private thoughts on his institutional self and performativity, or the transformative impact that educational meetings such as with the *jiaoyanzu* had on faculty members like Lu, both mentally and somatically), and some of it because it is part of a qualitatively different epistemic atmosphere that remains indescribable as such, being palpable only for those who breathed it directly.

3. A Republican Education

Born the second child of an intellectual family in Puxing village 普興村, Haimen county 海門縣, Jiangsu Province on November 26, 1903, Lu Kanru learned to read and write at the local primary school founded by his father Lu Cuoyi 陸措宜 (1882-1945), which featured a progressive curriculum (xinxue 新學).²⁴

In 1920, at the age of sixteen, Lu Kanru enrolled into Beijing Higher Normal School (Beijing gaodeng shifan xuexiao 北京高等師範學校). Soon he joined the Literature Research Society (Wenxue yanjiuhui 文學研究會) founded by Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (the younger brother of Lu Xun, 1885-1967), Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸 (1898-1958), Mao Dun and other prominent intellectuals, and became immersed in the literary life of the capital. In 1922, Lu was admitted as a student to Peking University's department of Chinese Culture Studies (Beijing daxue guoxuexi 北京大學國學係), where he graduated in 1926. He continued with a post-graduate degree at the newly established Chinese Culture Studies Research Institute at Qinghua University (Qinghua daxue guoxue yanjiuyuan 清華大學國學研究院), which he obtained in 1927.²⁵

We hardly have any information on his youth education or how he managed to enroll at Beijing Higher Normal School and subsequently transfer to Peking University. Nor do we know how he was able to afford the tuition fees and the living expenses in Beijing, which were considerable at the time.²⁶ But we know that he started publishing academically in 1922, when he was only nineteen years old, and that during his study years at Peking and Qinghua Universities he wrote three major works on the subject of ancient Chinese literature. The first, completed in 1923, was entitled *Qu Yuan pingzhuan* 屈原評傳 (Annotated Biography of Qu Yuan), and remains an important source in Qu Yuan scholarship to the day.²⁷ The second, entitled *Yuefu guci kao* 樂府古辭考 (Study of

²⁴ (Mou and Gong 1983, 81)

²⁵ (Ibid.)

²⁶ On this, see the extensive calculations made by Yeh Wen-hsin in her (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), Chapter 6: "College Life and the Costs of Style". It appears that Lu Kanru's family was both a prominent and wealthy family in Haimen county that had enough capital to invest in education. Cf. (Yan 2008, 121).

²⁷ For the long-lasting importance of Lu Kanru's Qu Yuan biography, see e.g. the 2008 study by Zhao Kuifu 趙達夫 entitled "Qu Yuan de ming, zi yu 'Yu Fu' 'Bu Ju' de zuozhe, zuoshi, zuodi wenti" 屈原的名、字與《漁父》《卜居》的作者、作時、作地問題 (Qu Yuan's given name, first name, the author of 'An Old Fisherman' and 'Choosing a Dwelling Place', and when and where they were written), available at URL:

classical Yuefu poetry) was written in 1925 and first published a year later.²⁸ Furthermore, his biography of Song Yu 宋玉, an alleged student of Qu Yuan's, entitled *Song Yu pingzhuan* 宋玉評傳 (Annotated Biography of Song Yu), was first printed in the supplement *Dushu zazhi* 讀書雜誌 (Study Magazine) of *Nuli zhoubao* 努力周報 (Diligence Weekly) in 1923, and subsequently as a book in 1927 (entitled *Song Yu*).²⁹ Thus, before he had reached the age of 25, Lu Kanru had already laid a strong academic foundation for his subsequent rise to authority in classical Chinese literary studies.³⁰

This seems to indicate that he was a precocious talent in literary studies, but Lu Kanru himself, in a short autobiographical account written many decades later in a socialist environment, provided a slightly different explanation:

My students were extremely surprised and also respectful because of my early rise to fame. I have pointed out previously that this issue has to be perceived from a historical angle. On the one hand it is true indeed that I started to write books and to establish my own opinions while I was still a student. It so happened that at the age of twenty, while I was still a first-year student at Peking University, I published *Qu Yuan, Annotated Biography of Song Yu* and other writings. At the age of 24, my book *Song Yu* came out. During this period, I also published more than ten articles, including "Investigation into Song Yu's fu-poems" (*Song Yu fu kao*) and "Evidential investigation regarding the birth and death years of Qu Yuan" (*Qu Yuan shengzu nian kaozheng*). All these articles and monographs were highly esteemed by the academic world. (...) As stated above, my early fame has to be treated from a historical angle. What I mean to say by this is that back then there were very few people doing ancient literature. If you happened to write some stuff, it was easy to draw people's attention and from there it was relatively easy to be published. This is one point. The other point is: all my writings back then were either compliatory [*ziliaoxing* 資料性] or philological [*kaojuxing* 考據性]. Moreover, the viewpoints [*guandian* 觀點] expressed in them were extremely biased.³¹

While the last sentence reveals the socialist filter through which Lu Kanru had learned to look at his Republican years in academia, the first reason highlighted to explain his early fame – i.e., a lack of competition – is not necessarily false modesty. Rather, it

<http://www.csscipaper.com/literature/gjdw/17413.html> (last accessed August 17, 2010). Cf. also (Mou and Gong 1983, 82).

²⁸ Shanghai: Shangwu yinshudian, 1926.

²⁹ Shanghai: Dongya tushuguan, 1927. For the publication history of this text, see (Lu 1929, preface).

³⁰ In the case of Qu Yuan studies, his work remains definitive to the day (Mou and Gong 1983, 82).

³¹ (Office of the State Council Academic Degree Committee 1997, 583).

reflects how the modern discipline of literary studies, along with other academic fields, was gradually emerging.³² But Lu mainly began publishing at such an early stage in his academic career because, as a protégé of China's most famous intellectual of that time, he was encouraged to do so. This is corroborated by Lu himself in a preface to a text that later became the first part of his and Feng Yuanjun's co-authored *Zhongguo shishi* 中國詩史 (A History of Chinese Poetry, 1931). The preface is entitled "Gudai shishi' zixu" 《古代詩史》自序 (Author's preface to "A History of Ancient Poetry") and was first published in *Guoxue yuebao* 國學月報 (Chinese Culture Studies Monthly) in 1927. In it, Lu Kanru explains how he came to be a researcher of Chinese literary history on a larger scale. It all began after he had completed writing his *Annotated Biography of Qu Yuan*:

At the time, I received a message from the supplement *Study Magazine of Diligence Weekly*, and sent them selected passages on the issue of the authorship of "The Great Summons" and "Far-off Journey" [pieces in *Songs of Chu* (Chu Ci 楚辭) attributed to Qu Yuan]. Mr Hu Shi published them and sent me a copy of the first issue, to which he included a piece [of his own] on reading the *Songs of Chu* [*Du Chu Ci* 讀楚辭]. Our views happened to coincide, which made me very happy. He originally persuaded me to give the entire text of the *Annotated Biography* to Peking University's *Chinese Culture Studies Quarterly* to publish, and later he again encouraged me to edit a new collection of Qu Yuan's works, of which the *Annotated Biography* was to be the preface. It was from here that my interest in the research of Chinese literature was born.³³

It was as a student at Peking University that Lu first met Hu Shi. Born in 1891 in Shanghai, Hu did the main bulk of his studies in the United States, first at Cornell, and later at Columbia University where he studied with John Dewey and in 1917 submitted his PhD thesis entitled *The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China*. After spending seven years in the United States, Hu Shi returned to China and was appointed professor of philosophy at Peking University, where he taught from 1917 to 1926.

³² One clear sign of this new development was the establishment of the Academia Sinica in 1928, which was able to thrive mainly thanks to the large wave of returned scholars in the sciences, humanities and social sciences. On the emergence and expansion of modern scholarly circuits in the Republican era, see E-Tu Zen Sun. "The Growth of the Academic Community, 1912-1949", in: *Cambridge History of China*, Vol. XIII, Part 2: 396-412.

³³ (included in: Lu 1987, 100).

During his time at Peking University, Hu gathered a large group of followers in the capital and was perhaps the single most influential persona in literary academics.³⁴

In the wake of the May Fourth Movement, Hu Shi had called for a reorganization of the cultural heritage according to new and modern criteria, subsuming the task under the slogan *zhengli guogu* 整理國故 (“reorder the national heritage”). His own take on the literary aspects of this “reordering” was first published in 1928 and entitled *Baihua wenxueshi* 白話文學史 (A History of Vernacular Literature). In it, he reinvestigated classical Chinese literature according to linguistic criteria, namely the use of the traditional vernacular language. To Hu, this represented a move to historically consolidate his own vision of a new, modern Chinese written language based on the traditional vernacular, which was to substitute the cumbersome classical style of writing, *wenyanwen* (文言文), in literary creation.³⁵

Two early core texts of this movement that scholars of Lu Kanru’s generation were overly familiar with, were Hu Shi’s “Wenxue gailiang chuyi” 文學改良芻議 (My humble opinion on literary reform) of 1917, and his “Jianshe de wenxue geminglun” 建設的文學革命論 (On a constructive literary revolution) of 1918.³⁶ Here, Hu Shi had laid out some basic “ground rules” of how to go about the construction of a new literary language.³⁷ These creative ground rules also necessitated a new research of classical

³⁴ For a concise account of Hu Shi’s life, see Martina Eglauer. *Wissenschaft als Chance. Das Wissenschaftsverständnis des chinesischen Philosophen Hu Shi (1891-1962) unter dem Einfluss von John Deweys (1859-1952) Pragmatismus*. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2001): 23-28. For a longer treatment of Hu’s life, see the still very useful Jerome B. Grieder. *Hu Shi and the Chinese Renaissance. Liberalism in the Chinese Revolution, 1917-1937*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970).

³⁵ Cf. Jerome B. Grieder. *Hu Shi and the Chinese Renaissance. Liberalism in the Chinese Revolution, 1917-1937*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), 161-166. In a way, it can be argued that despite differences in content, the method of utilizing works of the past and of rewriting literary history to consolidate a present concept in literary politics was not a Communist invention. Hu Shi’s “reordering” of the national heritage had followed a very similar principle. Similarly, in the 1950s Hu Shi’s legacy came to serve as a negative point of reference in the process of redefining the scope and content of the new literary and critical canon.

³⁶ Both were originally published in *Xin Qingnian* 新青年 (New Youth), one of the most influential literary periodicals of the May Fourth era, founded by Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879-1942) in Shanghai in 1915.

³⁷ In the first text of 1917, “My humble opinion on literary reform”, Hu had come up with the following eight tenets: “(1) Write with substance (*xu yan zhi you wu* 須言之有物), (2) do not imitate the ancients (*bu mofang guren* 不模仿古人), (3) pay attention to grammar (*xu jiangqiu wenfa* 須講求文法), (4) do not moan if you are not sick (*bu zuo wubing zhi shenyin* 不作無病之呻吟), (5) eliminate embellishment and clichés (*wuqu lanyantaoyu* 務去爛言套語), (6) do not use classical allusions (*bu yong dian* 不用典), (7) do not use parallelisms (*bu jiang duizhang* 不講對仗), (8) do not avoid popular characters or popular language (*bu bi suzi suyu* 不避俗字俗語)”. In the later text of 1918, “On a constructive literary revolution”, these eight tenets were shortened to four, and Hu again emphasized the importance of creating a “national language” as a precondition for new literature (*guoyu de wenxue* 國語的文學). For a reprint of the

literature that was to ignore classicisms for the sake of rediscovering the vernacular traditions of the past – and this, in turn, was exactly the type of enquiry that the later *Baihua wenxueshi* would provide. The main method Hu Shi advocated for literary studies to this end was what he called *kaozheng* 考證, i.e., a modern version of the Qing “evidential research” method. In his later much disputed “*Shuihu zhuan kaozheng*” 水滸傳考證 (Textual criticism of *The Water Margin*) (1920), “*Honglou meng kaozheng*” 紅樓夢考證 (Textual criticism of *Dream of the Red Chamber*) (1921), and “*Xiyouji kaozheng*” 西遊記考證 (1923) (Textual criticism of *Journey to the West*), he developed the method as the basis of a new philological enquiry into the origins and historicity of novels from the Chinese tradition.

At a closer look, it is obvious that Hu Shi’s interest in the vernacular and popular traditions of Chinese literature was somehow at odds with the Qing “evidential” philology and its Republican descendants, who were primarily focused on classical texts written in the often difficult *wenyan*-style. As it happens, Hu Shi’s introduction of an “evidential research” methodology into his iconoclastic approach to the Chinese literary legacy was the result of a compromise: the classical scholarly tradition of empirical studies continued to dominate academia to such an extent that Hu Shi “had no choice but to wed his pioneering work on vernacular literature to philological research so as to make his studies of *The Dream of the Red Chamber* intellectually respectable”.³⁸ As Yeh Wen-hsin further points out in her book on academia in the Republican period:

Although the creation of Western-style colleges and universities at the turn of the century represented a major overhaul of Chinese academic institutions, traditional scholarly lineages in many cases continued to operate, despite changes in institutional infrastructure. The authority of the established mode of scholarly inquiry and the prestige of the established scholarly community were thus mutually reinforced. Despite their political differences on cultural questions, for example, few among his contemporaries would not defer to Huang Kan (1886-1935) as the leading phonologist of Republican academic circles. Huang’s fame was built on his study of the sixth-century masterpiece of literary criticism, *Wenxin diaolong* (The literary mind: Elaborations). He owed his renown as the most important phonologist since the high Qing, at the same time, to his standing as the leading

original texts, see *Hu Shi gudian wenxue yanjiu lunji* 胡適古典文學研究論集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988).

³⁸ Yeh Wen-hsin in her *The Alienated Academy. Culture and Politics in Republican China, 1919-1937*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000): 23.

disciple of Zhang Taiyan (Binglin, 1868-1936). Zhang had studied in his youth with the leading Zhejiang philologues Yu Yue (1821-1907) and Huang Yizhou (1828-1899). Through the former, Zhang was able to trace his intellectual genealogy to such eminent eighteenth-century scholars as Dai Zhen (1724-1777), Wang Niansun (1744-1832), and Wang Yinzhi (1766-1834). Huang Kan's accomplishments, in other words, were measured by the criteria of a scholarly community that could rightfully claim an intellectual lineage of proven distinction.³⁹

How did the transmission of “evidential research” knowledge work in the academic environment of the 1920s? One way to illustrate this is to look at the curriculum devised by the prominent scholar Chen Yuan 陳源 (1896-1970) for his course on philological methods taught at Yenching University in Beijing. The course was focused on a small corpus of texts, precisely three essays by the Qing scholar Quan Zuwang 全祖望 (1705-1755). Chen's notes for the entire course consisted of two pages only, pointing to the importance of orality and a close student-teacher relationship in the transmission of philological knowledge. Chen required his students to make their own longhand copies of Quan's three essays. Personal and geographical names as well as historical references were underscored in the copies and, in a second didactic step, fully annotated by the students, who were required to recur to the classical texts and other relevant primary sources. Finally, students were asked to write a philological article on one of Quan's three essays. In a nutshell, the main goal of this training was to provide students with a good feeling for traditional texts that in the long run (and after a long period of practice) would allow them to distinguish sound passages from textual distortions. The students were expected to become professional philologists with editing skills.⁴⁰

At the time Hu Shi was teaching there, Peking University was in fact the headquarters of Jiangnan-Zhejiang based scholarly lineages of “evidential research”, whose descendants had been invited to join the faculty by the university's president Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940). The classicists revolved around the persona of Zhang Taiyan and included such prominent figures as Mao Youyu, Ma Shuping, Zhou Zuoren

³⁹ (Yeh 2000, 24-25) Incidentally, as we shall see later on in this chapter, the same lineage applied to another target of mid-1950s criticism who was also an acquaintance of Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun's: *Honglou meng* expert Yu Pingbo had also studied with Huang Kan in Beijing, and Yu Yue – as is well known – was none other than Yu Pingbo's grandfather.

⁴⁰ See (Yeh 2000, 32-33). On the history and different fields of Qing “evidential research”, see Benjamin Elman. *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, 1984). For a more detailed perspective on “evidential research” methodology (and its historiography), see Ori Sela. “Qian Daxin (1728-1804): Knowledge, Identity, and Reception History in China, 1750-1930.” PhD thesis, Princeton University, 2011.

and others. Clashes between the traditional philologists and the modern iconoclasts were frequent and unavoidable, not only at Peking University.⁴¹ At the same time, Hu Shi became increasingly interested in finding historical parallels between the West and China, highlighting in this context the Qing philologists of the Qianlong (1735-1795) and Jiaqing (1796-1820) eras as scholars who investigated the classics with the same open and independent approach as their counterparts of the European Renaissance and Enlightenment.⁴² According to Hu Shi, it was this kind of scientific attitude that was mainly responsible for historical progress.⁴³ In other words, philology and modernism were *de facto* compatible.⁴⁴ At the same time, traditional philology as such was put to

⁴¹ One famous incident was Huang Kan's refusal to deliver his lectures on Chinese philology at Wuchang Higher Normal in protest of the school's attempt to invite Guo Moruo to join its faculty. Huang Kan refused to work with colleagues whom he thought to be connected with the New Culture Movement. See (Yeh 2000, 30).

⁴² To highlight the importance of "evidential research" for the progress of history, Hu Shi even published books on two of the most prominent *kaozheng* figures, specifically a chronological biography (*nianpu* 年譜) of Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 (1922), as well as a book on Dai Zhen's 戴震 philosophy (1932). For a concise study of its modern adaptation and the link to Hu Shi, see Yang Yi 楊怡. "Hu Shi 'zhengli guogu' sixiang de guoxue yuanyuan tanxi 胡適《整理國故》思想的國學淵源探析", in: *Wenxuejie*, June 2010: 194-195. Interestingly, this method once again fused the subjects of "literature" and "history", as it based literary exegesis on historically verifiable data, rather than lofty philosophical "ideas". Originally, one of the aims of "ordering the heritage" (*zhengli guogu*) in connection with the New Culture Movement (*Xin wenhua yundong* 新文化運動) had been to split up the vast dimensions of Chinese cultural studies, formerly held together under the vague term *guoxue* 國學 (literally: "national studies"). For a more detailed treatment of the origins and fate of *guoxue* in modern China, see Edward Wang. "Beyond East and West: Antiquarianism, Evidential Learning, and Global Trends in Historical Study", in: *Journal of World History* 19.4 (December 2008): 489-519.

⁴³ The *locus classicus* for this paradigm can be found in Hu Shi. *The Chinese Renaissance* [1933]. (Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2001): 106-107. It concludes with the following bold comparison: "The striking similarity in the scientific spirit and method of these great leaders of the age of new learning in their respective countries make the fundamental difference between their fields of work all the more conspicuous. Galileo, Kepler, Boyle, Harvey, and Newton worked with the objects of nature, with stars, balls, inclining planes, telescopes, microscopes, prisms, chemicals, and numbers and astronomical tables. And their Chinese contemporaries worked with books, words, and documentary evidences. The latter created three hundred years of scientific book learning; the former created a new science and a new world." Hu's comparison of the two traditions is decidedly ambivalent and seems to confirm Lin Yü-sheng's characterization of Hu Shi as paradoxically committed to both the evolutionary form of Chinese tradition and totalistic rejection of that tradition. See Lin Yü-sheng. *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness. Radical Antitraditionalism in the May Fourth Era* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), Chapter 5 "The Pseudoreformism of Hu Shi". This ambivalence in Hu's approach to Chinese history is also confirmed by Li Moying, who pointed out: "Hu's own understanding of the scientific character of history was a mixed one. Though he never wavered from his commitment to the critical use of sources and careful collection of data, or from his attempt to follow and explain the process of change, Hu was neither trained nor inclined to turn history into science. Even though the words 'laboratory' and 'scientific procedures' were part of his vocabulary, Hu demonstrated no intention to change history into a quantitative study so that it could become real science." Li Moying. "Hu Shi and his Deweyan reconstruction of Chinese history." (PhD thesis, Boston University, 1990): 233.

⁴⁴ In fact, literary iconoclasm was dependent on "evidential research" in order to have persuasive power, as has been richly illustrated by Chan Ngong Fung (Chen Anfeng 陳岸峰) in his PhD thesis entitled "Yigu sichao yu baihua wenxueshi de jiangou: Hu Shi yu Gu Jiegang 疑古思潮與白話文學史的建構：胡適與顧頡剛" (The "yigu" movement and the construction of "baihua" literary history: Hu Shi and Gu Jiegang). PhD thesis, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, 2004. Based on "evidential research" methods, as

use and thus innovated from within vis-à-vis the wealth of recent discoveries of archaeological objects and archival materials.⁴⁵ Through these different threads, classical scholarship was gradually transformed into a modern discipline which combined old techniques with new methods, imbuing Chinese tradition “with a linear sense of historical progression”.⁴⁶

It was against this backdrop of Hu Shi’s *zhengli guogu* that Lu Kanru produced his own initial works of literary criticism, and it was also under Hu’s personal tutelage that Lu developed as a scholar in the 1920s. But in his academic formation Lu combined Hu Shi’s approach with the knowledge provided by the “evidential” community of scholars, a trend that was reinforced after he graduated from Peking University and enrolled at the Chinese Culture Studies Institute at Qinghua University. The Research Institute’s faculty included prominent philologists such as Wang Guowei, Liang Qichao, Zhao Yuanren and Chen Yinke. Until his suicide on June 2, 1927, Wang Guowei gave courses related to classical studies (*jingxue* 經學), philology (*jiaoxue* 校學) and ancient history

Chan shows, Hu Shi and Gu Jiegang created two different threads of *baihua* literary history, i.e., Ming-Qing vernacular fiction in Hu’s case, and folklore and folk song in Gu’s approach.

⁴⁵ That there was considerable resistance against this transition of traditional “national studies” towards a modern discipline is very well illustrated by Wang Fan-sen in his *Fu Ssu-nien. A Life in Chinese History and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), esp. Chapter 2 “The Shaping of a New Historical School”, which shows how the exclusive textual focus of scholars trained in evidential research methodology rendered them blind for other archaeological objects – this was one of the main reasons for the initial complications encountered during the Anyang excavations in 1928. Even the authenticity of the oracle bones was not accepted by all evidential researchers, including Zhang Binglin: “Only after scientific excavation [at Anyang] was Chang reported to have secretly read the inscriptions on the oracle bones. The change of Chang’s attitude marked the successful persuasion of the foremost philologist of the classical school to accept the authenticity of this new historical data.” (F.-s. Wang 2000, 86). Moreover, in the attitude that modernists such as Fu Sinian had towards “national studies”, a certain tension between anti-traditionalism and nationalism was palpable. On the one hand, Fu pleaded that research into indigenous topics, instead of being parochial and compartmentalizing, should follow methods and standards that were scientifically objective and universal. Fu Sinian’s historiographical approach looked like Qing evidential research in the way it emphasized the importance of proof while banning flowery prose and farfetched deduction. But it was in fact to a substantial extent informed by positivism and its obsession with data. On the other hand, Fu Sinian contended – after realizing to his great dismay that the world’s foremost centers of Orientology were Paris and Berlin – that the archaeological and textual investigation of the Chinese tradition should belong to China. As such, it needed to be carried out and managed by Chinese scholars. On this tension, see Chapter 4 “The Nationalization of Facts and the Affective State” in Tong Lam. *A Passion for Facts. Social Surveys and the Construction of the Chinese Nation-State, 1900-1949*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011): 91-116; for Fu Sinian’s perspective, see (F.-s. Wang 2000, 55-69 and 73-74).

⁴⁶ (F.-s. Wang 2000, 25-27). Among many things, Yeh Wen-hsin’s description of academic life in the Republican era reveals that there was a certain methodological pluralism at work during this period, which began to be streamlined only after 1949. It also shows that the academic paces and approaches in force in the metropolitan and provincial areas diverged considerably. Last but not least, it also describes a factional antagonism between “iconoclasts” and “traditionalists” that remained a running thread throughout the Republican era. See esp. the captivating section “Qinghua’s Chinese Examination Controversy of 1933” (pp. 42-48).

(shanggu shi 上古史). He was also Lu Kanru's principal mentor. Lu's academic projects at the time focused on the history of ancient Chinese poetry and on anthologies of poetry, which was the first leg of his long-term endeavor to write a history of Chinese poetry from its beginnings to the present day.⁴⁷

It is evident that during his years at Peking and Qinghua Universities, Lu received solid philological training – to the extent that, based on his own “evidential research”, he disagreed with Hu Shi on several occasions.⁴⁸ In terms of his method, Lu was very insistent on the fact that the questions he encountered in his research of classical poetry necessitated “evidential research”:

These types of questions are endless, and if we don't answer them in advance, no satisfying literary history will ever be produced. However, I am absolutely not saying that *kaozheng* is the same thing as appreciation, and neither that literary historians should merely apply *kaozheng* and consider the matter done. Rather, *kaozheng* is the essential ladder that leads to appreciation. If we neglect *kaozheng*, we will certainly not be successful.⁴⁹

At the same time and in spite of all the philological disputes, Lu Kanru was able to establish a very close teacher-student relationship with Hu Shi, which lasted for several decades after his graduation from Peking University in 1926. Thus, when in 1928 Hu Shi moved from Beijing to Shanghai to assume the presidency of his early alma mater, China Public University (Zhongguo Gongxue 中國公學), he hired Lu Kanru as the head of its Chinese Culture Studies Department (guoxuexi), which was then duly renamed Chinese Literature Department (Zhongguo wenxuexi 中國文學係) and provided with a new curriculum by Lu.⁵⁰ For the same department, Hu Shi also hired Lu's fiancée, Feng

⁴⁷ The information on Lu's year at the Chinese Culture Studies Research Institute at Qinghua University is based on (Xu Zhijie 2006, 27-34). As stated above, Xu Zhijie's book is not always reliable, so that this bit of information needs to be corroborated by additional sources, such as, for example, Lu Kanru's aforementioned preface to his *History of ancient poetry* (Gudai shishi 古代詩史), in which he mentions the mentoring of Wang Guowei as well as Liang Qichao and Hu Shi (Lu 1987, 104).

⁴⁸ These differences of opinion were related to questions regarding the authenticity of texts by or on Qu Yuan. See his autobiographical account in: (Office of the State Council Academic Degree Committee 1997, 584).

⁴⁹ (Lu 1987, 103).

⁵⁰ The curriculum is still available as it was laid out in the first issue of the department's periodical, *Zhongguo wenxue jikan* 中國文學季刊 (Chinese Literature Quarterly), which was also established in 1929 by Lu and featured both original literary works and academic essays (the calligraphy featured on the cover of the first issue was, incidentally, by Hu Shi). The curriculum as devised by Lu was comprised of courses on literary history from pre-Qin writings to modern literature since the May Fourth Movement, but also featured courses in creative writing that included classes on composition, rhetoric and style. Additionally, it prescribed classes discussing contemporary translations of Western literary works,

Yuanjun, who had also been his student at Peking University. When Lu and Feng, who had been dating since the fall of 1926, married in January 1929, Hu Shi was among the principal guests at the reception the couple gave in Shanghai.⁵¹

At China Public University, Lu and Feng both embarked on a part of their academic lives which, as for the greater part of the young intelligentsia during the Republican period, turned out to be extremely volatile and peripatetic in terms of their institutional affiliations.⁵² The itinerant dimension of university faculty was caused by the budgetary circumstances of tertiary education in the Republican era. Besides a lack of nationally binding standards for college administration and its routines, one of the main problems that academics faced was the ubiquitous practice of recruitment based on short-term contracts with poor remuneration. The result of this practice was concisely described by the League of Nations' 1931 Mission of Educational Experts to China:

The employment of part-time teachers on the scale which obtains today, and the system under which professors and lecturers made a practice of teaching at more than one university, are injurious to the best interests of university education, and should be discontinued. In future, not less than 85 per cent of the staffs of universities should consist of full-time teachers. Professors and lecturers should be informed that it is a condition of their posts that they shall devote their whole time to the institution appointing them, and that, in the event of their receiving an invitation to give a course of lectures elsewhere, they must, before accepting it, obtain special permission to do so from the president of their university.⁵³

journalism classes (xinwenxue 新聞學) and a preparatory class for the composition of the students' graduation theses. Cf. (Lu 1929b).

⁵¹ Cf. (Yan Rongxian 2008, 99-101 and 121-123).

⁵² Actually, Lu Kanru's first yet very short-lived appointment had been in 1927 at the Beijing campus of the Université Franco-Chinoise (Zhongfa daxue 中法大學), an institution sponsored by the French government, which had a total of three locations, namely Beijing, Guangzhou and Lyon. See (Xu Zhijie 2006, 33) and the preface of Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun. *Zhongguo wenxueshi jianbian* 中國文學史簡編 (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1947). On this institution, see Ruth Hayhoe. "Catholics and Socialists: The Paradox of French Educational Interaction with China", in: Ruth Hayhoe and Marianne Bastide (eds.). *China's Education in the Industrialized World* (Armonk: Sharpe, 1987): 97-119. On the mixing up of Shanghai's L'Aurore University and the Université Franco-Chinoise, see Susanne Kuß (ed.). *Carl-Heinrich Becker in China. Reisebriefe des ehemaligen preußischen Kultusministers 1931/32* (Münster: LIT, 2004): 169 fn. 195.

⁵³ (League of Nations' Mission of Educational Experts 1932, 181-182). The "Mission of Educational Experts" consisted of: Carl-Heinrich Becker (professor at the University of Berlin), Marian Falski (director of the Primary Education Department at the Polish Ministry of Education), Paul Langevin (professor at the Collège de France), and Richard Henry Tawney (professor at the University of London).

Accordingly, to make ends meet, both Lu and Feng worked not only at China Public University, but also taught classes at two other universities, namely Fudan University (Fudan daxue 復旦大學) and Jinan State University (Guoli Jinan daxue 國立暨南大學).⁵⁴ This frenetic work rhythm was the main reason why both of them ended up accepting Anhui University president Yang Lianggong's 楊亮功 (1895-1992) 1930 invitation to teach at the Chinese literature department of this recently established institution, then located in Anqing. The new positions were fairly relaxed in terms of teaching, thus providing the couple with more time for research and writing.⁵⁵

Lu and Feng mainly used their time in Anqing to complete the project Lu had already embarked on under Wang Guowei's supervision at Qinghua University, namely to write a history of Chinese poetry from its very beginnings to the modern age. Their efforts finally resulted in a book comprising almost 900 pages, which came out in February 1931 with the Shanghai-based publisher Dajiang shupu 大江書鋪, famous for publishing the works of left-wing writers like Lu Xun, Mao Dun and Ding Ling.⁵⁶ Entitled *Zhongguo shishi* 中國詩史 (A History of Chinese Poetry), this book was an ambitious project which aspired to provide the same to the history of Chinese poetry that Wang Guowei had done for the history of Chinese drama and Lu Xun for the history of Chinese fiction.⁵⁷

Preceded by a prefatory discussion (daolun 導論) dealing with primary sources and the issue of periodization, this *magnum opus* was divided into three main sections: 1. Ancient Poetry, 1401 B.C.-220 A.D., focusing on four stages revolving respectively

⁵⁴ See (Xu Zhijie 2006, 228) and the preface to Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun's *Zhongguo wenxueshi jianbian*. In his *Social Engineering and the Social Sciences in China 1919-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 16-17, Yung-chen Chiang cites a passage from Franklin Ho's reminiscences at Nankai University in the Republican period, in which Ho described the frenetic rhythm of one of his friends: "My friend Li Ch'üan-shih [Li Quanshi], who received his Ph.D. in Columbia [1922], (...) taught courses in economics, history of economic doctrines, public finance, and money and banking in four different universities in Shanghai. (...) [H]e went from one university to another on a rickshaw from morning to late afternoon. The results were disastrous; like other teachers, he did not have time to prepare for the courses he taught. He repeated the same lectures from year to year. He had no time or funds for research, no time to update the material he used, and no time for his students."

⁵⁵ (Yan Rongxian 2008, 129-130)

⁵⁶ Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun. *Zhongguo shishi* 中國詩史 (A History of Chinese Poetry). (Shanghai: Dajiang shupu, 1931).

⁵⁷ (Yan Rongxian 2008, 131). Wang Guowei's history of Chinese drama, entitled *Song Yuan xiqu shi* 宋元戲曲史 (History of Song-Yuan drama), appeared in 1907, whereas Lu Xun's treatment of Chinese fiction, entitled *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilüe* 中國小說史略 (A Brief Account of Chinese Fiction) was published in 1925. On Wang Guowei's historiographic take on Chinese drama, see He Yunming. "Wang Guowei and the Beginnings of Modern Chinese Drama Studies", in: *Late Imperial China* 28.2 (December 2007), 129-156.

around the very beginnings, the Book of Odes, the *Chu Ci* and the *yuefu*; 2. Poetry of the Middle Ages, 220-907 A.D., focusing again on four stages revolving around the poets Cao Zhi, Tao Qian (Tao Yuanming), Li Bai and Du Fu; 3. Poetry of the Recent Period, 907-1911 A.D., also split into four subsections revolving around Li Yu, Su Shi (Su Dongpo), Jiang Kui and *sanqu* 散曲-lyric verse. At its end, the book included a lengthy appendix (fulun 附論) dealing with contemporary Chinese poetry.

Lu and Feng's *History of Chinese Poetry* was innovative in the sense that it was the first of its kind to be compiled in modern China. But it was also novel in its approach to scholarship. Based on evidential scholarship, it included archaeological findings such as the oracle bones, while rejecting poems deemed inauthentic or of little poetical value. In fact, the book was the result of a systematic search for original sources in different libraries and public collections. It was also the fruit of information exchange with other scholars in the field. Last but not least, it emerged to a great extent from Lu and Feng's extensive teaching experience. The chapters had been written for their lectures and subsequently refined based on feedback from their classes.⁵⁸ This also explains the somewhat colloquial style and the didactic layout of the main text.⁵⁹

Their routine to combine teaching and writing resulted in yet another common project, which was unambiguously intended as a textbook for students of Chinese literature.⁶⁰ Entitled *Zhongguo wenxueshi jianbian* 中國文學史簡編 (Short course in Chinese literary history), it was also published by Dajiang shupu only one year after *A History of Chinese Poetry*, in 1932. Comprising about 100,000 characters, this was a much shorter work than the voluminous study of Chinese poetry. It consisted of exactly twenty lectures, which covered the several thousand years that lay between lecture 1, "Origins of Chinese Literature" and lecture 20, "Literature and Revolution". In their

⁵⁸ See the preface to (Lu and Feng 1931).

⁵⁹ See for example the extensive use of tables and lists as well as the summary pointers in the margins.

⁶⁰ Lu and Feng's urge to produce both reliable and recyclable textbooks was related to their teaching load, which was heavy and mainly focused on lectures. As noted by the League of Nations' Mission of Educational Experts in the early 1930s, one of the principal features of university teaching in China was the "excessive number of hours given to formal instruction and, in particular, the tendency to place and undue reliance upon lectures as the principal, and sometimes, it would appear, as almost the sole, method of education." (League of Nations' Mission of Educational Experts 1932, 160-161). Another problem, which seems to have been a concern of Lu Kanru's too, were the deficient standards of the teaching materials: "In 1937, the Nationalist government published a report on curricular patterns and textbooks used across the disciplines in major universities, with a critical comparative analysis that pointed to a whole series of weaknesses: lack of uniformity in the definition of programs and courses, inadequate attention to basic content as against specialist areas of interest, lack of good teaching material, and an over-dependence on Western texts whose content had little relevance to China." (Hayhoe 1996, 55).

preface, the authors claimed to provide fundamental and concise knowledge based on reliable information. And indeed, it appears that Lu and Feng took care to be as philologically accurate as possible, exchanging letters with different scholars on various issues related to their text. On May 27, 1928, still at a very early stage of their textbook project, they wrote for example to Hu Shi, bombarding him with a host of technical questions:

Mr [Hu] Shizhi,

Every year, November 24th marks the anniversary of our mutual acquaintance. This year, we would like to achieve something before this date. Kan[ru] has an old manuscript [entitled] *History of ancient poetry*, Yuan[jun] has the script of a lecture on literary history she once gave at the Université Franco-Chinoise [in Beijing]. After merging them and doing some rearranging, they could be turned into a *History of Ancient Literature*. (If later on the plan is carried out even further, we will have a complete history of literature. Admittedly, this is only a wild wish of ours, for our academic level is not sufficient yet. But it spurs us on while providing our research with a system.) The plan is to complete the draft in September and to have the book published in November.

Here, we are submitting some detailed questions to you, asking you for your meticulous advice: (1) Is it appropriate to talk about ancient literature according to nations/nationalities (minzu 民族)?; (2) We believe that there is no genuine poetry dating from pre-Zhou times (what is your opinion on the *Book of Lord Shang* [Shang[jun]shu 商[君]書)? – what is your take on this?; (3) The dating of the hexagram lines in the *Changes*? (Wang Jing'an [Guowei] thought that they dated from the early Zhou, we think that it does not feel like and early Zhou text); (4) The dating of the *Etiquette [and rites]* [Yi 儀] and the *[Records on] Ritual* [Li 禮]?; (5) The time and place [of the composition of] the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* [Shanhaijing 山海經]?

There is still another point which is an opinion of Kan[ru] that Yuan[jun] does not agree with. Kan[ru] thinks that the Western Han can be integrated into the Chu nation and that the Middle Ages can begin with the Eastern Han. What is your say on this?

As for the parts of the entire structure, we have temporarily settled on four: (1) Pre-Qin; (2) Han to Sui; (3) Tang, Song; (4) Yuan, Ming, Qing (see details on separate sheet). Please give us your appraisal.

Health to you.

Students Kanru, Shulan [Yuanjun].⁶¹

This letter, one of a great many according to Feng Yuanjun's biographer Yan Rongxian, reflects the level of commitment that both Lu and Feng had developed towards academic work since their graduation. Through their two survey works, which required several years of data preparation, careful writing and repeated classroom testing, they were in fact shaping and setting standards for the discipline of literary studies. Looking at the final lines of Lu Kanru's preface to their *Short course in Chinese literary history*, we note however that in spite of his apparent steady ascent in the field, there was a decisive and so far unexplained hiatus in his academic career:

As for the various unsatisfactory parts [in this book], they have to wait before they can be corrected and supplemented. However, I am giving up my old profession for a new one and don't do literature anymore. Lu Kanru, recorded at 8, Rue Toullier, Paris. August 28, 1932 (Lu and Feng 1932, "Xuli", 2)

As it happens, in 1932, for reasons that as of yet still remain inexplicable, Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun packed up their things and went abroad to France.⁶² There, they registered as doctoral students at the Chinese Studies Department of Paris University (Sorbonne).⁶³ After the Boxer Indemnity Scholarship recipients (of whom Hu Shi had been one), theirs was the second generation of modern Chinese scholars to venture to Europe and the United States in pursuit of further academic qualifications.⁶⁴ It is also to their time in France that one can trace their first real encounter with Western leftist intellectualism: together with their compatriots and fellow exchange students Li Jianwu 李健吾 (1906-1982) and Dai Wangshu 戴望舒 (1905-1950), Lu and Feng soon joined the "Paris Chinese Expatriate Branch" of the "Anti-Fascist, Anti-Imperialist and Anti-War League" (Fanfaxisi fandi fanzhan da tongmeng de Bali huaqiao zhibu 反法西斯反帝反戰大同盟的巴黎華僑支部), which had grown out of the *Clarté*-movement founded by Henri Barbusse (1873-1935) and Romain Rolland (1866-1944) in 1919. With this group

⁶¹ (reprinted in: Yan Rongxian 2008, 138-139).

⁶² It is not quite clear if Lu held his position at Anhui University until the couple's departure to Paris. But we know that in the summer of 1931 Feng Yuanjun accepted an invitation to join the Chinese studies faculty of Peking University, where she taught until they left for Paris. In passing, it should be mentioned that one of her colleagues at Peking University was the eminent Yu Pingbo, who in the 1950s became the main target of the campaign that will be described in the next chapter. See (Yan Rongxian 2008, 130-131).

⁶³ Today: Université Paris-Sorbonne, Paris IV.

⁶⁴ Lu and Feng did not receive a scholarship for their studies abroad, and instead paid for everything out of their own pockets. Due to their many teaching positions, they had apparently been able to save 10,000 silver dollars (yinyuan 銀元) to afford the sojourn in France (Mou and Gong 1983, 83).

of people Lu and Feng frequently met in cafés and along the river banks of the Seine to discuss Marxist theories as valid alternatives to the spread of fascism, at the time emanating from Germany, Italy and Japan, and to generally keep up with the political and social developments at home. According to Feng Yuanjun-biographer Yan Rongxian, the group would also sing the Communist *Internationale* and even the Chinese version of the *Marseillaise* at such gatherings, which seems to underline the left-leaning tendencies developing among some of the foreign enclaves of Chinese university students in the 1930s.⁶⁵

While in Paris, Lu Kanru's new focus on history extended to European topics. In the spring of 1933, he finished translating into Chinese a survey book by the quite prominent French historian Henri Sée (1864-1936) entitled *Esquisse d'une histoire économique et sociale de la France* (1929). In his preface to the Chinese translation, which was published by Dajiang shupu in Shanghai in 1933 and carried the title *Faguo shehui jingji shi* 法國社會經濟史 (Social and economic history of France), Lu explained what had attracted him to Sée's book in the first place:

The present social and economic history of France is one of his [Sée's] works that synthesized his research. Although it unavoidably displays a certain bias that is characteristic of university professors (such as Bernstein's apology in the last passage of the third section of chapter four in part 8), up to the present moment no book can be found that narrates better than this one all the historical facts of France. Therefore, it needs to be translated.⁶⁶

Henri Sée, a student of the famous 19th-century historian Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges (1830-1889), believed that history was "the science of human societies" and he was convinced of the importance of an economic interpretation of historical facts. Even though a systematic reader of Marx, he was not a follower, but rather a critic, of the

⁶⁵ (Yan Rongxian 2008, 146). As it happens, very little is still known about the social life of Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun during their Paris years. In the preface to the translation of Henri Sée, cited in the next footnote, Lu mentions his two friends "Anderson" and "Royère", who as of yet have not been identified, and Roberte Dolléans, better known as Marie-Roberte Guignard, who after being trained in Chinese and Japanese studies with Pelliot, Maspero and Démieville, became a professional librarian at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. On her biography, see Marie-Rose Séguéy. "Nécrologie" In: *Bulletin des Bibliothèques en France* 4 (1972), 187-189.

⁶⁶ Sai Angli 賽昂里 [Henri Sée]. *Faguo shehui jingji shi* 法國社會經濟史 (Social and economic history of France). Lu Kanru transl. (Shanghai: Dajiang shupu, 1933), "Yizhe xuyan" 譯者序言 (Translator's preface), 2. In his preface, Lu also states that his was not the first translation of a work by Henri Sée. Sée's *Les origines du capitalisme moderne* (1926), *Matérialisme historique et interprétation économique de l'histoire* (1927), and *Science et philosophie de l'histoire* (1928) had been previously rendered into Chinese, but not by Lu Kanru and transliterating Henri Sée's name as Shi Hengli 施亨利.

Marxist doctrine of history.⁶⁷ This is what Lu Kanru seemed to imply when he referred to “a certain bias that is characteristic of university professors”, listing as one example the passage in which Sée, basing himself on the social democrat Eduard Bernstein’s *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgabe der Sozialdemokratie* (The prerequisites for socialism and the tasks of social democracy, 1890), argued that the rise and expansion of capitalism was not as rapid and pervasive as Marx contended.⁶⁸ Apparently, Lu Kanru had stronger left-wing leanings than Bernstein or Sée, although we do not know how much of a Marxist he developed into during his Paris years.

In June, 1935, Lu and Feng received their doctoral degrees in Paris. Lu Kanru’s dissertation, entitled *L’histoire sociale de l’époque Tcheou* (Social History of the Zhou Period), had been supervised by the French sinologists Paul Pelliot (1878-1945) and Henri Maspero (1883-1945). It was published in Paris by L. Rodstein the same year Lu received his degree.⁶⁹ On its frontispiece, Lu Kanru highlights his Peking University qualification (“licencié ès lettres de l’Université de Pékin”) and his professional affiliation (“ancien professeur à l’Université de Changhaï”). In spite of his rich teaching and research experience in China, Lu had not yet earned a Ph.D. degree, which may well have been the principal reason for his coming to Paris.⁷⁰ The focus of his Ph.D. thesis, which was almost exclusively historical, may explain the statement he made in the preface to *Zhongguo wenxueshi jianbian*, according to which he was giving up old profession for a new one. In other words, Lu had shifted his interest from literary to historical studies. It is not clear why – one possible reason may be related to the expertise and thematic preferences of his doctoral advisers Maspero and Pelliot.⁷¹

⁶⁷ On Henri Sée and his historical approach, see A. Rébillon. “Henri Sée (1864-1936)”, *Economic History Review* 7.1 (1936), 55-57.

⁶⁸ For the original passage, see Henri Sée. *Esquisse d’une histoire économique et sociale de la France. Depuis les origines jusqu’à la guerre mondiale* (Sketch of an economic and social history of France. From the beginnings until the world war) (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1929), 483.

⁶⁹ Lou Kan-jou. *Histoire sociale de l’époque Tcheou* (Paris: Rodstein, 1935). I would like to extend my gratitude to Pierre-Henri Durand for providing me with a copy of this book, which can be accessed at the Collège de France library in Paris.

⁷⁰ As it happens, Ph.D. degrees were not offered in China at all at the time, which prompted many students to pursue their post-graduate studies at foreign universities. In his “Suggestions for a Harvard-Yenching Institute Five Year Plan for Graduate Teaching and Research at Yenching University” from 1940, William Hung (Hong Ye 洪業) was the first to articulate the plan (that eventually failed) to set up a Ph.D. program in China. See Philipp West. *Yenching University and Sino-Western Relations, 1916-1952*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 190 and 290 (fn. 52). See also Dwight W. Edwards. *Yenching University* (New York: United Board for Christian Higher Education in China, 1959), 164.

⁷¹ Even though Lu Kanru considered himself to be a “literary scholar” and in spite of the fact that his Ph.D. topic was considered to pertain to what we would term “history” in its most classical, i.e., philological,

The thesis, which comprised exactly 200 pages, was mainly intended as a “synthesis of the results gleaned by modern Chinese historians, which will undoubtedly be of interest to Western readers.”⁷² It consisted of five chapters dealing respectively with primary sources (“les documents”), the ethnicities (“les peuples”), economic life (“la vie économique”), the social structure (“l’organisation sociale”) and the ideological evolution (“l’évolution idéologique”) during the Zhou epoch. In the fifth and final chapter, which was split into two sections, “Philosophie” and “Littérature”, Lu also used the chance to share some of his research results regarding early Chinese literature. Occasionally comparative in his approach and quoting once Friedrich Engels on the origins of societal structure, Lu relied primarily on close text readings of original sources, including archaeological findings and their treatment by early China scholars Luo Zhenyu, Fu Sinian, Gu Jiegang, Guo Moruo and Bernhard Karlgren.⁷³ While deferring to his French advisors Pelliot and Maspero, Lu felt above all indebted to Wang Guowei, Liang Qichao and Hu Shi.⁷⁴ Of these three, it was Wang Guowei he respected the most, calling him “le plus grand historien de la Chine contemporaine”.⁷⁵

Soon after graduating, Lu and Feng left France to return to China and to literary studies.⁷⁶ In fact, their reintegration into Chinese academia seemed initially very

sense, it should be pointed out that the sources used by literary and historical researchers of early China in the Republican period were to a large extent the same. Additionally, we must consider Lu’s training with people like Liang Qichao, Wang Guowei and Hu Shi, who worked first and foremost philologically, and only in the second instance drew conclusions in the fields of “history”, “literature”, or “linguistics” based on their close reading of texts. The basis of all branches of research into Chinese textual antiquity was thus, at heart, identical. It is therefore somehow forced to draw a line along the divisions created by the modern humanities. Having said this, it should be pointed out that Lu’s wife, Feng Yuanjun (signing as Feng Shu-lan), wrote her French Ph.D. thesis on an exclusively literary topic, specifically *La technique et l’histoire du Ts’eu* (The technique and history of the *ci*), published also by Rodstein in 1935. This means that Lu could have written about a decidedly “literary” topic, but instead for some reason opted for a topic with a primarily historical emphasis.

⁷² See (Lou 1935, “Préface”).

⁷³ For the comparative approach, see (Lou 1935, 99). The Engels quotation can be found on p. 108. For Lu’s main sources, see his bibliography, *ibid.*, 196-198. The fact that Lu was working closely together with both Paul Pelliot and Henri Maspero in Paris may well have contributed to his venture down the road of archaeology in addition to the textual philology he was trained in, but so far too little is known of their actual collaboration to draw any more meaningful conclusions other than to note Lu’s occasional citation of their work in his thesis (cf. *Ibid.*, 88-89 and *passim*, where he cites from Maspero’s *La Chine antique* of 1927). It should also be noted that the work of Bernhard Karlgren was well-known to Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun even before their departure to France: in 1932, they published a Chinese translation of “The Authenticity of Ancient Chinese Texts”, entitled “Zhongguo gushu den zhen wei 中國古書的真偽”, in the journal *Shida yuekan* (in which Karlgren’s name is rendered as “Keluojuelun” 珂羅倨倫), 201-220.

⁷⁴ Cf. (Lou 1935, “Préface”).

⁷⁵ (*Ibid.*, 107). See also on p. 37 the little dispute between Wang Guowei and Hu Shi on the value of primary sources, which Lu resolves in favor of Wang.

⁷⁶ They went to Paris by boat, but returned to China on the Transsiberian Railway via Moscow, where they made a short stopover. This stopover was at least in part prompted by a letter Feng Yuanjun had received

promising. Towards the end of the year 1935, Lu Kanru was appointed the head of Yenching University's (Yanjing daxue 燕京大學) Chinese Department in Beijing, while Feng Yuanjun took up a teaching post at Hebei Women's Normal College in Tianjin (Hebei nüzi shifan xueyuan 河北女子師範學院).⁷⁷ In the 1930s, Yenching University was – besides Peking University, the Institute for History and Philology and Beiping Academy – one of the best locations in China for classical scholarship.⁷⁸ Above all, it was the best funded one. A private institution founded and run with the support of American Christians, which had its campus south of the Old Summer Palace from 1926 onwards, Yenching University became one of the main beneficiaries of the Hall estate, based on which it was able to establish together with Harvard University a dual research institute named the Harvard-Yenching Institute. The principal focus of this institute was classical scholarship, which mainly thanks to William Hung's (Hong Ye 洪業, 1893-1980) efforts was able to thrive through graduate programs, scholarly exchanges, and a host of publications, most notably the Harvard-Yenching Sinological Index Series and the *Yenching Journal of Chinese Studies* (Yanjing xuebao 燕京學報), founded in 1927. Attached to the journal was also a separate monograph series, which aspired to feature high-quality works of the most recent classical scholarship.⁷⁹ It was in this series that Lu and Feng's first research project after their return to China was published in 1936. The

a year earlier by her brother Feng Youlan, who had spent some time there on his own way back to China in 1934. In his description, the Soviet Union at the time was "...neither hell on earth as some people like to say, nor the heavenly paradise as described by some propaganda pieces, but rather a society in transition. This society does not advocate 'respect for wealth', but for production. The highly regard model workers, progressive characters. This kind of 'exaltation of the virtuous' is a form of social progress, and it could well lead to a heavenly paradise." If one is to believe the extant biographical depictions of that journey, Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun were generally impressed by the Soviet Union as it presented itself from their Transsiberian train window. See (Yan Rongxian 2008, 154) and (Li Jianfeng 2009, 192).

⁷⁷ (Yan Rongxian 2008, 160-161) just indicates that Lu Kanru was employed by Yanjing University. The less reliable (Xu Zhijie 2006, 99) states – without providing any further evidence – that he was appointed as a professor and head of the Chinese department. According to the 1930 regulations of the Ministry of Education, universities were allowed to have only four faculty ranks: professor, assistant professor, lecturer and instructor. Professors and assistant professors were required to have several years of teaching experience, 5 for professors, 3 for assistant professors. They had to have published original work following their graduation and to possess the ability to direct graduate research. A Ph.D. degree was not a requirement, but certainly an advantage for those applying for professorships. On this ranking and Yenching University, see (Edwards 1959, 257-259). Lu Kanru seems to have fulfilled all these prerequisites so that it is likely, but not certain at this stage, that he was hired as a professor.

⁷⁸ On the Chinese Studies and other research landscape in the 1930s, see (E.-T. Z. Sun 1986, 396-411).

⁷⁹ On the history of the Harvard Yenching Institute, see (P. West 1976, 187-194) and Susan Chan Egan. *A Latterday Confucian: Reminiscences of William Hung (1893-1980)*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 111-118 and 140-149.

monograph carried the title *Nanxi shiyi* 南戲拾遺 (Filling in the Blanks in Southern Drama).⁸⁰

Nanxi shiyi was to remain Lu Kanru's only serious attempt at researching the dramatic genre (which after this collaboration became his wife's primary area of research). The title, "Filling in the Blanks...", referred to the book's supplementary character to two other books on the *xiqu* genre published slightly earlier by Zhao Jingshen 趙景深 (1902-1985) and Qian Nanyang 錢南揚 (1899-1987), namely *Song Yuan xiwen benshi* 宋元戲文本事 (Sources of Song and Yuan Drama) and *Song Yuan nanxi baiyilu* 宋元南戲百一錄 (101 Records of Song and Yuan Southern Drama) respectively. "Southern Drama" was the predecessor, prevalent in the Southern Song and Yuan dynasties, of the so-called *chuanqi* 傳奇 (romance) dramas of the Ming and Qing periods. The actual shape and structure of "Southern Drama" was unknown until the 20th century, when three texts were found in London in a set of the Ming encyclopaedia *Yongle dadian* 永樂大典. After this discovery, more texts belonging to the 170 known titles of Yuan and Ming "Southern Drama" were eventually found. Of these texts, some 20 are extant plays, while excerpts from about 120 titles were preserved in various *qu* 曲 (aria)-formularies. Most of the extant material had been retrieved by Zhao Jingshen and Qian Nanyang. However, in 1935, after their return to China, Lu and Feng, who until then had not been particularly interested in dramatic literature, found in a bookstore a manuscript copy of the often mentioned, but supposedly lost *Jiugong zhengshi* 九宮正始 (The correct beginnings of the nine *gong*), which was a book of songs and arias compiled by Niu Shaoya 紐少雅 (1564-1667?). As they could not afford it, they started copying the most crucial passages by hand. When they were almost finished, the bookseller dropped the price drastically so that in the end they were able – after borrowing some money from friends – to purchase the original copy.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun. *Nanxi shiyi* (Filling in the Blanks in Southern Drama). (Beijing: Harvard-Yenching Society Press, 1936) (= Supplement No. 13 of Yanjing Journal of Chinese Studies). The monograph series ran from 1933 to 1948 and featured a total of 21 titles, among which were such prominent works as Gu Jiegang's *Sanhuang kao* 三皇考 (Investigations on the Three Emperors) and Li Jinhua's *Mingshi zuanxiu kao* 明史纂修考 (Investigation into the compilation of the Standard History of the Ming).

⁸¹ For the more information on the genre of the *chuanqi* and *nanxi*, see Stephen H. West. "Drama", in: William H. Nienhauser, Jr. (ed.). *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, Vol. 1 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 13-30, specifically pp. 19 f., as well as the relevant entries

In the *Jiugong zhengshi*, Lu and Feng found Southern Drama-texts other than the ones retrieved by Zhao and Qian. The book is a philologically careful compilation of these for the most part very short and sketchy texts. It is preceded by a long introduction, in which the authors provide their readers with information about the Southern Drama as a genre as well as the provenience and authorship of the *Jiugong zhengshi*. Partly, the introduction was also the result of discussions Lu and Feng had with Hu Shi, with whom they were in close contact via letters. In response to their request for his opinion on a manuscript version of *Nanxi shiyi*, Hu sent them on May 22nd, 1936 – seven months before the book came out in December –, a letter of encouragement, recommending terminological improvements and making suggestions as to where they could publish their findings:

Kanru and Yuanjun:

That *nanxi* [southern dramas] could be extracted out of the *Jiugong zhengshi* is indeed great news. I hope you send the manuscript to [Luo] Xintian [Changpei, 1899-1958], and [Wei] Jiangong [1901-1980]. They will most certainly accept the manuscript for publication in *Guoxue jikan* [National Studies Quarterly]. When was *Jiugong zhengshi* written? When you use the term “Yuan romance” [Yuan chuanqi], isn’t that being a bit arbitrary? The term *chuanqi* emerged later with the literati who composed *nanqu* [southern arias], people in the Yuan didn’t have this designation.

In Yuan drama, one can distinguish *yuanben* and *zaju*, *yuanben* are the scripts from the entertainer’s quarters, whereas the literati works are called *zaju*. Zhao Zi’ang [Mengfu, 1254-1322] once said so. Ming drama also has to be divided into to stages, the early stage was *nanxi*, whereas the later stage was *chuanqi*. Therefore, I am not quite ready for your use of the term *Yuan chuanqi*. Not only is the term *chuanqi* debatable, the term *Yuan* is so as well. Unless we have sufficient evidence, it is not appropriate to identify [these pieces] as Yuan [pieces]. You can only use the general term *nanxi* and that’s it.

When [Chu] Wanfeng edited the *Collected Works of Hu Shi* some years ago, he summarized its ideas with a couplet:

“Bold hypotheses and careful proof./ A little less empty phrases and a little more good readings.”

This year I would summarize my own editing with this couplet:

in Nienhauser (i.e., “Ch’uan-ch’i” and “Nan-hsi”). See also (Lu and Feng 1936, “Xuli”), where the authors recount the story of how they stumbled upon the manuscript.

“If you have a bit of evidence, say a few words./ If you want to harvest, you first need to sow.”

I send you both a smile.

[Hu] Shizhi⁸²

This is incidentally one of the last extant letters between Hu Shi and Lu and Feng. Though this may not have been due to any real breach in their contact, the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in mid-1937 would certainly have hindered communication or caused the loss or even destruction of their correspondence. Besides, by 1938 Hu Shi had left the country to serve as the Chinese ambassador to the United States, and would only return to Beijing in 1942, a fact which probably contributed to their muted communication.

Lu Kanru worked only for about one year at Yenching University. On July 7, 1937, the Marco-Polo-Bridge Incident marked the start of the war, which would last until 1945. For Chinese academia, this meant above all a decade of internal migration entailing a series of ruptures, displacements and shifts, especially in terms of geographic stability. The majority of institutions, including all state-run universities, moved either to rural areas within their province, or to the southern or hinterland regions. As the Japanese kept gaining more territory, colleges and universities were frequently on the road, sometimes moving three or four times, as wartime conditions worsened. A lot of traveling was involved during this mass exodus.⁸³

Even though Yenching University remained in Beijing after the Marco-Polo-Bridge Incident until 1942, at which point it moved its campus to Chengdu in Sichuan province, Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun left Beijing for Shanghai already in early 1938. Their main aim was to check on Lu's family in Haimen county. As Haimen county had been invaded by the Japanese, Lu could not get through to his home region. Instead, he and Feng traveled to Kunming via Hong Kong and Hanoi. In Kunming, Lu was offered a teaching position at Sun Yat-sen University (Zhongshan daxue 中山大學) in Guangdong,

⁸² Quoted in: (Yan Rongxian 2008, 163).

⁸³ For a very vivid and detailed account of the trials and tribulations encountered by the three top universities of China during the war, see John Israel. *Lianda: A Chinese University in War and Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). For a more synoptic view, see (Hayhoe 1996, 54-60). For a substantial study, see the still very useful Zhuang Kunming 莊焜明. “Kangzhan shiqi Zhongguo gaodeng jiaoyu zhi yanjiu 抗戰時期中國高等教育之研究” (A study of Chinese higher education during the War of Resistance) (Ph.D. thesis, Sili Zhongguo wenhua xueyuan shixue yanjiusuo, 1979).

which he accepted. Shortly after Lu and Feng's arrival in Guangzhou, Sun Yat-sen University, on account of the imminent Japanese occupation of the city of Guangzhou, decided to move to Luoding 羅定 in the western part of Guangdong province. In 1942, the university moved again, this time to Pingshi 坪石 in the northern part of the province. Also in 1942, Lu and Feng were both offered positions at Northeastern University (Dongbei daxue 東北大學), which had moved its campus from Shenyang, Liaoning province, to Santai 三台, between Chengdu and Chongqing in Sichuan province. They accepted the offers and moved to Santai, where they remained until the end of the Sino-Japanese War.⁸⁴

Little is still known about Lu's academic life in these itinerant years. Wartime activities of exiled intellectuals, apart from writing and publishing essays and book manuscripts, often included forming discussion groups with other members of the exiled elite which would frequently edit their own (more or less short-lived) politically tinged literary journals. In Lu and Feng's case, the most prominently referenced of the latter was the North Sichuan subgroup of the left wing "National Literary and Art Circle Association for Fighting the Enemy" (Zhonghua quanguo wenyijie kangdi xiehui 中華全國文藝界抗敵協會). The subgroup was founded in 1945 mainly due to Lao She's support and encouragement, while the larger organization can be seen as a kind of precursor to the later *Wenlian* (Federation of Literary and Art Circles). Lu and Feng were both active members of the subgroup, even providing their home in Santai as its official base.⁸⁵ It was also in the first and only issue of the subgroup's periodical, *Wenxue qikan* 文學期刊

⁸⁴ (Yan Rongxian 2008, 169-207). Note that (Xu Zhijie 2006, 99-106 and 229) provides an alternative chronology of Lu's wartime itinerary. In this version, Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun left the capital already in late 1937 to take up positions at Anhui University, which was then located in Anqing 安慶, Anhui province. They remained there until February 1938, when they followed the university's transition to Hankou 漢口, Hubei province, and took up teaching posts at Wuhan University's Chinese Department (Anhui University was merged with Wuhan University in this version of the story). In March 1938, the National Literary and Art Circle Association for Fighting the Enemy (Zhonghua quanguo wenyijie kangdi xiehui 中華全國文藝界抗敵協會) was founded in Hankou and, allegedly, Lu Kanru was among the fifty initial members of the board of directors, alongside people like Lao She, Ding Ling, Guo Moruo and Mao Dun. In 1939, Lu and Feng left Hankou, traveled through Hong Kong, Vietnam and Yunnan, and eventually came to Guangdong province, where Lu took up the above mentioned position at Sun Yat-sen University (which was located first in Guangdong, then in Yunnan, and finally also in Pingshi in this version of the story). In 1942, the couple left Sun Yat-sen University, which was also suspending classes, and joined the staff of Northeastern University, then situated in Sichuan province.

⁸⁵ Though the sources leave no doubt about their participation, there are some discrepancies as to their exact positions within the subgroup. According to Xu Zhijie, Lu Kanru was named its chairman, while Zhao Jibin 趙紀彬 (1905-1982) and Feng Yuanjun were vice-directors (Xu Zhijie 2006, 229). In Yan Rongxian's account, by contrast, Zhao Jibin was the director, and Feng Yuanjun vice-director, while Lu Kanru is not mentioned as holding a leading position at all (Yan Rongxian 2008, 205).

(Literature periodical, January 1945), that an initial draft version of Lu Kanru's posthumous *Zhonggu wenxue xinian* 中古文學系年 (Chronology of Mid-Ancient Chinese Literature) was first published.⁸⁶

* * *

To sum up the development of the academic landscape in Republican China in a (perhaps overly) simplified manner, one could say that the modern disciplines as we know them today began to emerge in the 1910s to 1920s. Gaining momentum in the late 1920s, they leaned towards standardization and centralization during the 1930s, but were forced into the hinterland during the Sino-Japanese War, from which they finally re-emerged as institutions belonging to post-war China proper.

In terms of quantity, this meant that in 1930 China had 30 universities, 17 colleges and 23 professional schools. Of the universities, 15 were national-level, 18 provincial-level and 23 private. By 1947, this number had grown considerably, as China then had 207 institutions of higher education, comprising a total of 154,612 students.⁸⁷ Lu Kanru had come into contact with all these different types of schools: national (Peking University), provincial (e.g., Anhui University) and private (Yenching University).

In terms of quality, the Republican universities of China followed various models, including the Chinese tradition, the French model, the German model, the American model, as well as the Yan'an model, which became central for the later Communist government and its educational and cultural policies. Except for the Yan'an model, Lu Kanru came into contact with all of the other types: the Chinese tradition was followed at Qinghua during his early intellectual formation under Wang Guowei and Liang Qichao. At Peking University, he encountered the German model, while at Yenching University, it was the American model. His contact with the French model was first established at the Université Franco-Chinoise in China and then, of course, in France during his post-graduate studies.

⁸⁶ (Yan Rongxian 2008, 204-207). *Zhonggu wenxue xinian* was apparently Lu's only major project during the war. It is basically a chronological encyclopaedia of mid-ancient Chinese literature, providing analytical summaries of all the extant works from this age. On its content, see Liu Wenzhong 劉文忠. "Du Lu Kanru xiansheng de 'Zhonggu wenxue xinian' 讀陸侃如先生的《中古文學系年》" (Reading Mr Lu Kanru's 'Chronology of Mid-Ancient Chinese Literature'), *Wenshizhe* 4 (1983), 44-49 and 85.

⁸⁷ (Hayhoe 1996, 53)

One can say that there were certain correspondences between the evolution of the academic institution and the individual Lu Kanru: Lu grew with the system, and he was not one of those who went abroad at a very young age to do their studies and upon their return home had to “re-learn” the Chinese language.⁸⁸ Rather, he slowly veered from a text-oriented classical scholarship to a slightly more modern approach to texts, which was informed by a data-oriented positivism. In this sense, it looked as though his intellectual approach to his subject matter did not change much over the years, because in fact Qing evidential research and data-oriented positivism look very much alike.

Compared to the late Qing tradition, however, a lot had changed in the field of literary and historical research: (a) an academic institutionalization had taken place which included professionalized faculties, libraries and publicational venues; (b) research had become a full-time occupation, rather than a leisurely activity for the economically privileged; (c) academic disciplines had been created and hierarchized; and (d) there was a sense of specialization, in terms of research and writing for a readership who were at the same time one’s professional peers.

In terms of a development towards a full-fledged profession, the famous Republican scholar Fu Sinian provoked an intriguing debate about the goals of an academic education in 1932. Vehemently opposed to the Chinese traditional intellectual who was, above all, a “man of letters”, Fu argued for a broadening of the educational concept beyond pure textual philology, and emphasized the importance of field work in historical and linguistic research: “We are not book readers, (...) (we must) go all the way to Heaven above and Yellow Spring below, using our hands and feet, to search out the stuff of history.”⁸⁹ Fu believed that the core stratum of a modern society should be a professional class, not the traditional literati, and that students within a modern society should be trained to use both the brains, as well as their “hands and feet”. Similarly, he advised the use of largely unexplored data in historical and linguistic research efforts,

⁸⁸ This effect has been termed the “reverse language barrier”, and it is described by Yung-chen Chiang who gives an example of Jiang Tingfu (B.A., Oberlin, 1918; Ph.D. Columbia, 1923), a Qinghua historian who had received an English-language education from an early age in China (at a Presbyterian missionary school in Hunan province) and later, at age seventeen, went on to pursue his academic training in the United States. In his “Reminiscences”, Jiang recounted his experiences in regaining his Chinese language skills upon his return to teach and work in China: “I began exactly the way I did when I was six years old in the country, namely, by reviewing the Four Books and Five Classics of Confucianism. I did not try to re-memorize these classics, but by repeatedly reading them aloud, most of the passages came back to me. From the basic texts, I went on to study the essays and poems usually selected for secondary school education. From that point, I went on to read such books as seemed proper.” Quoted in: (Chiang 2001, 19 f.).

⁸⁹ Quoted in (F.-s. Wang 2000, 76 f.).

such as epigraphs, icons and folk songs, rather than restricting oneself to the limited supply of books and published written records.⁹⁰

One of the side effects of academic professionalization was a certain standardization, which was – then as now – also always connected to the burden of administration. Professors and other teaching staff were expected to perform on different fronts, namely research, teaching and service.

In terms of research, one can say that Lu Kanru was very productive: during the Republican period he wrote many articles starting from a very early age. More importantly, it turns out that his work on Qu Yuan and Southern Drama is still very useful and his *History of Chinese Poetry* still a standard in Chinese academic circles. From an equally early age, he was connected to all the prominent figures in his field, such as Liang Qichao, Wang Guowei, Hu Shi, Gu Jiegang, Fu Sinian, Chen Yuan, and William Hung, and he had international ties through his advisors Paul Pelliot, Henri Maspero and probably an array of other scholars we are no longer able to clearly identify.

In terms of teaching, Lu was nolens volens able to gain a lot of experience as the teaching load at Republican universities was huge. At the same time, this load was turned into an incentive to produce high-quality survey works, such as his *History of Chinese Poetry*, his *Wenxueshi jianbian* or the *Chronology of Mid-Ancient Chinese Literature*.

In terms of service, we only have little information, and much of what we have is not very reliable. But it must be assumed nevertheless that he was able to gain a lot of administrative experience and the skills required for a leading position in an academic institution. Generally, one should point out that academic service was at the time very much bound to an institution providing a position, as there was little extra-institutional funding that one could apply for in the Republican period. There were no supra-institutional professional associations with peer-reviewed journals and regular conferences. In fact, Yung-chen Chiang's remarks about the social sciences are equally applicable to the field of literary studies Lu Kanru was working in:

The Chinese educational system was centralized under the control of the Ministry of Education, much like in the case of the French and

⁹⁰ (Ibid., 77)

Japanese systems. This vertical integration worked to hinder horizontal interactions among the faculties at the same level of the educational hierarchy. There was little factual integration in the Chinese academia. Research projects and journal publications were typically organized and handled by institutions, rather than by the professional associations. The state, which had played the pivotal role in establishing and maintaining the monopoly of professions in the Anglo-American settings, in the Chinese case created conditions that contributed to the under-professionalization of the social science disciplines. It was the institutions where they taught, rather than the professional associations of which they were members, that delineated the boundaries, set the reward structure, and controlled the world of Chinese social scientists.⁹¹

The Chinese state was also politically and financially too weak to create clusters or schools of learning that could structure and integrate the whole field. That the Republican academic landscape looked so diverse and pluralistic was not the result of a deliberate policy. Rather, it was caused by its political environment, which was impermanent and lacked a center. Accordingly, the modern field of literary studies was brittle and fragmentary, which is reflected in the peripatetic itinerary of Lu Kanru during his Republican years.

4. A Socialist Profession

Following the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War on September 2, 1945, Chinese universities and colleges began to move back from their interim locations in the hinterland to their original campuses. Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun continued working at Northeastern University, which transferred back to Shenyang in September 1946.⁹² At the time, the Second United Front (Di'er ci Guo-Gong hezuo 第二次國共合作) between the GMD and the CCP was broken, and new tensions arose between the two factions.

These tensions were most palpable in Manchuria due to Stalin's double-edged policy towards the Chinese at the time. While backing the Chinese Communists on the one hand, he sought on the other hand to protect his territorial gains made in the Yalta agreement of 1945, i.e., control over the Chinese Changchun railway and the naval base at Lushun. The main consequence of this policy was that the Soviets had to show support for Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist regime, which they did: in a first step, they

⁹¹ (Chiang, *Social Engineering and the Social Sciences in China, 1919-1949* 2001, 256 f.).

⁹² (Xu Zhijie 2006, 230). 1946 was also the year in which Hu Shi was nominated president of National Peking University, cf. *ibid.*

ordered the Chinese Communists to leave the urban areas they had occupied in southern Manchuria in 1946 and, in a second step, they withdrew their own troops from northeastern China.⁹³ Consequently, the presence of the GMD in that region became very palpable to left-leaning academics. Lu and Feng, though not members of the Communist Party themselves, were nevertheless regarded as left-wing intellectuals. And in the short period that they remained on the Shenyang campus, they apparently felt increasingly threatened by the dominance of GMD forces at Northeastern University and began to seek academic alternatives.⁹⁴

The break came in the summer of 1947, when the president of Shandong University at the time, dramatist and educator Zhao Taimou 趙太侖 (1889-1968), offered both of them positions in Qingdao. The offer being accompanied by the prospect of working with a group of friends and close acquaintances from their days in exile – people like Marxist historian of philosophy Zhao Jibin 趙紀彬 (1905-1982) and Confucian classics specialist and historian Yang Xiangkui 楊向奎 (1910-2000) – Lu and Feng accepted the invitation willingly. Therefore, in the summer of 1947 they joined the staff of Shandong University (Guoli Shandong daxue 國立山東大學), where they were to remain until their final days.

Shandong University was a state university which had been established in 1930 with a main campus in Qingdao and a side location in Jinan. During the Sino-Japanese War it first took refuge in Anhui, then in Wanxian (Sichuan), and finally in Chongqing, returning to its place of origin already at the beginning of 1946.⁹⁵ Its faculties were divided into five colleges, namely the College of Medicine (yixueyuan 醫學院), the College of Agriculture (nongxueyuan 農學院), the College of Technology (gongxueyuan 工學院), the College of Natural Sciences (lixueyuan 理學院) and the College of Liberal Arts (wenxueyuan 文學院). The College of Liberal Arts consisted of two departments:

⁹³ W. A. Douglas Jackson. *Russo-Chinese Borderlands* (Princeton: D. van Nostrand, 1962), 56-57.

⁹⁴ According to Yan Rongxian, they even received a series of anonymous threats during that time, warning them to lay low and hold back with political opinions, not to go out alone at night and to keep to themselves in general. The situation was exacerbated in late 1946, when the university hired a GMD-member as new vice-head of the Literature Department, which was at the time headed by Lu Kanru. Unable to resign straight away but feeling uncomfortable with the newcomer, both Lu and Feng were greatly relieved when only half a year later they received offers to move to Qingdao, where the situation for left-wing intellectuals was more relaxed (Yan Rongxian 2008, 228-232).

⁹⁵ For a historical survey of Shandong University, see Xiaoshi bianxiezu 校史編寫組 (ed.). "Shandong daxue xiaoshi gaiyao 山東大學校史概要" (A Historical Survey of Shandong University), in: *Shandong daxue xiaoshi ziliao 山東大學校史資料* (8 vols.), vol. 1 (October 1981), 3-10.

the Chinese Literature Department (Zhongguo wenxue xi 中國文學係) and the Foreign Languages and Literature Department (waiguoyu wenxue xi 外國語文學係), which mainly specialized in English.⁹⁶ Within this structure, Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun became regular professors at the Chinese Literature Department, then headed by Yang Xiangkui.⁹⁷

When Lu and Feng joined Shandong University in Qingdao, the city was still under GMD governance. The two new staff members presented themselves as supportive of the so-called “progressive students” (jinbu xuesheng 進步學生) of the time: according to contemporary witnesses, they contributed a part of their salaries to left-wing student activities and participated in meetings, rallies, music recitals and theatre productions staged by them. When in August 1948 a group of Shandong University students was arrested by GMD officials, Lu Kanru allegedly donated money to elicit their release from prison.⁹⁸ Though it is retrospectively difficult to ascertain, it is even said that by the time they took up their jobs in Qingdao, Lu and Feng had both been put on the GMD blacklist (hei mingdan 黑名單), meaning that their lives were in actual danger because of their leftist political tendencies.⁹⁹ The situation changed radically when Qingdao was officially “liberated” by the Communists on June 2, 1949.

4.1. Sovietization and Maoist epistemology

From the viewpoint of an academic institution like Shandong University, the Communist takeover in 1949 initiated a process of departure from previous Republican models of education. Two ideological currents were responsible for this new evolution, namely Sovietization and “Maoist epistemology”, to use the term that Ruth Hayhoe has coined for the academic legacy from the CCP's Yan'an days. The first and initially overbearingly

⁹⁶ For Shandong University's structure during the Republican period, see *ibid.* and Shandong daxue xiaoshi bianxiezhu (ed.), *Shandong daxue xiaoshi. 1901-1966 nian* 山東大學校史。1901-1966 年 (History of Shandong University 1901-1966), 31-188, esp. 152-188.

⁹⁷ Shandong University Archives (ed.). *Shandong Daxue dashiji, 1901-1990* 山東大學大事記 (Chronicle of events at Shandong University, 1901-1990) (Jinan: Shandong daxue chubanshe, 1991), 56. The College of Liberal Arts at the time was formally headed by Lao She 老舍 (1899-1966), who was, however, on leave in the United States and therefore substituted by Zhao Taimou, cf. *ibid.*

⁹⁸ (Yan Rongxian 2008, 241-245).

⁹⁹ (Mou, Gong 1983, 85) and (Yan Rongxian 2008, 235). As Yan relates - without providing any substantial evidence though -, when Lu and Feng arrived in Qingdao, they were informed by their friend and colleague Zhao Jibin (who was himself on the GMD “blacklist”) that they had been blacklisted and were thus under surveillance by the GMD due to an incident involving their financial support of a student associated with the CCP back in Sichuan. Zhao therefore also warned them to tread with caution despite the better atmosphere at Shandong University.

dominant current was Sovietization, which was brought about by the CCP's imminent need for guidance in its endeavors to build a socialist Chinese state. In 1949, still a while before the People's Republic of China was officially established, the CCP leaders turned to the Soviet Union for help, asking the Kremlin to share their experiences in constructing a socialist economy; to supply them with relevant literature, advisers and technicians in various sections of the economy; and last but not least, to provide them with capital to be used for state-building purposes. In July of the same year, China's second leader, Liu Shaoqi 劉少奇 (1898-1969), traveled to Moscow to prepare "the groundwork for a systematic study of the Soviet system of government, societal organization, industrial management, educational and cultural administration, and other Soviet institutions and methods, in preparation for the establishment of the new regime in China."¹⁰⁰ Liu showed a special interest in studying the Soviet educational landscape, especially its overall architecture, including university regularization, teaching curricula and research planning. On August 14, 1949, he returned to Beijing by train with a first legion of Soviet advisers in tow, a significant part of whom would be focused on overhauling Chinese higher education.¹⁰¹

The ultimate goal of Sovietization was to establish a highly centralized and uniform system of higher educational institutions that imitated the model provided by the Soviet Union as closely as possible.¹⁰² From the viewpoint of Moscow, universities were essential for bringing "brother states" into the socialist mode, because they had an impact on national histories and ideologies but also on the formation of power elites.¹⁰³ According to the Soviet model, universities, instead of being autonomous institutions, were turned into appendages of the state apparatus. In this way it was actually the

¹⁰⁰ Douglas A. Stiffler. "Building Socialism at Chinese People's University: Chinese Cadres and Soviet Experts in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1957" (Ph.D. thesis, University of California at San Diego, 2002), 38.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 39-45.

¹⁰² The following survey of Sovietization is based on the very rich John Connelly. *Captive University. The Sovietization of East German, Czech, and Polish Higher Education, 1945-1956* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), especially part 1 "Sovietization", 19-79.

¹⁰³ This focus on the reproductive power of institutes of higher education explains the emphasis of the Soviet model on teaching to the detriment of research, which was moved to and carried out in so-called "academies of science", a trend that was followed in China as well (Connolly, 3-4). Note also that the Bolsheviks' initial reaction to higher education after the October revolution was categorically negative, universities were perceived as "monstrous conglomerates holding on to medieval notions of pure science", which "hindered the progress of modern, specialized knowledge" (Ibid., 25). Consequently, faculties were broken up and subsequently transferred to production ministries. It was only in 1931 that intellectuals and universities were rehabilitated again and began to play a key role in the educational landscape of Soviet Russia.

ministerial and Party agencies which selected university rectors and deans, controlled teaching and research appointments and monitored the content of textbooks and lectures. The headquarters of this centralized structure was the Ministry of Higher Education and its departments. The ministry controlled the universities, which were headed by rectors. The universities were composed of faculties, headed by deans, and the faculties were divided into departments, which were directed by senior professors. At each of these levels, the heads were made directly responsible for anything that happened within their area of jurisdiction, a principle that was also known as "one-man management".

In the fields of teaching and research, nothing was left to chance. The curricula were meticulously planned and standardized so that both undergraduate and graduate students were required to spend a lot of time in classes and take tests on a regular basis, mainly by means of oral examinations. As for the research agenda, it had clearly defined goals that had to be reached within a specific timeframe, and the achieved results had to be presented in highly orchestrated conferences that took place in institutions of higher education at least once a year. A key characteristic of Soviet higher education was moreover its subordination to state planning, thus turning it into an anti-intellectual and utilitarian system, which had a clear preference for specialized technological knowledge rather than Humboldtian ideals of education.¹⁰⁴

Undoubtedly, the Soviet higher education system's most salient feature was the ideology it ran on, i.e., Marxism-Leninism. This meant that research and teaching were imbued with the spirit of this ideology, which was studied in compulsory courses and served as a filter through which scholars articulated their research problems and findings. In order to ensure ideological orthodoxy on a micro-level, so-called *kafedras*, i.e., "teaching and research groups", were established at the sub-departmental level. In the *kafedras*, curricular and scholarly issues would be discussed by faculty members with the ultimate goal of synchronizing academic content with the ideological mainstream. The Marxist-Leninist focus also had a demographic impact in that their admission process required universities to always prioritize candidates from workers'

¹⁰⁴ This tendency to specialize rather than generalize higher education was so overwhelming that by 1953 there were 900 specialties, which were often taught in individual institutions such as for example the Moscow Machine Tools Institute or the Gorky Institute for Water Transport Engineering. See *ibid.*, 25-28.

households.¹⁰⁵ More importantly, all universities had their Communist Party organization, which was subordinate to the Party's Central Committee. The organization mainly supervised political training, and this meant above all the teaching of the two ideological subjects "Marxist-Leninist philosophy" and "Political Economy" which students from all specialties were required to take as part of their course work. At the same time, the organization was also responsible for the implementation of Party policy at the university. Thus, more often than not its first secretary was the most powerful man within the university.

In contrast to the systematic and regularized efficiency of Sovietization, "Maoist epistemology" – while adhering to Marxism-Leninism as its core ideology – worked on a decidedly more flexible and extemporaneous basis, which was clearly inspired by the precarious military situation of the CCP in Yan'an in the 1930s and 1940s. Initially rather informal and intellectually uninhibited, cultural life in Yan'an was rectified in a campaign that lasted from 1942 to 1944, and was ideologically anchored by three texts composed by Mao Zedong: "Reform our study" (Gaizao women de xuexi 改造我們的學習, 1941), "Oppose stereotyped party writing" (Fan dang bagu 反黨八股, 1942) and the "Yan'an talks on literature and art" (Zai Yan'an wenyi zuotanhui shang de jianghua 在延安文藝座談會上的講話, 1942). In brief, Mao insisted that culture had to be at the service of the masses and that it had to be linked to the social and political practices of a specific national context. Instead of focusing on book-learning and theoretical discussions, Mao contended, experts should become directly involved with the masses. Speaking about the creative intelligentsia in his *Yan'an Talks*, Mao expanded eloquently on this relationship between specialists and their ultimate audiences:

Our specialists are not only for the cadres, but also, and indeed chiefly, for the masses. Our specialists in literature should pay attention to the wall newspapers of the masses and to the reportage written in the army and the villages. Our specialists in drama should pay attention to the small troupes in the army and the villages. Our specialists in music should pay attention to the songs of the masses. Our specialists in the fine arts should pay attention to the fine arts of the masses. All these comrades should make close contact with comrades engaged in the work of popularizing literature and art among the masses. On the one

¹⁰⁵ Even though systematically applied on a long-term basis and with the ultimate goal to turn the offspring of workers into the main population in institutes of higher education, this policy was only modestly successful, so that in 1958 only 30 to 40 % of students in Moscow had a worker's family background. Cf. *ibid.*, 30.

hand, they should help and guide the popularizers, and on the other, they should learn from these comrades and, through them, draw nourishment from the masses to replenish and enrich themselves so that their specialities do not become "ivory towers", detached from the masses and from reality and devoid of content or life. We should esteem the specialists, for they are very valuable to our cause. But we should tell them that no revolutionary writer or artist can do any meaningful work unless he is closely linked with the masses, gives expression to their thoughts and feelings and serves them as a loyal spokesman. Only by speaking for the masses can he educate them and only by being their pupil can he be their teacher. If he regards himself as their master, as an aristocrat who lords it over the "lower orders", then, no matter how talented he may be, he will not be needed by the masses and his work will have no future.¹⁰⁶

Applied to higher education, this meant that universities were supposed to mainly cater to the CCP's own cadres and the masses. Moreover, higher education was seen as an essential part of political propaganda as well as a way to develop practical, technical skills that would be useful to the revolution. Unsurprisingly, the key institutions of higher education in Yan'an were *de facto* cadre schools, most notably North Shaanxi Academy (Shaanbei Gongxue 陝北公學), which was originally established as a full-scale cadre university. Its primary academic goals, as becomes clear from the fact that most of the courses offered were short-term, did not consist in providing students with scholarly knowledge or specific technological skills. Rather, the objective was to acquaint students with the essentials of CCP ideology as well as to provide basic military and political leadership training. This was the so-called "unification of theory and practice" (lilun yu shiji xiang jiehe 理論與實際相結合), articulated for the first time by the CCP's Central Committee in the "Resolution of the Yan'an Cadre Schools" of December 17, 1941. This pragmatic and highly selective "guerilla" approach had a decisive impact on the PRC's higher education in the 1950s, especially due to the fact that key positions in universities established after 1949 came to be held by graduates from North Shaanxi Academy and other Yan'an cadre schools.¹⁰⁷ Radically different from the academic system of High Stalinism, Yan'an higher education – also in institutions not designed for cadre education – prioritized practicality and flexibility and achieved this objective by minimizing tendencies toward bureaucratization, authoritarianism and hierarchization,

¹⁰⁶(Mao Zedong, "Yan'an talks on literature and art". In: *Selected works*. Volume III.) Translated text available at: http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_08.htm.

¹⁰⁷ (Stiffler 2002, 90-97, 273)

most notably by asking students to assess their instructors in group criticism meetings.¹⁰⁸

The Yan'an legacy – or rather its spin-off – became a direct part of Shandong University when in 1950 it was decided to merge Shandong University with East China University (Huadong Daxue 華東大學). The latter was a cadre school which had been established in 1948 in the city of Weifang 濰坊 shortly after the PLA had seized Weixian-county in Shandong Province. In September of the same year it moved to Jinan, where it had three colleges (Liberal Arts, Education and Social Sciences) and a research section (yanjiubu 研究部). East China University's main function was to provide the CCP with a fast supply of cadres, who were desperately needed for the newly established government in Shandong. As East China University was smaller in size than the original Shanda, it was decided to name the final result of the fusion "Shandong University".¹⁰⁹ Since East China University did not have a college for natural or medical sciences, the merge only concerned one of Shandong University's five colleges, namely the College of Liberal Arts (wenxueyuan 文學院), which was brought together with East China University's own College of Liberal Arts, eliminating overlappings in the process. In addition, East China University's Department of Politics and Department of Arts were integrated into Shandong's administrative structure as autonomous entities without a college affiliation.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ (Ibid., 273)

¹⁰⁹ The accurate description of how the two universities merged, especially the attempt to reconstruct the short yet Protean evolution of East China University, is blurred by a silhouette of the Republican past, namely that of Cheeloo University (Qilu daxue 齊魯大學, official name: Shandong jidujiao gonghe daxue 山東基督教共和大學 [Shandong United Christian University]), which was the most prestigious private institution of higher education in Shandong Province during the first half of the 20th century. As it happens, its impressive campus was seized by East China University when it moved to Jinan in 1949. The story of how its original resources ended up being absorbed by Shandong University via the fusion with East China University remains to be written (mainly based on archival materials that are as yet inaccessible). Of special relevance for the topic of this thesis is the fate of the "Cheeloo Institute for Chinese Research" that was established with funds made available by the Harvard-Yenching Institute in the early 1930s. Modeling itself after the Harvard-Yenching Institute, it had an impressive library for Chinese classical studies and a research staff that was distributed among four sections: Chinese Literature, Philosophy, History and Geography, and Social Sciences. On Cheeloo University, see Charles Hodge Corbett, *Shantung Christian University (Cheeloo)* (New York: United Board for Christian Colleges in China, 1955). On its relationship with other Christian colleges, especially Yenching University, see Jessie Gregory Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges, 1850-1950* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1971, 291-296, and Yung-chen Chiang, *Social Engineering and the Social Sciences in China, 1919-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Chapter 2 "The Yanjing Sociology Department: From Social Service to Social Engineering, 1925-45", esp. 67-68.

¹¹⁰ Shandong daxue xiaoshi bianxiezu 山東大學校史編寫組 (Shandong University History Writing Group). *Shandong daxue xiaoshi, 1901-1966* 山東大學校史, 一九〇一 - 一九六六 (History of Shandong University,

The table below shows the basic administrative structure of Shandong University after its merge with East China University.

Table 1 Shandong University's Administration after Its Merge with East China University in 1951¹¹¹

OFFICE	FUNCTION	PERSON
University President's Office <i>xiaozhangchu</i> 校長處	University President <i>xiaozhang</i> 校長	Hua Gang 華崗
	University Vice-Presidents <i>Fuxiaozhang</i> 副校長	Tong Dizhou 童第周 Lu Kanru 陸侃如
Office of Academic Affairs <i>jiaowuchu</i> 教務處	Dean of Studies <i>jiaowuzhang</i> 教務長	He Zuolin 何作霖
	Vice-Dean of Studies <i>fu jiaowuzhang</i> 副教務長	Yu Xiu 餘修 Luo Zhufeng 羅竹風
	Head of Secretarial Office <i>mishuzhang</i> 秘書長	Liu Chuan 劉椽
	Vice-Head of Secretarial Office <i>fu mishuzhang</i> 副秘書長	Liu Suxian 劉宿賢
Colleges <i>xueyuan</i> 學院	Dean of College of Liberal Arts <i>wenxue yuanzhang</i> 文學院長	Wu Fuheng 吳富恆
	Dean of College of Natural Sciences <i>lixue yuanzhang</i> 理學院長	Guo Yicheng 郭貽誠
	Dean of College of Technology <i>gongxue yuanzhang</i> 工學院長	Ding Lüde 丁履德
	Dean of College of Agriculture <i>nongxue yuanzhang</i> 農學院長	Chen Ruitai 陳瑞泰
	Deans of College of Medicine <i>yixue yuanzhang</i> 醫學院長	Xu Zuoxia 徐佐夏 Pan Zuoxin 潘作新
Autonomous Departments <i>zhishuxi</i> 直屬系	Directors of Department of Politics <i>zhengzhixi zhuren</i> 政治系主任	Li Zhongrong 李仲融 Ma Yuting 馬雨亭
	Director of Department of Art <i>yishuxi zhuren</i> 藝術系主任	Zang Yunyuan 藏雲遠
Library <i>tushuguan</i> 圖書館	Head <i>guanzhang</i> 館長	Lu Kanru 陸侃如
	Director <i>zhuren</i> 主任	Liu Wei 劉偉

As can be seen from the table (and more extensively below), Lu Kanru was a key figure within this administration, which seems to have been more related to his decades of university experience than his political affiliation. In fact, Shandong University's

1901-1966) (Jinan: Shandong daxue chubanshe, 1986), 193-198. The original plan, which was discarded in the final decision made by the Ministry of Education, was to integrate East China University's Department of Arts into the College of Liberal Arts and to change the College's name to "College of Literature and Arts" (*wenyi xueyuan* 文藝學院). As for the Department of Politics, it was supposed to join forces with the merged History Department and become part of a new College named "College of Social Sciences" (*sheke xueyuan* 社科學院). See *ibid.*, 194-195.

¹¹¹ Based on the table inserted between pages 198-199 of (Shandong daxue xiaoshi bianxiezu 1986).

administration was shadowed by the CCP, which established a party organization within the university during the merging process. At its inner and most powerful core was the Party Group (dangzu 黨組), headed by Shandong University's president Hua Gang. Mainly responsible for leading the school on all policy-related matters, the Group was an exclusive unit comprising five members, three of whom (Yu Xiu, Luo Zhufeng and Liu Suxian) were concurrently working at the Office of Academic Affairs. Despite his high position in the university's position, Lu Kanru was not part of the Group. Nor was he involved in Shandong University's Party Committee (Shanda dangwei 山大黨委), which mainly took care of the daily Party work.¹¹²

In the summer of 1952, only eighteen months after the merging of Shandong University and East China University, the Sovietization of Chinese higher education administration was launched on a national scale. Known as the "readjustment of colleges and departments (yuanxi tiaozheng 院系調整), this administrative policy had the primary goal of further approximating Chinese institutes of higher education to the Soviet university model. For Shandong University, this meant above all that all specialties deemed important for "socialist construction" were pulled out of their Colleges and Autonomous Departments to then be re-established within colleges for professional training (zhuanke xuexiao 專科學校). Moreover, the "college" (yuan 院) level within the university was abolished completely and only the "departments" (xi 系) were retained, though reorganized into smaller units of specialization. Students now no longer enrolled into a large-scale college, but directly into a specific subject, which also resulted in a shorter duration of tertiary education courses.

Table 2: Shandong University's Administration Before and After Sovietization¹¹³

COLLEGE/AUTONOMOUS DEPARTMENT	DEPARTMENT/GROUP	AFTER READJUSTMENT OF COLLEGES AND DEPARTMENTS (1952) departments retained/added are marked in bold
College of Liberal Arts	Department of Chinese Studies	Department of Chinese Studies
	Department of History	Department of History
	Department of Foreign Languages	Department of Foreign Languages
College of Natural Sciences	Department of Mathematics	Department of Mathematics
	Department of Physics	Department of Physics
	Department of Chemistry	Department of Chemistry

¹¹² (Ibid., 197-198)

¹¹³ Based on information provided in *ibid.*, 200-201.

RED DISCIPLINE

	Department of Zoology	Department of Biology
	Department of Botany	
	Department of Mining	moved to Changchun, merged with other similar departments to become Changchun Academy of Geology
	Department of Aquatic Production	Department of Aquatic Production
		Xiamen University's Department of Oceanology moved to Shandong University and became one of its departments
College of Technology	Department of Civil Engineering	merged with the Civil Engineering and Textile Production Departments of Shandong Institute of Technology and became Qingdao Institute of Technology, which was later moved to Wuhan in order to merge with the Wuhan Technical University of Surveying and Mapping
	Department of Mechanics	moved both to Jinan, merged with the Shandong Institute of Technology, later renamed as Shandong Technical University
	Department of Electronics	
College of Agriculture		moved to Jinan, merged with Shandong Agriculture Institute and became Shandong Agricultural University
College of Medicine		moved out and was reestablished as Qingdao Medical College (but only in 1956 due to logistical delays)
Department of Politics		moved out and became Shandong Province School of Politics, later renamed Party School of the Shandong Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China
Department of Art	Drama Group	moved to Shanghai, where it merged with the Shanghai Professional College for Drama and became the East China Branch of the Central Drama Academy, later renamed Shanghai Drama Academy
	Music Group	moved both to Wuxi, where they merged with the Shanghai Professional College for Fine Arts and the Suzhou Professional College for Fine Arts, thus becoming the East China Professional College for Art
	Fine Arts Group	

As far as Shandong University was concerned, the ultimate goal of this administrative readjustment, which was much in line with the Soviet model, was to transform this

institution of higher education into a so-called "comprehensive university" (zonghe daxue 綜合大學), i.e., an university with an exclusive focus on liberal arts and non-applied sciences.¹¹⁴

In accord with the Soviet model, Shandong University's curricula started to be meticulously planned and standardized. The Department of Chinese Studies, where Lu Kanru was a professor, developed a well-defined set of 14 courses that students were required to take, including a course on Soviet literature. These were: 1. Introduction to the Study of Literature and Art (wenyixue yinlun 文藝學引論); 2. History of Chinese Literature (Zhongguo wenxue shi 中國文學史); 3. Literary Composition Practice (xiezuo shixi 寫作實習); 4. Modern Literature (xiandai wenxue 現代文學); 5. People's Oral Creations (renmin koutou chuangzuo 人民口頭創作); 6. Classical Literature (gudian wenxue 古典文學); 7. World Literature (shijie wenxue 世界文學); 8. Soviet Literature (Sulian wenxue 蘇聯文學); 9. Introduction to Linguistics (yuyanxue yinlun 語言學引論); 10. Chinese linguistics (Zhongguo yuyanxue 中國語言學); 11. Poetry and *Ci* research (Shici yanjiu 詩詞研究); 12. *Book of Odes*-research (Shijing yanjiu 詩經研究); 13. Du Fu Research (Du Fu yanjiu 杜甫研究); 14. Lu Xun research (Lu Xun yanjiu 魯迅研究).

Strictly following the Soviet model, university research was required to have clearly defined goals that had to be reached within a specific timeframe. The results of this planned research had to be presented in an annual conference that by default included representatives from all departments. Accordingly, each department at Shandong University was obliged to come up with a detailed research plan (yanjiu jihua 研究計劃), which would typically include a title, a description, the name of the researcher in charge and, finally, the date of accomplishment. All planned research projects had to be

¹¹⁴ Cf. (Ibid., 198-199). In the case of Shandong University, the policy of having an exclusive focus on liberal arts and non-applied sciences was only partly implemented, as a large number of its departments were focused on oceanography and its related fields, and therefore still very much concerned with applied sciences. It is not quite clear why oceanography was not sorted out of Shandong's departmental architecture in order to be established as an autonomous professional college. In passing, I also point out that another (albeit much later) aspect of Sovietization concerned the geographical distribution of higher education. In the Chinese context, this meant the development of new universities in the hinterland – oftentimes at the expense of coastal institutions if so needed. In 1954, the Ministry of Education devised the plan to move Shandong University to Zhengzhou, Henan Province. The plan was then modified to the extent that Shandong University stayed at its original location, but was required to deploy some of its administrative staff to Zhengzhou with the concrete goal in mind to establish Zhengzhou University. Moreover, when Zhengzhou University was finally founded in 1956, Shandong University supplied the new institution with a substantial number of teaching personnel from its own departments (Ibid., 200-201).

achieved before the annual conference, which began on Shandong University's anniversary day, i.e., March 15th, and lasted for about a month.

Due to the importance in the university's academic agenda, the preparation phase for this "school anniversary scientific symposium" (xiaoqing kexue taolunhui 校慶科學討論會) followed a strict procedure. By the end of the year, departments had to turn in a list of all presentations to be given at the event to the Office of Academic Affairs. After giving its approval, the Office of Academic Affairs compiled a detailed conference program, which listed all panels, chairs, speakers, dates and locations. Typically, the conference would be inaugurated by a keynote speech given by one of the university leaders.¹¹⁵ At the first conference in 1952, university president Hua Gang talked about "Mao Zedong thought" (Lun Mao Zedong sixiang 論毛澤東思想). At the 1953 conference, at which an agonizing total of 94 papers were presented, Lu Kanru held a speech entitled "On the world views and creative methods of classical authors" (Lun gudian zuojia de yuzhouguan he chuanguo fangfa 論古典作家的宇宙觀和創作方法) (which will be discussed later on in the present chapter). The key note speeches and a selection of the "best" papers were subsequently published in the university's two journals, *Shandong daxue xuebao* 山東大學學報 (Shandong University Journal) and *Wenshizhe* 文史哲 (Literature - History - Philosophy). Sometimes the conference would also result in an edited volume.

Both research and teaching were carried out within the framework of Marxist-Leninist ideology. Within the departments, ideological orthodoxy was micro-managed through the Chinese version of the Soviet *kafedras*, which were called "teaching and research groups" (jiaoyanzu 教研組). In the *kafedras*, as already mentioned above, teaching and research matters were discussed by faculty members with the ultimate goal of synchronizing academic content with the ideological mainstream. The Department of Chinese Studies had three of these groups: 1. The Modern Literature Teaching and Research Group (xiandai wenxue jiaoyanzu 現代文學教研組), headed by Sun Changxi 孫昌熙 and Liu Panxi 劉泮溪; 2. The Chinese Literary History Teaching and Research Group (Zhongguo wenxueshi jiaoyanzu 中國文學史教研組), headed by Feng

¹¹⁵ Shandong University's annual conference was a large-scale event, but rather modest in comparison with that of People's University, which was even more planned and orchestrated as well as closely monitored by Soviet advisers. For a thorough description of the annual conference at Renda, see (Stiffler 2002, 209-214 and 307-312).

Yuanjun and Xiao Difei 肖滌非; 3. The Chinese Language Teaching Small Group (Zhongguo yuyan jiaoxue xiaozu 中國語言教學小組), headed by Yin Huanxian 殷煥先.¹¹⁶

Demographically speaking, Sovietization also meant that in their admission process universities were required to prioritize candidates from workers' and peasants' households. As of yet, no statistics are available on changes in the student population resulting from this policy at Shandong University. We know, however, that the policy was being implemented, also via the “Short Course Middle School for Workers and Peasants” (gong-nong sucheng zhongxue 工農速成中學) that was attached to Shanda and whose aim it was to equip candidates from a workers' and peasants' background with the knowledge required for university admission.¹¹⁷

For Chinese universities, Sovietization also meant establishing and, if already established (as was the case at Shanda), reinforcing their Communist Party organizations, which were subordinate to the CCP Central Committee. As described above, at Shandong University these were principally the policy-oriented Party Group (dangzu) headed by university president Hua Gang, as well as the Party Committee (dangwei), which took care of the CCP-related red tape. As a consequence of Sovietization, the Shanda Party Committee was also considerably expanded.¹¹⁸ Additionally, it must be assumed that there were “Party cells” on the departmental levels, which again were subdivided into “combined Party cells” (dang zongzhi 黨總支) at the department top and lower-level “Party cells” (dang zhibu 黨支部), which were usually reserved for students and teachers of the same department.¹¹⁹ The Party organization's explicit aim was to “turn Shanda into a new kind of socialist university, at which the scientific theory of Marxism has to be used in all areas and fields of work, thus fully arming the minds of students and teachers.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Cf. (Shandong daxue xiaoshi bianxiezhu 1986, 213).

¹¹⁷ Lu Kanru was actually named head of the Short Course Middle School, see section 4.2. below for details.

¹¹⁸ (Shandong University Archives 1991, 109)

¹¹⁹ (L. S. Zhu 2008, 76) describes the cell structure of the Party organization in academic institutions. It is very likely – even though our available primary sources are silent on this matter – that there were such cells at Shanda, too.

¹²⁰ (Shandong daxue xiaoshi bianxiezhu 1986, 202)

In order to reach that goal, students were also required to take ideological classes as part of their course work.¹²¹ In addition, in 1953, a "study committee" (*xuexi weiyuanhui* 學習委員會) for political study was established, which was headed by Shanda's president Hua Gang and the vice-presidents Tong Dizhou and Lu Kanru. The committee was responsible for establishing and running a year-long lecture series, during which all of Shanda's teachers and cadres were invited to listen to bi-weekly talks on Marxist philosophy and dialectical materialism. After the talks, which were given by Hua Gang himself, the audience was split into groups in order to discuss the contents of the new lecture. Some of these discussions and individual reactions were made public in the university's main propaganda organ *New Shanda* (*Xin Shanda* 新山大). Here is what Lu Kanru's wife, Feng Yuanjun, had to say about Hua Gang's lectures:

Through the first studying of dialectical materialism, we obtained a grandstand view of the rich and diverse literary legacy of China, from among blurry signs we obtained clarity, from a huge mess we sorted out leads and clues, the views and methods of dialectical materialism are weapons we need to master for our study and research.¹²²

This short quotation indicates in a nutshell the impact that Sovietization had on Shanda: it systematized and standardized a university model according to which academic content could not be divorced from and actually had to be adapted to the parameters set by a socialist framework. The latter, in turn, could oscillate between the extremes of Soviet rigidity and Maoist experimentalism, depending on the political trends within the CCP. Through its remodeling of the overall institutional landscape, Sovietization also stressed the dual structure that was now in force at Shanda, i.e., the newly revamped Shanda had become both an academic and a political institution. The political side, embodied by the diverse CCP offices shadowing Shanda's administrative hierarchy, was in command, whereas the academic side had only nominal power.¹²³ At the same time,

¹²¹ It is not clear from the extant source material what ideological courses Shanda students had to take as a consequence of the Sovietization of their curriculum. But we know that there was an autonomous unit at Shanda that was responsible for the devising and teaching of all ideological courses. Named "Office for the Teaching and Research of Marxism-Leninism" (*Maliezhuyi jiaoyan shi* 馬列主義教研室), it was divided into four *kadefras*, which most likely reflected the scope of the ideological courses offered at Shanda: 1. Modern Chinese Revolutionary History (*Zhongguo xiandai geming shi* 中國現代革命史); 2. Basics of Marxism-Leninism (*Ma Lie zhuyi jichu* 馬列主義基礎); 3. Dialectical Materialism (*bianzheng weiwulun* 辯證唯物論); 4. Political Economy (*zhengzhi jingjixue* 政治經濟學). See (Ibid., 213).

¹²² Quoted in: (Shandong daxue xiaoshi bianxiezhu 1986, 203).

¹²³ This dual structure of power became more prominent after Sovietization. Before that, the school council (*xiaowu weiyuanhui* 校務委員會) was the most powerful interim organ within the university from 1949 to 1951 during the first period of academic restructuring. In March, 1951, the new university

however, the CCP was very much dependent on the cooperation of experienced academics in order to be able to run the university as such and to prevent it from disintegrating into a cadre school void of any academic standards. This situation of symbiosis is still best described by Lee S. Zhu in an insightful article published in *Twentieth-Century China* in 2008.¹²⁴ Zhu draws attention to the conflicts between Communist cadres and non-cadre administrators and professors at these institutions between 1955 and 1962, arguing that this was a period dominated by power struggles between two factions: on the one hand, there were the traditionally educated professors with “proper” qualifications, and on the other there were the cadre-administrators of the CCP committees, whose schooling often had not gone past even a primary education. Though Zhu’s period of focus is rather the late 1950s, his main point of departure also rings true for the first half of the 1950s:

I argue that one of the dilemmas the CCP faced at universities was how to ensure its influence on the decision-making process at all levels and at the same time include some input by the professors who held administrative positions.¹²⁵

This explains why the upper echelons of Shanda's administration were populated with both CCP party members and non-party members, as can be seen from the following list:

administration scheme following the Soviet model was installed under university president Hua Gang and a University Standing Committee consisting of most of the top positions within the school (including the heads of the school administration, of the Colleges, and some student and worker representatives) took over some of the main functions of the *xiaowuhui*. By then, of course, the Shandong University CCP committee (dangweihui) was also established as a governing and policy-making body within the school, but unlike in some other cases, there did not seem to have been many clashes of power between the regular administration and the CCP administration at Shandong University at the time. This was most probably due to the fact that the president of the school council and later university president Hua Gang was himself an “old cadre” (lao ganbu 老幹部) and a member of the university Party committee. (For cases where this “sharing” of administrative power within the university went less smoothly, see Lee S. Zhu, “Communist Cadres on the Higher Education Front, 1955-1962”, in: *Twentieth-Century China* 34.1 [2008], 73-95). This is why, until 1951, directives from the central government concerning, for example, the merging of schools in the East China region in 1950, were first communicated to the Qingdao municipal government, which transmitted them directly to Shandong University’s school council (Shandong University Archives 1991, 81-82). Until the new Soviet-inspired presidential system was in place, they were the ones deciding on school rules and administrative changes, hiring people for all the important positions within the school (i.e., the department heads or college directors), and deciding on the relevant procedures to merge schools with East China University (Huadong Daxue 華東大學) in 1951. Interestingly however, though perhaps not surprisingly, the council itself was structured similarly to the CCP, as it too consisted of a comparatively large number of regular members (21 at the beginning, and up to 27 later on) and a more exclusive standing committee at its core, which was made up of only nine people. Lu Kanru, from the time he was elected into the council in 1949, was also part of its standing committee. The hierarchy within the council would come to somewhat reflect the later hierarchy within the school’s new presidential system from 1951: under university president Hua Gang, Lu Kanru accordingly became vice-president of Shandong University.

¹²⁴ See full reference in footnote 123 above.

¹²⁵ (L. S. Zhu 2008, 75).

1. **University President:** Hua Gang, a writer, philosopher, historian and educator, though only partly academically trained. Unlike many other universities, Shanda was privileged with a university president who was a *lao ganbu* 老幹部, an “old cadre”, himself – he had joined the CCP in 1924 - and concurrently served as secretary (shuji 書記) of the CCP group and head of the school council (xiaowuhui).¹²⁶ The three topmost positions of the school – president, CCP-group head and (officially non-CCP) school council president – were therefore filled by the same man.
2. **University Vice-presidents:** Tong Dizhou, biologist and also head of the Zoology Department (dongwuxuexi 動物學係), and Lu Kanru, literary historian and also head of the university library, both classically trained academics and non CCP-members.
3. **Dean of Studies** (xiaowuzhang 校務長): until June, 1952: He Zuolin 何作霖 (1900-1967), geologist and also head of the Geology and Mineralogy Department (dizhikuangwuxi 地質礦物係), member of the China Democratic League (Zhongguo minzhu tongmeng 中國民主同盟), no CCP-membership; after June, 1952: Wu Fuheng 吳富恆 (1911-2001), classically trained English professor, member of the Democratic League and until 1955 also not a CCP-member.
4. **Vice-deans of Studies:** until June, 1952: Yu Xiu 餘修 (1911-1984) and Luo Zhufeng 羅竹風 (1911-1996), both *lao ganbu*. Yu Xiu had been working for the CCP in Shandong province since the 1920s, while Luo Zhufeng, a CCP-member since 1938, was a military representative at Shanda after 1949. Both of them were also members of the Shanda CCP group; after June, 1952: Cui Rong 崔戎, CCP-member and member of both the CCP group and CCP committee at Shanda.
5. **Head of the Secretarial Office** (mishuzhang 秘書長): Liu Chuan 劉椽 (1903-1971), chemist and also head of the Chemistry Department (huaxuexi 化學係); probably not a CCP-member.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ I make use of Zhu’s definition of “old cadre” here, i.e., someone who had joined the CCP prior to 1949 (L. S. Zhu 2008, 73 f.). Hua Gang had joined the Party in the twenties, and therefore qualified as *lao ganbu*, a generic term used in primary sources to designate those Communists of the early days.

¹²⁷ According to an obituary by one of his students, Liu Chuan had been in close contact with the Shandong branch of the CCP since the late 40s. Allegedly, he had tried to become a Party member in the early 1950s, but the obituary does not state whether his application was successful (Lu J. 2009). There are also no records of him in the online database of the CCP, accessible through CrossAsia under <http://erf.sbb.spk-berlin.de/han/cpc/58.68.145.22/directLogin.do?target=cpc> (last accessed: November 11, 2010), which is

6. **Vice-head of the Secretarial Office:** Liu Suxian 劉宿賢 (1911-1979), CCP-member since 1933, and a former Eighth Route Army general. Liu Suxian had been Party Secretary at East China University before the merge, and became a member of the Party group and secretary of the Party committee at Shanda after the merge.

As becomes clear, after 1951 every higher-echelon office staffed with a non-CCP member at Shanda was provided with a corresponding deputy office staffed with a seasoned member of either the CCP group and/or the committee, except in the case of the university presidency, where the logic was reversed. This does not necessarily mean that there existed a “power struggle” between CCP group and non-CCP group forces at Shanda in the first few years of its new existence in the P.R.C. In fact, the above positions after all remained more or less intact until mid-1955, when Hua Gang was implicated in the Anti-Hu Feng-Campaign and was forced to step down. Under the subsequent university presidents Chao Zhefu 晁哲甫 (1894-1970) and Cheng Fangwu 成仿吾 (1897-1984), tensions resulting from the aftermath of the Hundred Flowers and the Anti-Rightist Campaigns caused increasing instability within the university administration, which is why it becomes probable that the years between 1951 and 1954/early 1955 were still the most stable in terms of administrative cooperation and coexistence.¹²⁸

4.2. Working at Shanda, 1949-1954

Looking as closely as our sources allow us at Lu Kanru's institutional performance at the newly “sovietized” Shanda, we will notice that of the three areas academic professors are required to cover, i.e., service, teaching, and research, service became his main focus, also because of his prominent position within Shanda's administrative hierarchy. In fact, his rise to prominence began well before Shanda's Sovietization. In 1949, he was made head of the university library.¹²⁹ In early October, he was named one of the twenty-one

not conclusive, because that database does not seem to contain any data on the CCP's lower-echelon members.

¹²⁸ On a personal level, this may also be related to Hua Gang's relationship with intellectuals in general, which was rather positive, or to quote his own words: "The intellectuals from the period before the Liberation are valuable resources that old China has handed down to us; if we want to efficiently establish Shandong University, we need to rely on them, and if we want to establish socialism we need them even more. Unfortunately, these resources are rather scarce." As quoted in (Shandong daxue xiaoshi bianxiezhu 1986, 236).

¹²⁹ (Shandong University Archives 1991, 71)

members of the new school council, the main governing body of the university in its first years under CCP rule, and by April 23, 1950, he was even elected as one of that council's three vice-presidents under council president Hua Gang.¹³⁰ That same year in October, he was one of Shandong University's twelve representatives at the East China Higher Education Conference (Huadong gaojiao huiyi 華東高教會議), and when the decision was taken in November to merge Shandong University with East China University, Lu became vice-head of the committee in charge of organizing the merging process.¹³¹ Also in 1950, Lu was elected as one of Shandong University's five delegates to the National People's Congress (Renmin daibiao dahui 人民代表大會), and he formed part of the university's recruitment committee for the Military Cadre Schools (junshi ganxiao 軍事幹校) of Shandong province.¹³²

Between 1951 and 1953, Lu's career at Shanda did not appear to falter. Apart from being named university vice-president in 1951 alongside Tong Dizhou upon the establishment of the new Soviet-inspired presidential system, he was involved in a staggering number of administrative tasks, of which the most important included, in the chronological order:¹³³

1. April, 1951: member of the new University Standing Committee (xiao changwu weiyuanhui 校常務委員會), which became the university's main administrative decision-making body alongside the then established Party Group and Committee (dangzu and dangweihui) within the new presidential system, and which assumed some of the decision-making power of the school council
2. May, 1951: vice-director of *Wenshizhe* press, which published one of the most influential academic journals for the humanities in the P.R.C. until the appearance of *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 (Historical Studies), *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲學研究 (Philosophical Studies) and *Wenxue yanjiu* 文學研究 (Literary Studies) in 1954, 1955, and 1957, respectively

¹³⁰ (Ibid., 75).

¹³¹ (Shandong University Archives 1991, 79 f.)

¹³² (Ibid., 78, 80)

¹³³ If not otherwise indicated, the following positions and functions are taken from the *Shandong Daxue Dashiji* 山東大學大事記 (Shandong University Chronicle) (Shandong University Archives 1991, 85-102). The dates refer to the months in which Lu Kanru assumed a given office, and do not mean that he only held the position for the duration of that month.

3. September, 1951: head of the new “Secret Keeping Committee” (baomi weiyuanhui 保密委員會), whose tasks included dealing with classified information, such as theses and other publications by university members.
4. February, 1952: head of the organization committee for the university’s anniversary celebration
5. April, 1952: Qingdao municipal government-approved vice-chief justice of a People’s Tribunal (renmin fating 人民法庭) set up at Shanda in the wake of the national Three-Anti-Campaign (San-fan yundong 三反運動)
6. August, 1952: vice-head of the committee in charge of reforming the colleges and departments (yuanxi tiaozheng) according to the Ministry of Education’s reform directive
7. November, 1952: president of the new “Short-course Middle School for Workers and Peasants” (gong-nong sucheng zhongxue 工農速成中學) attached to Shanda
8. May, 1953: head of a committee for the setting up of a College of Medicine (yixueyuan 醫學院) at Shanda
9. September, 1953: vice-head of the “study committee” (xuexi weiyuanhui) which was set up again for the political education of all university members after the *yuanxi tiaozheng* had been completed (see above).
10. October, 1953: member of a university delegation to India
11. December, 1953: head of the university endowment survey committee (xiaochan qingcha weiyuanhui 校產清查委員會)

From 1951 to 1953, as one can see from the above, Lu Kanru held some central administrative offices at Shanda, either in the head or deputy head position. His tasks involved restructuring the university and making decisions both in curricular and organizational matters, he was entrusted with classified information, he had some knowledge of the university’s endowment situation, he was sent abroad to India as a representative of the school, and he was appointed a judge of “political correctness” in the Shanda’s name.

Besides his onerous administrative duties, Lu was also a professor at the Department of Chinese Studies, which had a strong focus on classical literature and its

history.¹³⁴ We do not know how much time he had to teach in the first place nor do we know what and how many courses he taught in the early fifties. We do know that in 1953 he embarked, together with Feng Yuanjun, on a modest project which consisted in revising their joint publication of 1932, “A Short Course in Chinese Literary History” (Zhongguo wenxueshi jianbian 中國文學史簡編), so as to use the revised edition as a new basis for their lectures.

Their main motivation to carry out this project was that prior to 1957, there was no officially approved reference work for the subject of classical Chinese literary history at institutions of higher education in the P.R.C. Professors of classical Chinese literature therefore had to rely on their own writings and research notes in teaching classes on the subject, as they waited for the Ministry of Higher Education to issue an official syllabus. The final version of the revised edition however only appeared in 1957, just before the Ministry of Higher Education issued its first official syllabus. Though it was received with much enthusiasm and subsequently even used as the main textbook in universities other than Shanda, the lengthy process of its coming into being (four years in total, including a draft publication between 1954 and 1955 which spurred a further process of revision) may have been partly caused by the combination of administrative changes, tight study and teaching curricula for all faculty members, as well as shifts in CCP policy and large-scale thought reform campaigns that demanded everyone’s participation on all hierarchical levels in the initial years of the P.R.C. It is thus also very likely that this originally modest project also turned into something much more complex as it became entangled in Shanda’s initiative to sovietize the curricula and teaching materials of its departments on a large scale.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Besides Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun, Shanda’s Department of Chinese Studies had a group of rather prestigious scholars of classical literature, namely Gao Heng 高亨, an expert on pre-imperial Chinese literature with a focus on Yijing and Laozi; Xiao Difei 肖滌非 and Huang Xiaoshu 黃孝紓, both of whom were renowned Tang-poetry scholars; Yin Menglun 殷孟倫, a scholar of pre- and early imperial Chinese literature; Yin Huanxian 殷煥先, an expert on early Chinese linguistics; Guan Dedong 關德棟, a scholar of Manchu literature and oral traditions, including Dunhuang, and Gao Lan 高蘭, a prolific teacher of creative poetry. In the same department were also some modernists, such as the relatively young Sun Changxi 孫昌熙 and Liu Panxi 劉泮溪, who were studying Lu Xun. Cf. (Shandong daxue xiaoshi bianxiezu 1986, 206).

¹³⁵ (Shandong daxue xiaoshi bianxiezu 1986, 216). The fact that there was a CCP-led autonomous unit for establishing and running mandatory Russian language courses seems to indicate that the studying of Soviet curricula and textbooks was carried out on a fairly systematic basis at Shanda (Cf. *ibid.*, 213). It is not clear from the sources if Soviet advisers partook in this process. Another issue that I did not try to problematize in the main text was the tentative, trial-and-error way of “sovietizing” the entire higher education system according to the concrete Soviet model of Moscow State University. This naturally also had to be adapted to local circumstances, not only in China (on this, see Douglas Stiffler. “Building

In terms of research, Lu's output at Shanda was radically different from his previous work. Rather than being focused on philological issues, he became more preoccupied with historiographic questions. Moreover, his research rhythm was paced by a strictly planned academic landscape, in which individual projects and results revolved around and were required to insert themselves into a larger, meticulously orchestrated picture. As mentioned above, following the Soviet model, research at Shanda was expected to have clearly defined goals that had to be reached within a specific timeframe. The results of this planned research had to be presented in an annual conference that included participants of all departments. One of the principal goals of these regular large-scale "scientific symposia" (kexue taolunhui 科學討論會) was for representatives of all specializations to present their current research topics in accordance with the new Marxist-Leninist guidelines.

Socialism in Chinese People's University: Chinese Cadres and Soviet Experts in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1957". Ph.D. thesis, University of California at San Diego, 2002), but also elsewhere: "Transfer of this [Soviet] system to Eastern and Central Europe also encountered more prosaic difficulties. East European Communists were dedicated Sovietizers, but they had to procure information on Soviet higher education, translate it, and comprehend it. Each of these steps was more complicated than it appeared at first glance. After 1949, requests for detailed information on Soviet cultural institutions poured into Moscow from all over the world, and the responsible Soviet agencies – the Soviet Ministry of Higher Education and the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS) – suffered systemic overload. The Communists in the countries under study never received a guide to Soviet higher education; rather, they had to try to make sense of a complicated array of laws, decrees, ordinances, speeches of great leaders, and a few historical works. And these were always in short supply. The most important questions were unanswered." (Connelly 2000, 20). Despite the energy and resources invested in the Sovietization of Chinese higher education, it seems – at least according to Doug Stiffler who took a very close look at the central Chinese institution in the Sovietization phase – that things went wrong because local circumstances were not taken into account during the process: "Despite the Party Propaganda-Education establishments's urging in 1954 that other universities emulate the example of Renda in assimilating 'advanced Soviet experience', the evidence shows that Renda was experiencing grave difficulties and, on the whole, making little progress in its mission of combining Soviet experience and Chinese conditions. Something had gone wrong. What went wrong at Renda was, in essence, what had gone wrong in the whole process of China's wholesale Sovietization in the early 1950s. The Party's insistence on learning from the Soviet Union had been so emphatic, and Stalin-era Soviet practices so rigid, that there had been no room for creative adaption of accommodation between "advanced Soviet experience" and "Chinese conditions" between 1949 and 1955." (Stiffler 2002, 323). This process was further complicated by the fact that it tried to pack decades of Soviet experience in the field of higher education into a very short span of time which resulted in a situation of "compressed intellectual Sovietization", to vary on the "compressed intellectual modernization" phrase that Brantly Womack has coined for the intellectual evolution of China in the 20th century. See Brantly Womack. "The phases of Chinese modernization". In: *Modernization in China*. Steve S. K. Chin, ed. (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Centre of Asian Studies, 1979), 1-16. National guidance during this "compressed" process was provided by the academic journal *Jiaoxue yu yanjiu* 教學與研究 (Teaching and Research), in which Soviet experts transmitted their views on higher education teaching, research and service, which were then further explained by Chinese experts on education. However, the amount of knowledge to be digested was still enormous, especially at People's University: "In these early years, young Chinese instructors had to struggle to grasp the basic content of the new Soviet knowledge: it was clearly impossible to be selective and critical when one dimly understood what the Soviet experts' lectures were about." (Stiffler 2002, 318).

Lu Kanru's keynote speech at the second of these annual conferences, which was held in March 1953, reflected one of the central issues affecting the revaluation of the classical heritage at the time. Entitled "On the world views and creative methods of classical authors" (Lun gudian zuojia de yuzhouguan he chuangzuo fangfa 論古典作家的宇宙觀和創作方法), it dealt with the problem of justifying the acceptability of works from the past that had been written by people who were politically questionable from the present Marxist point of view. It can be read as a somewhat typical piece of academic writing in the subject of classical literary history in the early P.R.C.

At the time, some of the common arguments brought forward by literary critics and historians in favor of an author's inclusion into the revalued "Marxist" literary canon derived from several of Engels' writings. One of these – a letter to British novelist Margaret Harkness (1854-1923) of 1888 – was also often cited with regard to a different issue, namely that of the "typical" (dianxingxing 典型性) in literature and art.¹³⁶ In his speech, however, Lu Kanru used the same letter to mark Engels' appraisal of Balzac as a great writer who despite his own class affiliation and resulting support of the aristocracy managed to depict the waning of that class as only a realist could, namely as inevitable.¹³⁷ Similarly, Lu cited Lenin's conflict with Leo Tolstoy, who he appreciated as a writer while dismissing his Christianity and his elitist landlord class background.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ It should be noted that Lu Kanru was overly familiar with this canonical letter, as he had been the first to translate it into Chinese from a French version in the 1930s. Along with his translation of another letter by Engels, it was published in *Dushu zazhi* in 1933. Cf. Lu Kanru (transl). "Engesi liang feng wei fabiao de xin 恩格斯兩封未發表的信" (Two unpublished letters by Engels). In: *Dushu zazhi* 3.6 (1933), 378-386.

¹³⁷ In the relevant passage of the letter, Engels actually compares Zola and Balzac, the latter of which he sees as the superior realist, supporting his argument thus: "Well, Balzac was politically a Legitimist; his work is a constant elegy on the inevitable decay of good society, his sympathies are all with the class doomed to extinction. But for all that his satire is never keener, his irony never bitterer, than when he sets in motion the men and women with whom he sympathizes most deeply – the nobles." (Friedrich Engels, Letter to Margaret Harkness in London (April, 1888). Available online at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1888/letters/88_04_15.htm [last accessed: November 9, 2012]). The passage was often quoted in comparing Zola and Balzac in early P.R.C. literary criticism, though generally decontextualized from the rest of the letter's content.

¹³⁸ Lenin's complicated relationship with Tolstoy was commonly cited in Chinese literary criticism in the early P.R.C., so as to underline and legitimize a possible discrepancy between an author's class affiliation and the historical value of his creative output. In fact, Lenin had written several essays between 1908 and 1911 simultaneously criticizing and eulogizing the author: "Although repeatedly admitting that Tolstoy's works 'rank among the greatest in world literature' (...), he at the same time equates Tolstoy's point of view with 'that of the patriarchal, naïve peasant'. He detests in Tolstoy 'the landlord obsessed with Christ', 'the jaded, hysterical sniveller', 'the crackpot preaching of submission', and the defender of clericalism (...). Lenin is evidently worried by the political effect of Tolstoy's writings. But from the literary point of view he attributed lasting value to Tolstoy's work. (...) It is clear that Lenin is opposed to cutting all ties with great literature, which induces him to justify his admiration for great art as far as possible in political terms." Douwe Fokkema and Elrud Ibsch. *Theories of Literature in the Twentieth Century: Structuralism, Marxism, Aesthetics of Reception, Semiotics* (London: C. Hurst, 1995), 90.

Transposing this theme put forth by an accepted foreign authority onto recent Chinese literary historiography, Lu Kanru saw these kinds of discrepancies occurring in four prominent writers of the Chinese tradition: Qing-literatus Wu Jingzi 吳敬梓 (1701-1754, author of *Rulin waishi* 儒林外史, transl. *The Scholars*), Yuan-playwright Guan Hanqing 關漢卿 (ca. 1225-1302), Eastern Jin-poet Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (ca. 365-427), and Han-historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 135-86 BC, author of *Shiji* 史記, transl. *Records of the Grand Historian*).

As if he realized that this type of argument was always built on shaky ground, Lu made a point of referring to Mao Zedong and Lu Xun (another CCP-approved authority in all literary matters) in defending his positions on Wu Jingzi and Tao Yuanming. He also took care to recall the writings of Konstantin Simonov (1915-1979) and Jian Bozan 翦伯贊 (1898-1968) in warning against the unquestioning praise or criticism of a traditional author. He summed up his findings on all of the above authors as follows:

From the brief analysis above, we can deduce: in Chinese literary history, among the great representatives of classical realism there also existed to some extent a contradiction between world views and creative methods. These four people were brought up in different stages of feudal society, but they had the same or a similar world view, and that was: to protect the exploiting class, and to strengthen the rule of the exploiting class. Even so, they actually all had decent hearts, they all were brilliant literary talents and extremely conscientious writers who maintained an extremely serious attitude, and they all had a definite degree of empathy and concern for the toiling masses. Consequently, they were able to bravely face the social reality squarely, and to truthfully reflect reality. Because of their correct creative method, they had to violate their own class profit, and to transgress their own class bias. Ideologically, they supported the old society and the old order, but in their works they involuntarily proclaimed the inevitable death of the old society and the old order. In different time periods, and different writing positions, they represent equally brilliantly the great achievements of Chinese classical realism, and their work undoubtedly is a quintessential part of the literary heritage that is most worthy of our reception. (Lu 1987, 10)

It is clear that Lu's main task with this article was not to present new research, but rather to re-assess in a public context the classical literary heritage of China. Based on his authority in the domains of literary criticism and history, Lu was tentatively re-arranging the Chinese literary legacy along Marxist-Leninist principles. Initially, he seems to have been rather successful at this kind of endeavor, which explains that a

meticulously revised, decidedly more “Maoist” version of this text migrated smoothly from the annual conference via Shandong University Journal (*Shandong Daxue xuebao* 山東大學學報) into a completely different context when it was published on March 25, 1953 in the Party's most widely distributed organ, i.e., the People's Daily (*Renmin ribao*).¹³⁹ Entitled “Implement Mao Zedong's literary ideology in teaching classical literature” (Ba Mao Zedong wenyi sixiang guanchedao gudian wenxue de jiaoxue zhongqu 把毛澤東文藝思想貫徹到古典文學的教學中去), this version of the article reaffirmed Mao's absolute authority in teaching the literary canon, citing first and foremost his *Yan'an Talks* of 1942 as a core reference text for literary historians. While naming as two key didactic concepts in literary historiography an attitude of “serving the masses of workers and peasants” (weigongnong dazhong fuwu 為工農大眾服務) and promoting “New Democracy” (xin minzhu 新民主), the main emphasis of the text was on how to adapt the classical heritage so that it would have a practical use for the creation of a new literature. In this, it closely followed the gist of the *Yan'an Talks* in both rhetoric and argument.¹⁴⁰

The two articles, though composed by the same author on similar subject matters and in similar rhetoric, seem to differ mainly due to the organs in which they were published. While the former appeared as a printed version of a speech held at what was understood to be a locally confined “academic” conference, the latter was published as a general article on the government's cultural policy in the main organ of the CCP, which was distributed across the nation. While the former's main objective was to justify, with the help (or despite the constraints) of Marxist-Leninist literary theory, the inclusion of some central figures of the past into the revamped classical canon, the latter presented itself as a text without academic goals. As such, it was focused on providing slogans,

¹³⁹ Originally, it had been published under the same title in *Shandong Daxue xuebao* 山東大學學報 already in 1952. In comparison, the *Renmin ribao* version is shorter and even more politically tinged than the first version in the university journal, though I am unsure whether the editing was done by Lu himself or a RMRB staff member. Cf. Lu Kanru. “Ba Mao Zedong wenyi sixiang guanchedao gudian wenxue de jiaoxue zhongqu 把毛澤東文藝思想貫徹到古典文學的教學中去” (Implement Mao Zedong's literary ideology in teaching classical literature). In: *Renmin ribao* (March 25, 1953).

¹⁴⁰ Cf. (Lu Kanru 1953). The phase of the “New Democracy” had been called out by Mao Zedong in his “On New Democracy” (*Xin minzhuzhuyi lun* 新民主主義論) in 1940. It remained the official slogan of the CCP government until the start of the First Five-Year Plan in 1953, when it was quietly declared over and replaced with the new phase of “transition into socialism”. See Lorenz Bichler, “Sowjetische Ideologeme und ihre Rezeption in Literaturtheorie und Belletristik in der Volksrepublik China” (Ph.D. thesis, Ruprecht-Karls Universität Heidelberg, 1999), 101. “On New Democracy” itself, however, a core text since the Yan'an period, remained canonical throughout the fifties, and was quoted from frequently also in later literary historiography.

rather than arguments, thus reducing the article's content to a lengthy affirmation of the political main line.

It is through small gradations in tone and argument like in the case of these two texts that something akin to Lu Kanru's work "atmosphere" becomes palpable: though politics and academic discourse were never clearly distinguished in early P.R.C. literary historiography and criticism, there were certain factors that could define the degree of emphasis on ideological *idées reçues* in a piece of writing. As we have seen above, the application of Marxist-Leninist principles in all aspects of academic teaching, research and community life had been underlined from the earliest days of the P.R.C. One of the most direct measures taken to achieve this end was the mandatory political lectures for the university staff and faculty, first introduced in November 1949 and temporarily cancelled during the period of departmental reorganization in 1952. When in the fall of 1953 the political lectures resumed, the CCP had further strengthened its position at Shandong University. In addition to the Party committee on the main administrative, and Party branches and combined cells on the departmental administrative levels, the university had now also established the "Marxism-Leninism teaching and research section" (Makesilieningzhuyi jiaoyanshi 馬克思列寧主義教研室), directly subordinate to the dean's office, whose main responsibility was to supervise the implementation of the Marxist-Leninist curriculum at Shanda. Cui Rong, a member of the CCP committee, was made its head.¹⁴¹ It was therefore under the supervision of the section that the political lectures were held and the political study committee for staff and faculty resumed its sessions (with Hua Gang as its head, and Tong Dizhou and Lu Kanru as vice-heads), and it was also this section, as we have seen above, that was responsible for the planning and introduction of a one-year mandatory course in dialectical materialism for both faculty and students.

For someone like Lu Kanru, who was ranked "first-degree professor" (yiji jiaoshou 一級教授) in the first national ranking of 1953, participation in academic life

¹⁴¹ (Shandong University Archives 1991, 95). Suzanne Pepper writes on the teaching and research groups (jiaoxue yanjiu zu 教學研究組): "Soon all teachers were organized into these groups on the basis of the subjects and courses they taught. The groups served essentially as the basic units for collective course preparation, teacher training, and mutual supervision. The more experienced were supposed to induct the younger members into the practical aspects of the profession. A group's members prepared course outlines and lecture notes together as a team, dividing up the work in different ways. They also attended one another's classes as a basis for group evaluations afterward." Suzanne Pepper, *Radicalism and Education Reform in Twentieth-Century China: The Search for an Ideal Development Model* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 175.

therefore meant a great deal of political activity, such as mandatory study and criticism sessions, buying state bonds as a means to demonstrate his loyalty to the government, and publications that showed his affirmative involvement in daily political affairs.¹⁴² Thus, aside from his teaching responsibilities and research work on classical literature, Lu authored several essays that were completely removed from his academic profession, and commented instead on such matters as the passing of the first Chinese constitution in 1954, or reported on the general proceedings of Second Session of the CPPCC that year, in which he took part as a delegate.¹⁴³

Summing up, we can say that between 1949 and 1953 Lu Kanru was both intensely and systematically exposed to a new model of higher education, whose main features have been well captured by John Connelly in his rich book on the Sovietization of the Eastern European academic landscape after World War II:

Universities in Eastern and Central Europe [before Sovietization] were public institutions with important powers of self-rule: faculty councils elected deans, made professional appointments, and decided what would be taught. Universities in the Soviet Union were appendages of the state apparatus, and line items in the state plan; the ministerial and Party bureaucracy selected deans, controlled professoral appointments, and dictated the content of textbooks and lectures. In East Central Europe, though universities produced legions of bureaucrats, they also provided space for liberal education and the cultivation of critical thought. Soviet universities attempted to constrict and direct thought systematically, as students were forced into subjects of study that were narrow in the extreme, and made to memorize the principles of a single worldview: Marxism-Leninism. [my insertions]¹⁴⁴

Arguably, in Lu's case the contrast between the old and the new university paradigms was not so radically prominent as in the European context. Despite his French years, during which he was able to observe and connect with the mainstream of European academia, Lu had spent most of his academic life before 1949 in a volatile intellectual

¹⁴² (Xu Zhijie 2006, 125 f.).

¹⁴³ (Ibid., 126 f., 132 f.)

¹⁴⁴ (Connelly 2000, 19). Another crucial difference between the two paradigms is the disciplines they favored: in Eastern and Central Europe, the humanities and the social sciences dominated the university curriculum, especially in the 1930s, whereas in the Soviet Union during the same period of time 60% of higher-education capacity was devoted to the technical sciences (Ibid., 21). This is a trend that can also be observed in the evolution of higher education in China: the main protagonist of the present thesis actually transitioned from an entire landscape of "humanities" to a new context in which hard-core science and technology was prioritized, i.e., from a context where scholarship could be pursued for its own sake, at least in its extreme form, to an environment in which professional training became the main priority.

landscape that was still very much in the making. Struggling on the one hand with educational models from the past, most notably the imperial examination system, it flirted, on the other hand, with different and even competing university paradigms imported from France, Germany, and the United States. Moreover, the Nationalist government's attempts to standardize and internationalize higher education in the 1930s were never clearly divorced from ideological manipulation.¹⁴⁵ To a certain extent, one could say that for Lu Kanru the new paradigm was also novel in the sense that it managed to establish for the first time in China – based on substantial input from the Soviet Union – a framework that was both standardized and coherent on a national scale.¹⁴⁶

There is no way to seize and describe what it felt like for Lu Kanru and other Shanda professors with a similar background to be part of this new educational paradigm. We do not know the extent to which they were committed to or perhaps loathed the new cause. It seems likely that they were not quite sure themselves. While delineating the main features of what changed in the academic landscape of the 1950s, we also tend to eclipse how these changes were being carried out on a daily basis, including all the intellectual and emotional sentiments that could occur on the micro-level. However, in one instance our sources do provide us with a very short and complex window into Lu Kanru's mind that also allows us to see the early socialist days of Shanda in slow motion.

¹⁴⁵ As a consequence of the territorial rift between the GMD and the CCP after 1949, the ideological urges of the Nationalist government became much more palpable as well as explicit after its exodus to Taiwan. On these urges and the similarities they shared with CCP higher education ideology, see Shi Ming Hu. "Interrelationship between Education and Political Ideology Exemplified in China: A Critical Analysis of Educational Policy and Curriculum Trends in the People's Republic of China (Mainland) and in the Republic of China (Taiwan) from 1949 to 1969." (Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1970).

¹⁴⁶ This focus on uniformity and standardization was also reinforced by the fact that in this specific period until about 1955 the Soviet Union did not tolerate any competing "cultural" models. In 1949, it even requested "the closure of all Western culture and information centres in Eastern Europe, as well as the reduction of tourism and exchange to a minimum". Ted Hopf. "Moscow's foreign policy, 1945-2000: identities, institutions and interests." In: *Cambridge History of Russia. Volume III: The Twentieth Century*. Ronald Gregor Suny ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 671. On this cultural xenophobia, see also James von Geldern. "Culture, 1900-1945" in the same *Cambridge History of Russia* volume, esp. 604-607. It should be pointed out that initially Sovietization was also perceived in that way by the CCP leadership: "On the school's [People's University] founding in 1950, Liu Shaoqi had specifically enjoined the school to begin with a kind of blank slate, as it were, by emphasizing that European-American education, Republican-era Chinese higher education, and even the CCP's own 'universities' were all unsuitable as bases for the 'new-style, regular university'. Only Soviet educational examples would do for this new period in China's development." (Stiffler 2002, 88-89).

Turning back to the beginnings of China's first Communist decade and Lu Kanru's working conditions at Shanda, we find that there exists a collective diary (jiti riji 集體日記) kept by the people working at the university library at the time. It covers the period from October 7, 1949, to December 26, 1950, and it is through this source that we have access to something akin to Lu Kanru's professional memoirs during the first national mass "study" (xuexi 學習) movement, geared to reeducate the nation politically and launched almost immediately upon the CCP's accession to government.¹⁴⁷ As a piece of writing composed and read by more than just one individual, the common diary project provides a good look into some of the ongoing reeducation propaganda work at a university of the early P.R.C., and how academics reacted to it on the job. It contains, among other topics, entries how the head of the library publicly viewed the cutting of funds, how hierarchies within the school were changed and institutionalized, and how practices of criticism and self-criticism were introduced into daily life at Shanda already at the very start of the P.R.C.

In his second entry of November 1, 1949, Lu Kanru referred to an entry of the day before by his colleague Wang Tianyou 王天佑, who had apparently expressed his concern that the library funds were being cut for the benefit of channeling money to aid the destitute Chinese peasantry. Lu Kanru, by way of a response to the situation, recounted recently being moved by a poem written by a female worker on the plight of the peasantry: speaking of the peasant class as the "mother" of the Chinese people, the poem called on her children to "save" their mother, who had fallen ill and could no longer care for them. Lu transposed this theme onto his work as head of the library: while expressing his support of funding cuts to "save" the Chinese people's "mother", Lu calls for patience with regard to improving library stock:

Let us wait for a good harvest, then we will be able to replenish these "teachers of teachers" [meaning: the peasants]. Under the correct leadership of the People's Government, the libraries' funds will surely be increased, and the complaints of a minority will not have any effect.

¹⁴⁷ The most concise description of the 1949/50 mass study movement can still be found in Theodore Chen, *Thought Reform of the Chinese Intellectuals* (Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press: 1960). As Chen relates of the campaign in higher education: "In the universities and other higher educational institutions, joint committees of faculty and staff members were established as an expression of the new 'democratic' spirit of the day. They were composed of professors, instructors, assistants, clerks and janitors, and all had a voice in the administration of the higher institutions. In co-operation with the student body organizations, these committees became the channel through which the Communists directed the programme of political re-education." (T. H.-e. Chen 1960, 13).

At the exhibition of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association, there were ten photographs of the Lenin Library. We must emulate the Soviet Union and fight for the Chinese library profession!¹⁴⁸

The Soviet Union, as becomes clear from the remark made about the Lenin Library as an ideal to aspire to, was at the time indeed the undisputed model Chinese academics were called on to emulate, not only in organization and structure, but also in terms of content. In fact, Sino-Soviet friendship is one of the main themes of the diary entries, and the events organized by the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association's various local branches clearly played an important part in promoting the Soviet Union at China's universities. Accordingly, in the following entry of November 25, Lu Kanru regretted that a recent edition of the periodical published by the Association, *Zhong-Su youyi* 中蘇友誼 (Sino-Soviet Friendship), had failed to include for the most part any of the articles his library group had submitted for publication.¹⁴⁹ This seemed to prove, in his opinion, that their group did not know enough about the Soviet Union to publish about it yet, and that they would have to continue in their efforts to study and learn from it.¹⁵⁰

A further theme that played an important part during the mass study campaign was the leveling out of traditional hierarchies, both among colleagues as well as between students and teachers. While a formal "teacher-student representative committee" only met for the first time in April, 1950, the preparations for such a collaboration clearly had gone on from the earliest stages of the "new" Shanda. The inclusion of students in the decision-making process, for example, had already been decided on with the installment of the first School Council on October 8, which included among its members two assistant professors, as well as two students.

In an entry of December 18, 1949, Lu therefore wrote of common student-teacher meetings at the Chinese Department to discuss the curriculum, teaching materials and

¹⁴⁸ Li Jianfeng 李劍鋒. "Lu Kanru guanwu riji shiqi ze 陸侃如館務日記十七則" (Seventeen diary entries of Lu Kanru during his time as head of the library). In: *Xin wenxue shiliao* 4 (2009), 192.

¹⁴⁹ The name of the periodical is misspelled in Li Jianfeng's reprint of the diary. Its name was actually *Zhong-Su youhao* 中蘇友好 (Sino-Soviet Friendship), and it first went into print on November 1, 1949 in Beijing. Cf. Wang Yafu 王亞夫 et al. (ed.). *Zhongguo xueshujie dashiji* 中國學朮界大事記 (Chronicle of events in Chinese academic circles) (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 1988), 127.

¹⁵⁰ (Ibid.). In a later entry of March 17, 1950, Lu referred to the library of People's University (*Zhongguo Renmin Daxue* 中國人民大學) as the new model on which the Shanda library was to be patterned (Li 2009, 194). This change in orientation is explained by the fact that in November, 1949, Renda, the P.R.C.'s own "model" university, did not as yet exist – the decision to found it was only made on December 16 of that year (Wang 1988, 127), and it was not until the autumn of 1950 that its first students enrolled (T. H.-e. Chen 1960, 19).

methods, and other related issues. During these meetings Lu noted that the students brought their opinions to the table in a very forward and succinct manner, which seemed to unsettle some of the older professors, who were still used to the more conservative hierarchies from before 1949. While not criticizing either side, Lu commented:

The weapons of criticism and self-criticism are not easy to master at first. The colleagues at the library have tried it a couple of times, and one cannot say that no mistakes were made. I shall urge myself, in case I ever undergo criticism, to definitely receive it with an open mind.¹⁵¹

In the same entry, Lu also encouraged the practice of “democratically” determining old colleagues’ positions and salaries, which had also been recently introduced as a measure of collective decision-making in 1949. Although he acknowledged some issues in its initial stages, he nevertheless expressed his support for the democratic process itself:

In the past, this [i.e., deciding on positions and salaries] was the privilege of the bosses, and there was much malpractice. Today’s method of having the staff decide by public debate is certainly much more fitting. Of course, when practicing it for the first time it is impossible to satisfy everybody. But I hope that the colleagues won’t pour out the baby with the bathwater, that they won’t do away with a large benefit because of a few small flaws.¹⁵²

A central point Lu addressed in the diary is the practice of criticisms and self-criticisms that was already underway at Shanda from the earliest days of the P.R.C., and for which the diary itself was supposed to be a kind of “study aid”. Here, too, the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association seems to have functioned as a role model, as Lu frequently compared their public debate and criticism sessions with the ones held at the “advanced study meetings” (jinxiuhui 進修會) and the “self-criticism meetings” (jiantaohui 檢討會) of the library group, holding up the former as an example for the latter. Returning from one session organized by the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association for the purpose of deciding on work awards for outstanding individuals on February 5, 1950, Lu observed the following:

Recently, the colleagues of this library have also been carrying out self-criticisms of all sections, but these had a lot of flaws: often,

¹⁵¹ (Li 2009, 192).

¹⁵² (Ibid.).

someone would only talk about his mistakes or shortcomings, and would not be willing to point out any good qualities; as for other people, they would often only talk about the many merits of someone who was being criticized, and would be unwilling to talk about their shortcomings. And another thing: as for the Friendship Association, after a self-criticism, a person has to summarize their own and the other people's speeches in a written report, which is then read out in public at the next meeting and has to be ratified by everybody before it can be archived. At the next self-criticism meeting, [that person's] progress is evaluated based on what was recorded the last time. We should really emulate this method.¹⁵³

Almost two weeks after this entry, it was Lu Kanru's turn to be criticized. Though he apparently was treated with much lenience by his colleagues from the library, he realized that praise was meaningless if it was given on account of a shyness to criticize, a flaw he had already pointed out in the earlier entry. Lu recognized that he himself was also guilty of sugarcoating when it came to other people, but he observed that this habit resulted in a strange contradiction:

While I compiled my summary, I thought to myself: if there was an individual who truly had all the positive traits ascribed to me by the others, that would be a very rare all-round talent. What a shame that I am not there yet by a long shot. Furthermore, on the one hand people said that I was democratic, on the other hand there were people saying that I only listened to a few [higher-ranking] people. On the one hand they said that I was astute in handling [library] matters, on the other hand there were people saying I didn't really grasp library work. These two aspects are contradictory, which can prove that my so-called "merits" don't match reality.¹⁵⁴

Although these bouts of modesty and expressions of caution can be seen as fairly typical examples of self-criticism, one could ask whether Lu Kanru really was aware that overt praise instead of criticism of a person designated to be criticized could be detrimental to that person's status. As his self-critical remarks were made in a public diary, it is often difficult to distinguish between Lu's true and formalistic remarks, though, of course, this distinction itself is problematic.

In later entry, Lu Kanru further refers to another potentially contentious peer group at Shanda, namely the members of the CCP Group and Committee described above. On April 22, 1950, in the wake of the mass political reeducation movement, *Renmin*

¹⁵³ (Li 2009, 193).

¹⁵⁴ (Ibid.)

ribao published a directive by the CCP Central Committee on the launching of criticisms and self-criticisms of Party members in public newspapers and journals.¹⁵⁵ In the Qingdao area, this seems to have set off a fresh wave of criticisms regarding malpractice and carelessness witnessed at Shandong University hospital, for which the CCP Group members were initially held responsible. Lu Kanru, angered by the maltreatment of a colleague at said hospital a year earlier, had been involved in criticizing its administration before, and reported in the entry of June 23, 1950, on how differently his opinions were received before and after the CCPCC's resolution:

Last year I already criticized the hospital because director Liu was treated inappropriately, and I caused the dissatisfaction of many people who thought that "a professor of the College of Liberal Arts should not mind the business of anyone outside the College of Liberal Arts." This year, because of the task of checking up [on everyone's work] I was so bold as to say something again, and once again I incited the bitter hatred of quite a few people. In the wake of the recent Party member rectification, comrades Luo Zhufeng and Zhang Hui¹⁵⁶ sincerely asked me to give my opinion, and so I said point-blankly: for the most part the Party members working at this section of the school are all very good, but there are too many flaws in those Party members working at the hospital; if they want to reform the hospital and improve the Party's credibility, the Party branch of the hospital has to try harder.¹⁵⁷

By October of that year, a progress report on the hospital written by a survey group led by Zhao Jibin and a certain "department head Zhu" (Zhu chuzhang 朱處長), who had been dispatched to Shanda by the Central Ministry of Health (Zhongyang weishengbu 中央衛生部), revealed that the hospital was still in a desolate state. This time, however, the reasons were sought elsewhere: instead of the cadres, it was now the "old school

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Chinese Communist Party Central Committee. "Guanyu zai baozhi kanwu shang zhankai piping he ziwopiping de jue ding 關於在報紙刊物上展開批評和自我批評的決定" (Decision regarding the launching of criticisms and self-criticisms in newspapers and journals). In: *Renmin ribao*, April 22, 1950. The directive called on newspaper and journal editors to take greater responsibility in publishing critical articles, and called for more public criticism of CCP work. At the same time, it warned against "harmful" and "destructive" criticism that targeted the Communist cause, the Party in general, or the CCP Common Program. Despite not specifying how exactly criticism was to be put forth "correctly", it recommended a few texts as reference materials: Lenin's "Lun women de baozhi de xingzhi 論我們的報紙的性質" (On the quality of our newspapers), Stalin's "Lun ziwo piping 論自我批評" (On self-criticism) and "Fandui ba ziwo piping kouhao yongsuhua 反對把自我批評口號庸俗化" (Oppose the slogan vulgarization of self-criticism), Mao Zedong's writings on self-criticism, as well as the decisions by the Eighth CPSU Congress regarding Party and Soviet newspapers and periodicals.

¹⁵⁶ Zhang Hui 張惠 is referenced in the Shandong University chronicles as the Secretary of the Shanda branch of the CCP Youth League as of its founding date on December 25, 1949 (Shandong University Archives 1991, 79).

¹⁵⁷ (Li 2009, 195).

intellectuals” who were seen as the root of the problem. As we can see from Lu Kanru’s entry of October 14, the tone of the accusations had changed:

As far as we know, the reason the hospital is in such a mess is not because there is a lack of talented personnel, but mainly because their political level is low, they lack the determination to serve the people and they lack an attitude of responsibility towards the people. This kind of mistake is very common within the schools or organs left over from the old society, so one must strengthen political study to reform the thought of the old intellectuals, so as to gradually eliminate the poison handed down from the old society. (...) Department head Zhu thinks that the hospital reform must start with a thought reform, and that really hits the nail on the head.¹⁵⁸

From this example it becomes clear that the tide of official opinion could turn quickly already in the early P.R.C.: what started out as a campaign to criticize cadre work within public institutions in May, 1950, had become another reason to reinforce the creed that it was actually the “old intellectuals” who needed reforming by autumn of the same year.¹⁵⁹ Needless to say, many of these “old intellectuals” were working academics at institutions like Shandong University.

The observation of a shifting climate is reinforced by the fact that instances of “bold” criticism – like the one brought forth by Lu Kanru in speaking out against cadre work at the Shanda hospital in June – were always interspersed with instances of self-

¹⁵⁸ (Li 2009, 196).

¹⁵⁹ The actual turn of events occurred much more systematically and was somewhat orchestrated from the center. On May 1, 1950, the CCPCC issued a “Directive concerning the launch of a rectification campaign among the entire Party and the entire military” (Guanyu zai quandang quanjun kaizhan zhengfeng yundong de zhishi 關於在全黨全軍開展整風運動的指示), which initiated a general investigation of CCP (and military) work in public offices. On June 6, at the third plenary session of the 7th CCPCC, Mao Zedong held a speech entitled “Battle to strive for the fundamental improvement of the nation’s financial and economic situation” (Wei zhengqu guojia caizheng jingji zhuangkuang de jiben haozhuan er douzheng 為爭取國家財政經濟狀況的基本好轉而鬥爭), in which he already addressed what would be seen as the root of the problem. Initially careful, he advocated that there be a “step-by-step and cautious reform of the old school and educational profession, as well as of the old social and cultural professions, a strive for every patriotic intellectual to serve the people. In this matter it is not right to procrastinate or maintain the ideology of not wanting to reform, but neither is it right to lose one’s patience or try to use crude methods to carry out the reform.” (speech available in the online archives of the CCPCC plenary sessions at: <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64559/4442107.html> [last accessed: November 8, 2012]). Then, on June 23, at the second plenary meeting of the 1st CPPCC, Mao officially launched a campaign of “self-education” and “self-reform” among the intellectuals working on the “culture and education front”, cf. Gu, Mingyuan 顧明遠 et al. (ed.). *Zhongguo jiaoyu daxi: Makeshuyi yu Zhongguo jiaoyu* 中國教育大係：馬克思主義與中國教育 (China education compendium: Marxism and Chinese education) (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1994), 1710. Therefore, when on July 1 at the occasion of the 29th anniversary of the CCP, Party branch member and military representative Luo Zhufeng mobilized his fellow CCP members to carry out the *zhengfeng* campaign at Shanda, one could say that the tide had actually already turned and the intellectuals were the ones officially targeted by the rectification movement (Shandong University Archives 1991, 76).

criticism in the collective diary, almost as if the author felt the need to demonstrate that he, too, was prone to erroneous judgment. In an entry of July 19, 1950, Lu commented on a few public self-criticisms by colleagues that he had attended and which had left him “overawed” by their openness and sincerity. Comparing them with his own ability to self-reflect, he compared the practice of self-criticism with that of treating an illness. Thus he noted:

I am very worried that I might follow the disastrous policy of “openly acknowledging [my mistakes], but stubbornly refusing to change”, from which only the friends who care for me can save me; without your help, I am afraid it will be very hard for me to “recover”. At the same time, I also alert you [to the fact] that among you there are also those that won’t be able to avoid committing the “openly acknowledge, but stubbornly refuse to change” mistake, and who must take precautions as soon as possible.¹⁶⁰

With the decision to merge Shandong University and East China University in late 1950, the influence of the *lao ganbu* was destined to grow among the library staff. At the first meeting of the merging committee several changes to this effect were discussed. Lu Kanru, who was vice-head of the committee, recorded the following in his final entry of December 17, 1950:

As far as the library is concerned, it will reinstate two [separate] groups for “compilation” and “management”, but the “groups” will then become “sections”. Moreover, a group of fresh forces will certainly be of the greatest help to us. Especially the East China University head comrade Liu Wei, for he is a library expert on the one hand, and an old revolutionary cadre on the other, so he can definitely become a model among the colleagues both in terms of profession and political study. I hope that all of the colleagues of the library will carefully learn from their example.¹⁶¹

The collective diary of the Shanda library staff provides some form of inside access to the structures of a university work unit at the very start of the P.R.C. Though kept for public and official perusal, Lu Kanru’s entries reveal some of the initial changes and difficulties associated with the mass study movement and the first campaign to criticize the work of the CCP after 1949 which - as would become typical of such campaigns in the P.R.C. - transformed into a first thought reform movement targeting the intellectuals rather than the cadres. Through Lu Kanru specifically, it also becomes possible to focus

¹⁶⁰ (Li 2009, 196).

¹⁶¹ (Li 2009, 196 f.).

on the issues and conflicts, to the extent that they were officially presented, of his generation of academics, who were easy targets for the epithet “old intellectual in need of thought reform”.

Accordingly, in an entry of June 23, 1950, Lu Kanru made an observation about his generation that appears not only sincere, but also rings true in light of the events yet to come in later years. After reporting on the resumption of criticism and self-criticism sessions within the library group upon the request of two student members, Lu noted:

Recently, I have had the profound feeling that the burden of history weighs so heavily on people like us, who are around fifty years of age, that we can hardly breathe, we should not talk and we cannot make fast progress, even slowly crawling is extremely difficult. Although I am not at all discouraged, when my eyes see the advances by leaps and bounds of the young, I am honestly overwhelmed with admiration.¹⁶²

The differences between Lu Kanru’s generation, still educated under May Fourth influence, and the next generation of scholars who were already fully trained in the P.R.C. were to become more striking as time progressed. One of the first instances in which the extent of these differences in education and perception would become palpable was, in fact, the *Honglou meng*-campaign of 1954, and it is perhaps in remarks like these that one can get a first glimpse of what would come to be not only a conflict of political interest, but also a generational gap. The next chapter, whose main focus is the *Honglou meng* campaign, tries to expand on this first glimpse and place it within a broader context.

¹⁶² (Li 2009, 195).

Chapter Two. Honglou meng

Reality has imposed a task on researchers of Dream of the Red Chamber which is serious and brimming with militancy: to correctly analyze and evaluate the Dream, to deliver it of all types of fallacious arguments, so that the broad masses of the people can appreciate it even more, and that the literary and art workers can accurately study it, has also become the most pressing task of the present.

--- Li Xifan and Lan Ling

The previous chapter has taken us from Lu Kanru's academic beginnings in the Republican period to 1953, the year in which Sovietization had been achieved at Shandong University and other institutions of higher education in the P.R.C. 1953 was also the year in which Lu Kanru appeared on the national scene as an expert in classical literary studies. In the country's largest official organ, he advocated that the field of Chinese literature needed to be radically transformed according to socialist criteria. In 1954, this transformation process gained a decidedly more pervasive and systematic dimension in the context of the so-called *Honglou meng*-Campaign, which revolved around the re-interpretation of China's most famous novel, penned in the eighteenth century by Cao Xueqin. Perhaps not always voluntarily, Lu Kanru became entangled in this campaign, writing one key text that was first presented at an academic conference and then eventually published in *Wenyibao* 文藝報 (Literary Gazette), the country's most important journal for literature and art.

What readers of Lu's *Honglou meng*-text or its most widely circulated English summary provided by Merle Goldman in Volume 14 of the *Cambridge History of China* tend to assume is that Lu's authorship was the result of an arbitrary process.¹⁶³ Clearly, this assumption is made on the grounds that authorship was not important in these kinds of overtly propagandistic texts. We therefore do not need to pay attention to Lu, as he was a random and replaceable figure in the campaign logistics, and also because he

¹⁶³ Merle Goldman. "The Party and the intellectuals", in: *Cambridge History of China. Vol. 14*. Roderick MacFarquhar and John K. Fairbank eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1987), 256.

was clearly not an expert on the *Dream of the Red Chamber*.¹⁶⁴ However, instead of ignoring or downplaying Lu's name, the present chapter tries to take it as a point of entry from which it becomes possible to retrace the origins of the *Honglou meng* campaign of 1954, and thus zeroes in onto the campaign's concrete fabric as opposed to just surveying it in passing from a very distant bird's view.

Why should we bother to magnify this campaign, especially if we consider that campaigns in the early days of the P.R.C. looked as if they were the monstrously magnified result of political innuendo rather than the reflection of systematic planning with a clear-cut final goal? Rudolf Wagner rather aptly describes the undeniable messiness of these first campaigns:

In the still very high temperature of Chinese society of the time, otherwise discrete phenomena like power struggles, ideological controversies, political events, literary policies and writings, and finally the life of the common people commingled in the one cauldron, so that what might have started with a trivial controversy between the Chairman and the Prime Minister over a young woman ended up by determining the personality composition of the Party for decades to come, along with the fate of the country in this one-Party system. In the same process, the sources lost much of their distinctiveness. Politburo documents had to be studied as closely as a line from a poem; a novel emerged as an administrative handbook; and hundreds of tons of clothes were stacked away or dug up again as the political climate changed.¹⁶⁵

While this is true – to no small extent, one might add –, there are several reasons why it is nevertheless interesting to magnify a specific campaign and its evolution. Arguably, one of the principal reasons is that a campaign's messy dimension, especially in the upper echelons of the political hierarchy, does not preclude the presence of complex logistics through which it is possible to spread the campaign's central message. One could think of the structure of these logistics as resembling a large pyramid with a central top, different levels of transmission and a very broad base. As for the central message itself, it is exposed to changes and negotiations as it travels up and down within but also in different directions across the pyramid, especially across both ambitiously upcoming as well as solidly established generations. On the one hand, this makes the

¹⁶⁴ Merle Goldman, while quoting one phrase from Lu's article, even turns Lu Kanru into the CCP's speaking puppet: "The Party claimed that to Hu Shih, 'academic research is to satisfy one's own interest, not the needs of the country and the people.'" (Ibid.).

¹⁶⁵ Rudolf G. Wagner. *Inside A Service Trade. Studies in Contemporary Chinese Prose*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992) 69.

whole process look rather messy, but on the other it is an integral and as such intended part of a campaign's communication structure. This flexible character of early P.R.C. campaigns also explains why, unlike pyramids, they tended not to have a solid structure that those directly involved could hold on to. Rather, they were Protean and malleable, emerging from previous campaigns and often phasing into new ones.

With each campaign, new ideas, concepts and terms were spread across the country. Among them, those which proved the most resilient after many travels through the pyramid and many debates they were exposed to along the way would stick and finally migrate to other less volatile contexts, such as textbooks and canonical writings. This is the main interest of writing about a campaign such as the one revolving around *Honglou meng* in the mid-1950s: to observe and document how intellectual change was staged and achieved through a mass movement and to look at what remained on the intellectual surface when the campaign waned.

From the viewpoint of this thesis, the *Honglou meng*-Campaign was not just any campaign. Arguably, it was this campaign that changed – in some domains irrevocably so – the field of literary history and criticism by systematically targeting and discarding crucial elements of the Republican legacy, while at the same introducing new linguistic and argumentative practices. Even though obfuscated by the many protagonists and the legions of people involved in the *Honglou meng*-Campaign, the main thread of the present chapter is still the itinerary of the individual who was introduced in the previous chapter, namely Lu Kanru. The chapter's principal interest thus lies in the area of intersection between the individual and the campaign. In addition, this chapter also tries to show how the field of studies Lu Kanru belonged to was transformed through this campaign, with his active support as well as that of other established academics. In this way, Chapter 2 takes us to the threshold of the process in which the results of these transformations were canonized in new works of literary historiography. That process will be the focus of the third and final chapter of the present thesis.

Chapter 2, "Honglou meng", has six main sections which are respectively entitled:

1. *The Problem of Sources*
2. *The Problem of Narratives*
3. *Campaigns*

4. *Protagonists*
5. *Texts*
6. *“A Poisoned Mind”*

While the former two sections focus on the methods of this chapter’s research and composition, the latter four focus on the campaign itself: where it all began, how it was nationally amplified and staged, who the main agents were, what campaign literature looked like in terms of its content, and, finally, how the protagonist of the present thesis presented himself in texts during this eventful period. While initially assuming a bird’s view of the campaign, this chapter gradually closes in on the actual texture of the *Honglou meng*-Campaign, culminating in a close reading of both the aforementioned and another, more self-critical article that Lu Kanru composed in the fall of 1954.

1. The Problem of Sources

In terms of primary source materials it should first be emphasized that in this chapter, I am actually focusing on one campaign, namely the one on *Honglou meng*, whose main individual target was Yu Pingbo. It is necessary to state this because conventionally, the *Honglou meng*-Campaign has been read as an (often minor) part of a larger package. In its most standard version, this larger conglomerate also included the campaign against Hu Shi, which immediately followed and in fact resulted from the *Honglou meng* criticisms. Its most extended version then tended to include the campaign against Hu Feng 胡風, which the anti-Hu Shi campaign gradually transitioned into.¹⁶⁶ Since these campaigns were thematically entangled with each other, it is not always possible to separate them in a clear-cut manner. Nevertheless, the present chapter will try as much as is feasible to keep a steady focus on the 1954/55 *Honglou meng*-Campaign and to distill from the available sources the topics related to the discussion of *The Dream of the Red Chamber* and, in a broader context, to literary questions in general.

In addition, I have to point out that all the materials I have used in writing the following chapter are published materials. This means that all the texts pertaining to *Honglou meng* were at one time or another made publicly accessible in contemporary

¹⁶⁶ For an example of the standard version, see Merle Goldman. “The Party and the intellectuals”, in: *Cambridge History of China. Vol. 14*. Roderick MacFarquhar and John K. Fairbank eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1987), 234-241. For the extended version, which in this specific case starts with Mao’s political targeting of Gao Gang, see Chapter 3 of Rudolf G. Wagner. *Inside A Service Trade. Studies in Contemporary Chinese Prose*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 17-25.

journals, periodicals or thematic volumes. In order to correctly retrace the more often than not opaque paths of content migration mentioned above, it would certainly be of some aid to find the relevant archival materials pertaining to the chain of command and the spectrum of information distribution that ranged from the political center to the academic periphery at the time of the campaign – insofar as such materials exist and are publicly accessible. However, the objective of the following chapter is not necessarily to reveal the “behind-the-scenes” as much as it is to understand the publicly accessible scene itself in all its apparent logic and complexity, as well as the massiveness of the texts created for and discussed in this campaign. It is in this way, after all, that knowledge on *Honglou meng* and the entirety of the literary canon was presented at the institutions of higher learning to the new generation of students who themselves had little to no access to the network behind the scenes. Therefore, the primary sources used in this chapter reflect the public steps of approximation to the subject of change in the research, publication and teaching of literary history in early Communist China.

Campaign literature

Writing a text based on published materials about how the public view on the perhaps most emblematic work of Chinese fiction was transformed in the wake of the political changes in mid-twentieth century China, one must mainly take into account (at least) three different types (or genres) of campaign literature. Each of these had a different point of origin, but in the end targeted the same readership, namely the minds of the mainstream intelligentsia that shaped the public (and the academic) discourse on the novel. These types of text are:

- National campaign and policy texts
- More locally confined campaign texts
- Writings focusing exclusively on *Honglou meng* within an academic ambience.

The first set of texts is essential to glean an idea about a certain “standard” in reading the novel as it was postulated in the upper echelons of cultural policy. It is essential to denote, however, that this “standard” was not fixed to the extent that it was immediately applicable to an academic context of literary criticism and historiography. Rather, these texts gave pointers as to what to focus on and what to reject in one’s approach to *Honglou meng* and, consequently, also other works from the Chinese literary heritage.

Some of these texts were later included into collections of campaign essays that were published after a campaign had been officially concluded, on the one hand to mark its end, and on the other, to provide the general reader with an anthology of study materials concerning the subject of the campaign. As such, they became the official “policy texts” that were studied and frequently referred to by other campaign participants in the course of their own compilation of campaign-related writings. Examples of this kind of text in the context of the campaign revolving around *Honglou meng* in the fall and winter of 1954 were three speeches by Guo Moruo, Mao Dun and Zhou Yang that were centered around turning the attention of the debate onto Hu Shi as the figurehead of the wrong kind of literary criticism. As such, they emphasized the importance of criticizing this public figure (and his epigones) publicly, so as to make a clean break with the misleading intellectual idolatry of pre-1949 times.¹⁶⁷

Aside from these texts by the cultural politicians, the main body of such official campaign compilations was made up of articles and essays of all shapes and sizes written by members of the professional landscape the campaign was targeting. Thus, in the case of the *Honglou meng*-campaign, the main contributors to the campaign were members of the academic establishment, bridging the generations from that largely in charge of academic research and teaching and that already completing their entire university degree under the tutelage of the new Communist government. Here, too, there were cases in which certain texts became emblematic reference points for the campaign participants, even though they had not been written by cultural politicians themselves, but were instead elevated to become central points within cultural policy. In the case described in this chapter, for example, the two most significant of these texts were written by two former students of Lu Kanru’s at Shandong University, Li Xifan and Lan Ling, who criticized the work previously done on *Honglou meng* by the most prominent contemporary expert on the novel, Yu Pingbo.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ The three speeches (which are discussed later in this chapter) were the following: 1. Guo Moruo. “Sandian jianyi 三點建議” (Three proposals), 2. Mao Dun. “Lianghao de kaiduan 良好的開端” (A good start), and 3. Zhou Yang. “Women bixu zhandou 我們必須戰鬥” (We must fight) – all of them were originally held at a joint meeting of the *Wenlian* and the CWU in December, 1954, and later included, among others, into the collection *Honglou meng wenti taolunji 紅樓夢問題討論集* (Collection of debates on the *Honglou meng* issue), 4 vols. (Beijing: Zuoja chubanshe, 1955).

¹⁶⁸ Their articles were “Guanyu ‘Honglou meng jianlun’ ji qita 關於《紅樓夢簡論》及其他” (On ‘Short Dissertation on Dream of the Red Chamber’ Et Cetera”, *Wenshizhe*, September 1, 1954), and “Ping ‘Honglou meng yanjiu’ 評《紅樓夢研究》” (Criticism of ‘Study of Dream of the Red Chamber’”, *Wenxue yichan*, October 10, 1954). Both are discussed further along in this chapter.

The older generation of campaign participants frequently made reference to both the policy texts formulated by the members of the political and cultural elite, as well as the two young authors Li Xifan and Lan Ling who were hailed publicly as the originators of the campaign and idolized in the mainstream media as members of a generation of “newly emerging forces” (xinsheng lilian 新生力量) who were destined to topple the old authorities mired by “bourgeois idealism” (zichanjieji weixinlun 資產階級唯心論). However, one must differentiate between campaign texts that were produced within the immediate context of a campaign and texts on the same (or a similar subject) that endeavored a more stringently academic approach, as evidence of both can be found in almost any large-scale national periodical or smaller-scale university journal across China at the time.

While the nationally significant (or in some way representative) campaign contributions by academics were written under the dominant influence of the campaign policy texts, they also developed parts of the argument into themes that were then discussed more locally, i.e., at a specific university in the course of the writing and compilation process of a new literary history textbook. In this, we are confronted with a core element of the Chinese academic practice in the early years of the P.R.C., namely the taking of cues from national policy issues and their further development within a more strictly academic setting. Of course, these more “academically” treated themes could in turn also be retransposed onto a more generally relevant framework of discussion, picked up and settled (by way of policy formulation) by the cultural politicians. This is why it is important to distinguish – without exaggerating – between what was published on a nationally relevant level (i.e., a compilation of campaign texts containing contributions from around the country) and on a more locally confined basis (i.e., the campaign contributions brought forth by members of a specific university department both in the wake of and the aftermath of the campaign).

This to some extent migratory nature of texts, themes and debate issues, though obvious in all three of the above mentioned types of primary source material, is at times hard to delineate. Though it is clear, for example, that in reiterating the importance of placing the “political criterion” (zhengzhi de biao zhun 政治的標準) (in literary criticism) before the “artistic criterion” (yishu de biao zhun 藝術的標準), a campaign contributor is implicitly referring to one of the core arguments in Mao Zedong’s *Yan’an Talks on*

Literature and Art,¹⁶⁹ the origins of other such migratory elements are not as clearly identifiable in most other cases. The search for the infamous black box of information must, for the most part, remain inconclusive, which is also due to the fact that access to the kind of material that would be needed to truly identify a chain of command – or a direction – in the flow of information, is limited.¹⁷⁰

As already mentioned above, on the academic level of campaign participation, the chapter is focused on both a local and the national dimension. Materials on the former are to be found in a compilation of speeches held at a conference dedicated to the *Honglou meng*-case at Shandong University in the fall of 1954, most of which were reprinted in January, 1955, in a special issue of the university's (and, at the time, the country's) most prominent journal for the humanities, *Wenshizhe* 文史哲 (Literature, History, Philosophy). Lu Kanru held the keynote speech of the conference and it is therefore both in his function as literary historian and representative of the Shandong University administration (i.e., the school's vice-president) that he contributed to the campaign. The other contributors were also largely made up of professors of Lu's generation teaching the various subjects of the humanities at Shandong University (one exception being a contribution by a graduate student).

As these university conferences held in the context of the early P.R.C. campaign culture were a regular phenomenon, the one under examination at Shandong University presents a case study of such an event and the arguments that were brought forth in its wake. However, as I have not looked, due to the limits and time constraints of the present thesis, into similar events at other universities around the country, it is difficult to say whether the Shandong conference papers in any way represent the “standard model” of such events at the time: other academically relevant conferences and institutions, such as universities in Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Guangzhou or Shenyang may well have different stories to tell about the campaign. The advantage of looking at Shandong University as a “model case”, however, is that it was indeed at this

¹⁶⁹ For a good translation and solid discussion of the *Talks*, see the still invaluable Bonnie S. McDougall. *Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art": A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1980).

¹⁷⁰ As Michael Schoenhals has convincingly shown in his *Doing Things with Words in Chinese Politics. Five Studies* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), especially in the fourth study “Direction of the Press: Hu Qiaomu's 1955 Breakfast Chats”, this inconclusiveness is also to some extent related to the fact that many of the criteria applied in the chain of command, far from being clear and solid, were extemporaneous, tentative and, last but not least, simply erratic.

particular location that the most prominent academic journal of the humanities (and specifically in our case, literature) was published before the advent of *Wenxue yanjiu* 文學研究 (from 1959: *Wenxue pinglun* 文學評論) in 1957.

In terms of the larger national scale, the present chapter examines the output of several volumes dedicated to the two main aspects of the campaign: redefining *Honglou meng* and criticizing Hu Shi. The former is a collection in four volumes entitled *Honglou meng wenti taolunji* 紅樓夢問題討論集 (Collection of debates on the *Honglou meng* issue, Beijing: Zuoja chubanshe, 1955), which includes essays and speeches revolving around the novel largely authored by members of the academic field in the wake of the campaign. The texts of this collection are mostly interesting insofar as they represent not only the thematic changes that were applied to the criticism of the novel, but also the range from pure policy statement to detailed treatment of some particular literary aspect that made up the different registers in which they were written.

The latter, entitled *Hu Shi sixiang pipan* 胡適思想批判 (Criticisms of Hu Shi's thought, Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1955) is a collection in eight volumes of articles and essays from the Anti-Hu Shi-Campaign (the later stage of the *Honglou meng*- or Anti-Yu Pingbo campaign), in which the so-called "Hu Shi thought" that was said to permeate all areas of the humanities (i.e., literature, history and philosophy) was singled out as the main target of Communist thought reform. In using this voluminous collection, I have restricted my focus to those contributions and passages that are directly pertinent to *Honglou meng* as well as primarily literary discussions.

Thus, both in terms of source material and main outlook, the present chapter is largely focused on the one step that was crucial in content migration in the early P.R.C., namely the carrying out of large-scale campaigns whose main function it was to secure the participation of as many members of the designated target group (here: the intellectuals) as possible while at the same time reinforcing that group's potential to auto-eliminate and help redefine what was considered politically out of line. Texts were the preferred site for engaging the intellectuals in this process. Through the composing, presenting, reading, hearing and digesting of articles, the academic intelligentsia would formalize, internalize and ultimately be transformed by the new literary discourse. For this reason, Chapter 2 reserves its final two sections to the presentation and discussion of these campaign texts, including the literary arguments that were developed therein.

Honglou meng

To turn back to the more specific question of how to trace the changes in the perception of *Honglou meng* in the first decade of the People's Republic, the sources available to me that played a part in the composition of this chapter include several important studies by Chinese scholars. The single most useful and central of these is a book by Sun Yuming 孫玉明, the current director of the *Honglou meng* Research Institute at the Chinese Academy of Art (Zhongguo yishu yanjiuyuan *Honglou meng* yanjiusuo 中國藝術研究院紅樓夢研究所) in Beijing, in which Sun unravels with as much academic precision as possible (meaning that his access to primary material was, at times, also restricted) the details behind the events that shaped the *Honglou meng*-campaign and the ensuing criticisms of Yu Pingbo and Hu Shi in the fall/winter of 1954/55.

Entitled *Hongxue: 1954* 紅學: 1954 (Redology: 1954; Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2003), this is a detailed case study of the origins, protagonists and consequences of the campaign which, however (as tends to be the case even with the most academically solid of these kinds of Chinese publications), is very much focused on laying open the interpersonal relations between members of the various groups involved in discrediting Yu Pingbo and Hu Shi. Though a goldmine of information, Sun tends to eclipse the dimension of how the campaign and the otherwise broadly discussed procedures of "thought reform" affected the rewriting of academic content concerning *Honglou meng* (and other works from the literary heritage) and thus permeated into mainstream Chinese education on a systematic and extremely thorough basis.

This is interesting insofar as the connection between the thought of individuals and their impact on an academic discipline (especially the study of *Honglou meng*), is generally given much attention in Chinese secondary scholarship, albeit often on what can be called a rather personal and aphoristic basis. Examples of this kind of study include a memoir of Yu Pingbo written by his grandson, Wei Nai 韋奈, which has as its central point of departure the question why Yu was criticized in the mid-1950s and how the campaign against him impacted his further scholarship.¹⁷¹ These kinds of

¹⁷¹ Wei Nai 韋奈. *Wo de waizufu Yu Pingbo* 我的外祖父俞平伯 (My grandfather Yu Pingbo) (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 2006).

publications also include such works as, for example, *Hu Shi yu Honglou meng* 胡適與紅樓夢 (Hu Shi and *Honglou meng*) by Zhu Hong 朱洪, professor at Anqing Normal College (Anqing shifan xueyuan 安慶師範學院).¹⁷² In his book, Zhu Hong traces the development of the field of *Honglou meng* studies as it evolved under the influence of Hu Shi, organizing his chapters according to the most pressing questions about the novel that Hu had managed to answer, such as the time of composition, the relations of Cao Xueqin's family with the imperial court of the Kangxi emperor, the philological definition of the earliest extant manuscript, etc.

Although it is generally speaking a concise and well-written history of Hu Shi's *hongxue*, and contains footnotes and references (though no bibliography), it nevertheless suffers from a certain elliptic contextualization which, for example, only gives around ten pages of room to remarks on the fact that Yu Pingbo's work from the mid-1950s was no longer "appreciated" (much to Hu Shi's regret) in mainland China. Due to their own political constraints, it is no secret that present-day Chinese scholars are often unable to speak with the same frankness about political events of the recent past as their Western counterparts, a fact which is by now taken for granted in the perusal of these secondary materials. Unfortunately, this also means that these sources often contain breaks in continuity and argument that are not made transparent and are therefore not easily resolved (or understood) by even the educated outsider, and that therefore some of the questions pertaining to a wider context (i.e., one that goes beyond individual people, motivations and texts) are, again, largely ignored or evaded by their authors.

A solid and very useful overview on the history of *Honglou meng* reception from its beginnings to the start of the new millennium in China is Fudan University professor Chen Weizhao's 陳維昭 two-volume *Hongxue tongshi* 紅學通史 (General history of redology) of 2005.¹⁷³ Here, the *Honglou meng*-campaign of 1954/55 and its effects on the field of studying the novel are contextualized within the political lineage of the Yan'an thought reform campaigns that served as the model for all subsequent campaigns carried out by the early P.R.C. government. In Chen's rendition, it is consequently Mao

¹⁷² Zhu Hong 朱洪. *Hu Shi yu Honglou meng* 胡適與紅樓夢 (Hu Shi and *Honglou meng*), (Beijing: Dangdai Zhongguo chubanshe, 2007).

¹⁷³ Chen Weizhao 陳維昭. *Hongxue tongshi* 紅學通史 (General history of redology, 2 vols.) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2005).

Zedong's interest in reading the novel a certain way that was to a great extent definitive of the road taken in *hongxue* in the 1950s, the input given by Li Xifan and Lan Ling merely representing a timely reinforcement of a prevalent trend that was then duly expounded on also by contemporary academics. Consequently, Chen's book is also – to my knowledge – the only one that directly addresses the problem of the generational difference: Chen maintains that the “vulgar sociological” (*yongsu shehuixue* 庸俗社會學) reading of *Honglou meng* was due, on the side of the younger generation, to a lack of knowledge and the political fervor induced by contemporary circumstance, while on the side of the older generation of scholars, it was due to their self-conscious process of “thought reform” in an ambience of constant criticism and self-criticism.¹⁷⁴ Chen's book is one of the very few to outspokenly view the history of early P.R.C. *hongxue* with a carefully critical eye and it is therefore a most useful resource for researchers of trends in modern Chinese literary historiography and criticism.

Memoirs

In its initial legs, this chapter revisits the main contributors to the *Honglou meng*-campaign itself, while introducing the most central texts that started and defined it. Accordingly, in an attempt to access the world of the campaign's protagonists, I have consulted the autobiographical writings by both Li Xifan and Lan Ling, which revealed quite a few differences in both of their retrospective historiographies of the affair.

Li Xifan's *Honglou meng yishu shijie* 紅樓夢藝術世界 (*The artistic world of Honglou meng*, Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1997) takes on a rather self-centered view of its author's rise to fame and subsequent place among the intellectual elite of China (at least until the late eighties), justifying his actions as necessary and correct within a grander scheme of breaking with the non-Communist past. Lan Ling's *Longjuanfeng* 龍捲風 (*Tornado*, Shanghai: Yuandong chubanshe, 1995), by contrast, reveals a certain bitterness on behalf of the author at not having achieved the same status in his lifetime. Consequently, Lan Ling's retrospective judgement of the campaign and his and Li Xifan's input in it appears less streamlined and to some extent more critical. Though at times these different renditions result in even more opaqueness when it comes to filtering the details from the cloud of judgment, both autobiographies

¹⁷⁴ (Chen Weizhao 2005, 280-285).

present a glimpse into the various modes of historiography still present in the minds of that generation to the day (in as far as its members are still alive).

2. The Problem of Narratives

Narratively speaking, the main problem with any attempt to write a history of a campaign such as the 1954 *Honglou meng*-Campaign is related to the fact that this was a national movement, carried out by legions of agents in different locations all over China. Each utterance, discussion and text was an event by itself so that any historian of the campaign faces the problem of how to select among this seemingly infinite number of occurrences the narratively most relevant ones, i.e., those that were decisive for the ways in which the campaign evolved over time. Another problem, which is closely related to the first one, has to do with the contents of the campaign and the most efficient way to present it. As the campaign was focused on the *Honglou meng*, it seems indispensable that this novel and the academic preoccupation with it before the 1950s both need to be included in any narrative that aspires to provide the whole context. Obviously, if we include too much data and context, the narrative runs the risk of being overburdened and thus too cumbersome to be followed, particularly by a Western readership. Narrative leanings toward brevity and conciseness, on the other hand, can generate an account that tends to eclipse most information and oversimplify the narration so that readers will not be able to sense, let alone penetrate, the fabric that the campaign was made of in the first place.

Equally difficult is the question of how to identify, or at least construct in a convincing manner, the individual threads that the campaign consisted of, i.e., how to untangle what becomes increasingly more entangled over time. In terms of its protagonists, to give one crucial example, the campaign had a rather complex structure: within it, we can differentiate (not always successfully since there were overlaps), between people working in academia, and agents with a semi- or non-academic background who were not active in academia, and yet had the power to change the mainstream discourse. Especially among academics, there were different sub-populations that we can try to group according to generations and/or specializations. All these human agents generated qualitatively different texts – the most notable yet by no means exhaustive distinction being the one made between academic and campaign texts –, which came to influence each other so that in the late 1950s they gradually became

mutually indistinguishable (a phenomenon that in Chinese secondary sources has been termed “standardization” *guifanhua* 規範化). Thus, the story of how *Dream of the Red Chamber* was rewritten/reread in the 1950s is not restricted to an academic setting, even though this is what appearances and the majority of participating protagonists seem to indicate. At the same time, the diametrically opposed version according to which this was a campaign in which politics directed and controlled academic “research” is also difficult to hold, at least in a convincing manner. Rather, what we have here, even though it is not always easy to classify the information accordingly, seems to be a story of mutual influence and assimilation. Academia became political, but cultural politics were then also considered “academic” (just as academics became politicians and politicians often had academic credentials).

Another narrative problem, arguably the most frustrating one for historians, is that a great bulk of the documentation is not accessible, specifically the red tape behind the scenes of the campaign. Without this data, the origins and evolution of this campaign tend to lack narrative consistency, thus looking more like an arbitrary chain of random events rather than a goal-oriented development. For someone without access to the archival materials on the decision-making process for the individual stages of this specific campaign, it is hard to understand how the criticism of a more or less obscure literary scholar could turn into a major campaign that then generated an even larger campaign against a public intellectual such as Hu Shi. In fact, it is the lack of access to this documentation that makes it difficult to prioritize the many data and events according to a valid hierarchy of importance. Mainly through the work of Michael Schoenhals, we know that this kind of documentation behind the scenes was (and still is, at the beginning of the 21st century) immensely large. Nothing was left to chance, especially not the terminology that was to be used in public communication, of which campaigns were the most impactful manifestations. What was deemed to be politically correct – or, to use CCP terminology, “scientific” (*kexue* 科學) –, was discussed in the higher echelons of power, and the concrete results of these discussions were divulged on a national scale first via party circulars and then through the state-controlled media.¹⁷⁵ Only by accessing this vast political and administrative documentation is it possible to write an integral and transparent, rather than a fragmented and hermeneutic, history of this and other campaigns that took place in the early P.R.C.

¹⁷⁵ See (Schoenhals 1992), esp. Chapter 2 “Formalized Language as a Form of Power”.

Due to the various narrative obstacles mentioned above, the present chapter does not aspire to provide a full-scale account of the *Honglou meng*-Campaign, trying to create coherence by skipping the multiple lacunae intrinsic to the primary sources that are available to us. Rather, its main interest consists in providing readers with a sense of the campaign's texture. Both on an eclectic and pointillistic basis, this chapter attempts to make visible some of the basic features of this particular texture. The section "Campaigns", besides providing a brief chronology of the events, attempts to render palpable the *political malleability* of the *Honglou meng*-Campaign in the sense that its direction and final goal were hard to define, even for those most directly involved. Rather, it was an unstable movement always on the brink of semantic vagueness due to the control of information along the Party hierarchy so that ultimately it could shapeshift into a new campaign with a much wider focus. While supplying readers with background information related to the main persons involved in the *Honglou meng*-Campaign, the section "Protagonists" attempts to highlight the *generational tension* in force during the discussions of *Dream of the Red Chamber*. The section "Texts" is focused on showing the *massiveness* of this campaign in terms of its production. As we will see, within a relatively short period of time tons of campaign literature were generated all over China. The section "A Poisoned Mind", finally, attempts to highlight the individual perspective in this mass campaign by looking at two articles that Lu Kanru published during this period. By narratively illustrating the campaign's political, generational, and reproductive forces and how they were channeled through a single individual, this chapter tries to make tangible the *Hongloumeng*-Campaign's transformative impact on the field of literary studies.

3. Campaigns

The national campaign against the renowned literary scholar Yu Pingbo 俞平伯 (1900-1990) and his reading of *Honglou meng* originated on September 1, 1954, at Shandong University. On that day, Shanda's most famous academic journal, *Wenshizhe* 文史哲 (Literature, History, Philosophy), published an article by two recent Shanda graduates, Li Xifan 李希凡 (*1927) and Lan Ling 藍翎 (1931-2005), criticizing one of Yu Pingbo's essays on *Honglou meng* which had appeared in the periodical *Xin Jianshe* 新建設 (New Construction) on March 3 of the same year. Entitled "Guanyu 'Honglou meng jianlun' ji

qita” 關於《紅樓夢簡論》及其他 (On “Short Dissertation on Dream of the Red Chamber” Et Cetera), Li and Lan’s piece began as follows:

Dream of the Red Chamber is a classical realist masterpiece, which for the past two hundred years has enjoyed wide circulation and exerted great influence in China. Last year, Writer’s Publishers [Zuojia chubanshe] re-edited and published this work, which was a very important task. To make China’s outstanding literary heritage “truly available to the people as a whole”, to turn it into [a part of] the entire people’s spiritual wealth really is one of the glorious tasks of the people’s publishing organs. At the same time, for the literary and art workers there is another level of significance beyond the above mentioned, and that is, when the artistic accomplishments of China’s classical realist literature had developed to the time of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, it reached yet a new peak. Thus, to study and inherit the *Dream’s* accomplishments in terms of artistic creation is also vastly significant in order to raise our [present] level of literary and artistic creation.¹⁷⁶

Already in their very first passage, Li and Lan established the central point in the Communist revaluation of the literary heritage, namely to render works of the past useful for present-day literary creation. In doing so, they perfectly complied with Mao Zedong’s line regarding the cultural heritage as laid out in his “On New Democracy” and later elaborated on in the *Yan’an Talks*. It was therefore perhaps unsurprising that Li and Lan’s critique would come to be supported by some of the highest-ranking members of the P.R.C. government in the ensuing weeks and months, and that it would be cited as the official starting point of the campaign against Yu Pingbo in related historiographies until the present.

Initially, however, the two young men had encountered some difficulties in trying to place their article in a more central periodical, namely *Wenyibao* 文藝報 (Literary Gazette), the official organ of the National Federation of Literary and Art Circles (Wenlian 文聯) and the Chinese Writers’ Union (Zhongguo zuojia xiehui 中國作家協會). After being rejected – or rather ignored – by *Wenyibao’s* editors already in April, 1954, they sent their critique directly to Ge Maochun 葛懋春 (1926-1996), an editor and personal friend of Li Xifan’s at *Wenshizhe*. Its initial publication in September quickly drew the attention of Mao Zedong, a subscriber to *Wenshizhe*, who contacted Deng Tuo 鄧拓 (1912-1966), then editor-in-chief of *Renmin ribao*, in mid-September with the

¹⁷⁶ (Li and Lan 1954a, 20).

request to have it republished there. In the end, however, because of the internal opposition of several cultural politicians, including Zhou Yang 周揚 (1908-1989), Lin Mohan 林默涵 (1913-2008), Shao Quanlin 邵荃麟 (1906-1971) and even the renowned *Hongloulou*-expert He Qifang 何其芳 (1912-1977), who thought the Party organ was not the right place for cultural debate, “Guanyu ‘Honglou meng jianlun’ ji qita” was never published in *Renmin ribao*.¹⁷⁷ Instead, it finally reappeared in *Wenyibao*, at the time headed by Feng Xuefeng 馮雪峰 (1903-1976), on September 30, 1954, with an editor’s note explaining its provenance and ascribing possible inaccuracies to the youth and inexperience of its authors.

Soon afterwards, on October 10, Li and Lan were able to publish a second critique of Yu Pingbo’s *hongxue*, this time in the country’s second-largest paper, *Guangming ribao* 光明日報 (Guangming Daily), specifically in its cultural supplement *Wenxue yichan* 文學遺產 (Literary Heritage), whose editor-in-chief then was Chen Xianghe 陳翔鶴 (1901-1969), a writer, literary historian, and a long-time member of the CCP. In their second article, entitled “Ping ‘Honglou meng yanjiu’” 評《紅樓夢研究》 (Criticism of “Study on Dream of the Red Chamber”), Li and Lan focused on the book *Honglou meng yanjiu* 紅樓夢研究 (Study on Dream of the Red Chamber) by Yu Pingbo. This was a revamped version of an earlier work from 1923 (originally entitled *Honglou meng bian* 紅樓夢辨, Discussing Dream of the Red Chamber) which had appeared in Shanghai with Tangdi Publisher’s (Tangdi chubanshe 棠棣出版社) in 1952. It was also in this second essay that for the first time the two authors linked Yu Pingbo’s research methods to Hu Shi’s influence, labeling them the “Xin suoyin pai” 新索隱派 (New Hidden Meaning School) of modern redology.

On October 16, Mao Zedong held a speech before members of the Politburo of the CCP Central Committee (CCPCC), which was, however, only made public in RMRB in May, 1967. Entitled “Guanyu Honglou meng wenti de xin” 關於紅樓夢問題的信 (Letter on the Issue of Dream of the Red Chamber), the text was an open expression of Mao’s support of Li and Lan. It was also here that Mao for the first time officially emphasized the

¹⁷⁷ Sun Yuming 孫玉明. *Hongxue: 1954 紅學:1954 (Redology: 1954)* (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2003), 39-45. See also Yuan Ying 袁鷹. *Fengyun ceji: wo zai Renmin ribao fukan de suiyue* 風雲側記:我在人民日報副刊的歲月 (Sidelights on the Wind and Clouds: My times at the People’s Daily supplement) (Beijing: Zhongguo dang’an chubanshe, 2006), 84.

importance of carrying out criticisms against Yu Pingbo and his mentor Hu Shi. At the same time, he criticized the reluctance on the part of the editors of *Wenyibao* and *Renmin ribao* to publish Li and Lan's initial critique. He reasoned as follows:

It appears as if this fight against the Hu Shi clique's bourgeois idealism, which in the field of classical literature has been poisoning our youth for more than thirty years, is perhaps ready to begin. The matter was brought up by two "nobodies", while the "somebodies" [i.e., the *Wenyibao* and *Renmin ribao* editors] frequently failed to pay attention and even hindered them. In an idealist respect, they [i.e., the "somebodies"] have been preaching a united front with the bourgeois writers, and have reconciled to become the prisoners of the bourgeoisie. This is nearly the same situation as when the films *The Secret History of the Qing* and *The Life of Wu Xun* were shown.¹⁷⁸

Due to the fact that this letter was, however, only published almost thirteen years past the event, the non-upper echelon CCP members among the protagonists of the literary field in the 50s had to rely largely on hearsay, on third party reports of the speech, and on incomplete versions to understand Mao's level of involvement in the campaign, as well as the actually intended target, Hu Shi.¹⁷⁹ Indeed, as time went by and meetings held, speeches delivered, and articles written became ever more officially part of a large-scale campaign, Yu Pingbo gradually disappeared from the limelight, while Hu Shi was placed at its very center.

As it appears, the real intent of the campaign and Mao's support of it was initially revealed only to the highest-ranking bodies in charge of policy within the relevant organizations and institutions. Thus, only two days following Mao's speech, on October 18, the CCP group of the Chinese Writers' Union met to talk about the speech, ordering it to be studied internally. Subsequently, on October 20, the classical literature research group (gudian wenxue yanjiuzu 古典文學研究組) of the Chinese Writers' Union

¹⁷⁸ (Mao Zedong 1967). *The Secret History of the Qing* (Qinggong mishi 清宮秘史) was a Hong Kong film released in 1948 in which the issue of reform versus revolution was brought up, as it turned out mainly in favor of reform, which made Mao Zedong launch a short-lived campaign against it in 1950. *The Life of Wu Xun* (Wu Xun zhuan 武訓傳), a PRC film released in 1950, told the story of a nineteenth-century beggar-turned-landlord who used his financial resources to establish schools. The film became the target of a 1951 CCP campaign which claimed that that Wu Xun was a negative symbol because of his urge to change China through education rather than revolution.

¹⁷⁹ As Sun Yuming relates, in the beginning of the campaign participating intellectuals did not understand that Mao Zedong ultimately wished to target Hu Shi, and were largely focused on Yu Pingbo in their criticisms (Sun Yuming 2003, 75). Yuan Ying 袁鷹 (*1924), who at the time worked at *Renmin ribao*, corroborated this impression in a personal interview conducted together with Yvonne Schulz Zinda (Universität Hamburg, Germany) and Wang Weijiang (Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, P.R.C.) in June, 2008.

convened and defined the final goal of the campaign as the “elimination of Hu Shi thought” from classical literature studies in the P.R.C.¹⁸⁰

Further down the political hierarchy, the reasons for and intended target of the campaign were made less clear. In mid-October, for example, Yuan Ying 袁鷹 (a.k.a. Tian Zhongluo 田鍾洛, b. 1924), then a young journalist at *Renmin ribao*, was entrusted with the task of writing the editorial that was to officially start the campaign against Yu Pingbo on a national level. In his own recollection, the *Renmin ribao* offices were brimming with rumors surrounding the reasons for such a campaign, and although there was talk about Mao Zedong’s personal involvement and a “letter” he had written to a select audience of high-ranking Party cadres, no one in Yuan’s immediate reach seemed to have witnessed or read it. Yuan Ying therefore had to trust editor-in-chief Deng Tuo’s 鄧拓 (1912-1966) word that the matter was of utmost importance and was strongly endorsed by Mao Zedong when he composed the text that was published on October 23 in *Renmin ribao* entitled “Yinggai zhongshi dui Honglou meng yanjiu zhong cuowu guandian de pipan” 應該重視對紅樓夢研究中錯誤觀點的批判 (We must take the criticisms of the mistaken views in research on Dream of the Red Chamber seriously). In his article, which he had to write under great time pressure and with little knowledge of *Honglou meng* and its literary criticism, Yuan Ying focused mainly on Yu Pingbo, referring to Hu Shi only in passing.¹⁸¹

From late October to early December, 1954, the focus of the *Honglou meng*- or Anti-Yu Pingbo-Campaign was therefore gradually changed from the top down. Following an initial *Honglou meng*-conference convened by the Chinese Writers’ Union on October 24,¹⁸² the director of the propaganda department of the CCPCC, Lu Dingyi 陸定一 (1906-1996), sent a report to Mao Zedong on October 27, in which the widened

¹⁸⁰ Dai Zhixian 戴知賢. *Wentan san gong’an* 文壇三公案 (Three cases in literary circles) (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1990), 49.

¹⁸¹ (Yuan Ying 2006, 87 f.). Yuan admitted in his memoirs as well as in the personal interview of June, 2008, that he had not really heard about Li Xifan and Lan Ling’s essays, nor read anything by Yu Pingbo before Deng Tuo approached him about the editorial. Although the final text is nowadays commonly cited as the editorial starting the campaign, the story of its coming into being involved rather more improvisation on behalf of its author, as well as on corrections and editing by some of the more senior *Renmin ribao* editors than one would suspect. According to Dai Zhixian, the text of Mao Zedong’s speech was, however, immediately disseminated among the Party groups of all institutions and editorial boards that had to do with the literary arts (Dai Zhixian 1990, 49). Thus, although Yuan Ying may not have known about it directly, his direct superiors who were in the Party group certainly did.

¹⁸² For a selection of the speeches held at this meeting, see *Guangming ribao*, November 14, 1954. The same selection was also translated to English in *Current Background*, 315 (1955).

scope and purpose of the campaign were already clearly laid out.¹⁸³ The report suggested, among other things, that the intellectuals be incorporated (rather than merely targeted) into the scheme of cultural redefinition, it reaffirmed that Hu Shi be established as the ultimate nemesis, and that further areas of the humanities be included into the criticisms.¹⁸⁴ On November 7, an interview in *Guangming ribao* with Guo Moruo, then not only head of the *Wenlian* but also director of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, publicly confirmed this trend to widen the scope of the campaign.

In practice, the shift of the campaign's focus was mainly carried out via eight enlarged meetings convened by the *Wenlian* and the Writers' Union between October 31 and December 8, 1954. On the final day of these sessions, Guo Moruo gave a talk entitled "San dian jianyi" 三點建議 (Three proposals), which signaled that the campaign had finally completed its shift and had now become the "Anti-Hu Shi-Campaign".¹⁸⁵ It carried the weight of a meeting between Mao Zedong and Zhou Yang of December 2, at which the main points of criticism against Hu Shi had already been determined.¹⁸⁶ It was also at this meeting that a committee headed by Guo Moruo, Zhou Yang and Mao Dun was formed, which was to take charge of organizing the bulk of assemblies criticizing Hu Shi in the months that ensued.¹⁸⁷

The Anti-Hu Shi-Campaign took place between late December 1954 and March 1955. In its course, 21 large-scale conferences dedicated to criticizing Hu Shi were

¹⁸³ The report was entitled „Guanyu zhankai Honglou meng yanjiu wenti de pipan“ 關於展開紅樓夢研究問題的批判 (On the launching of criticisms of the problems in Dream of the Red Chamber research), and was passed on to a small group of select cadres after Mao Zedong had added his comments (Sun Yuming 2003, 82).

¹⁸⁴ (Sun Yuming 2003, 82).

¹⁸⁵ His talk was published one day later, on December 9, in *Renmin ribao*. A few months following the initial publication, it was incorporated as the "policy essay" into an eight-volume collection of anti-Hu Shi criticisms. Cf. *Hu Shi sixiang pipan* 胡適思想批判 (Criticisms of Hu Shi's Thought; hereafter: HSSP) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1955).

¹⁸⁶ Specifically, the targets of anti-Hu Shi-criticism were to be the following nine: 1) Hu Shi's philosophical thought, 2) Hu Shi's political thought, 3) Hu Shi's historical views, 4) Hu Shi's literary thought, 5) Hu Shi's views on the history of Chinese philosophy, 6) Hu Shi's views on the history of Chinese literature, 7) a new analysis of the position and function of historical and classical literary studies, 8) the popular nature and artistic accomplishments of *Honglou meng*, 9) criticism of all previous research on *Honglou meng* (Dai Zhixian 1990, 73 f.).

¹⁸⁷ (Sun Yuming 2003, 85). The other members included philosopher Pan Zinian 潘梓年 (1893-1972), Deng Tuo, philosopher and historian Hu Sheng 胡繩 (1918-2000), Lao She, Shao Quanlin, archaeologist Yin Da 尹达 (1906-1983) and nine others. The participants of these assemblies were designated to be writers, historians, university professors, literary and art workers, and editors of academic journals, and apparently around 100 people within these fields were listed by name (Dai Zhixian 1990, 74).

arranged across China.¹⁸⁸ Its end was marked by the publication of an eight-volume collection of critical essays attacking the influence of “Hu Shi thought” (Hu Shi sixiang 胡適思想) in all areas of intellectual life, but specifically in the three core humanities philosophy, history and literature.¹⁸⁹

Selecting Hu Shi as a negative role model in CCP cultural policy was not a new phenomenon in 1954.¹⁹⁰ Already in October 1953, in his closing speech to the Second Congress of Literary and Art Workers (Zhongguo wenxue gongzuozhe di er ci daibiao dahui 中國文學工作者第二次代表大會), Shao Quanlin 邵荃麟 (1906-1971) had linked Hu Shi with the negative of two trends that had developed in literature following the May Fourth Movement. According to Shao, a first, positive trend consisted of literature that developed under CCP guidelines and was influenced by progressive literature all over the world. A second, negative trend, however, had formed under the auspices of individuals like Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 (1893-1988) and Hu Shi, and was characterized by “anti-realism” (fan xianshizhuyi 反現實主義), “decadence” (tuifeizhuyi 頹廢主義), “aestheticism” (weimeizhuyi 唯美主義) and “reformism” (gailiangzhuyi 改良主義).¹⁹¹

Earlier still, during the thought reform movement underway in 1951, which merged into the Three Anti- and Five-Anti-Campaigns of 1952, Hu Shi had also represented a kind of figurehead of the “bourgeois ideology” (zichanjieji sixiang 資產階級思想) one sought to eliminate.¹⁹² The reasons behind the singling out of Hu Shi in the

¹⁸⁸ (Sun Yuming 2003, 85) and (Dai Zhixian 1990, 74).

¹⁸⁹ (HSSP 1955).

¹⁹⁰ Neither was it a new phenomenon before the 1950s. In fact, Chinese Communist criticism of Hu Shi had already begun in the 1920s, gradually turning into a competitive view that clearly favored Guo Moruo over Hu Shi by the 1930s. Cf. Yvonne Schulz Zinda. “Anti-Hu Shi-Campaign 1954/55: Setting New Standards for the Humanities in the P.R.C.” (unpublished manuscript, 2008), 5. See also Chan Lien. “Chinese Communism Versus Pragmatism: The Criticism of Hu Shih's Philosophy, 1950-1958” In: *The Journal of Asian Studies* 27.3 (1968), 551-570: 551 fn.3. Of all the Marxist attacks he lists as dating from the 1930s, Chan Lien has singled out Chen Duxiu's as somewhat representative of pre-1949 criticism of Hu Shi. The exchanges of opinion between Chen and Hu are reprinted in *Hu Shi wencun* 胡適文存 (Collected Works of Hu Shi), vol. III, 40-51 (Ibid., 552).

¹⁹¹ Shao Quanlin. “Yanzhe shehuizhuyi xianshizhuyi de fangxiang qianjin 沿著社會主義現實主義的方向前進” (Progress along the lines of socialist realism). In: *Renmin wenxue* 11 (1953), 53-63: 56. See also (Bichler 1999, 102 ff.).

¹⁹² See for example: You Guo'en 游國恩. “Wo zai jiefang qian zou de shi zheyang yi tiao lu 我在解放前走的是這樣一條路” (The road I took before the liberation was of this kind) In: *Renmin ribao* (December 11, 1951); or Lu Kanru. “Jiajin gaizao sixiang, yingjie xin de zhandou renwu 加緊思想改造，迎接新的戰鬥任務” (Intensify thought reform, welcome the new combat task). In: *Renmin ribao* (February 4, 1952[a]). The Three-Anti-Campaign (san-fan yundong 三反運動) was officially directed against “corruption”, “waste”, and “bureaucratism”, while the Five-Anti-Campaign (wufan yundong 五反運動) targeted five of the “crimes” linked to urban entrepreneurs and industrialists: “bribery”, “tax evasion”, “fraud”, “theft of state

50s were manifold, but in general, Western secondary scholarship agrees that the main point was his lasting influence on early P.R.C. intellectuals, which inconveniently clashed with his pro-American tendencies and the fact that he had sided with Chiang Kai-shek and the GMD during the years of civil war prior to 1949.¹⁹³ If the CCP was to consolidate its hold over the nation's academics and intellectuals, politically disreputable role models like Hu Shi would therefore have to be replaced by other, more CCP-inclined individuals.

Hu Shi, who had left mainland China for good in late 1948, was an easy target in early P.R.C. cultural campaigns, as he was not actually around to defend himself, let alone to “admit” to his “errors”. In 1950, his son, Hu Sidu 胡思杜 (1921-1957) publicly criticized his father as a “loyal official of the reactionary class” (fandong jieji de zhongchen 反動階級的忠臣) and an “enemy of the people” (renmin de diren 人民的敵人) in the left-wing, Hong Kong based *Dagong bao* 大公報 (September 22).¹⁹⁴ Though Hu Shi initially reacted with silence in public, his diary of that time shows a certain preoccupation with the event. Hardly commenting on the matter in his own writing, he successively inserted several related newspaper clippings in both English and Chinese. When friends sent him a copy of the published attack, he also stuck it into his diary, adding the following words: “One can see that this text was published under orders.”¹⁹⁵ In October 1950, Hu Shi published a lengthy essay in English entitled “China in Stalin's

assets”, and “leakage of economic state secrets”. Cf. Theodore Hsi-en Chen. “The Thought Reform of Intellectuals.” In: *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 321 (1959), 82-89: 84.

¹⁹³ See for example: (Chan Lien 1968); (Pepper 1996, 171 f.); (T. H.-e. Chen 1960, 43-45); Jerome B. Grieder. “The Communist Critique of Hung lou meng.” In: *Papers on China* 1956, 142-168: 160; Helmolt Vittinghoff. “Der Gelehrte als Staatsfeind: Die Anti-Hu-Shi-Kampagne in der Aufbauphase der VR China”. In: Karl-Heinz Pohl, Gudrun Wacker, Liu Huiru (eds.). *Chinesische Intellektuelle im 20. Jahrhundert: Zwischen Tradition und Moderne* (Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde, 1993), 333-350: 339 f.

¹⁹⁴ Hu Sidu at the time was a student at one of the initially six new cadre schools (one in each of the early administrative regions of the early P.R.C.), North China People's Revolutionary University (Huabei Renmin Geming Daxue 華北人民革命大學), located in Beijing and run by the regional CCP Military Control Commission (junzheng weiyuanhui 軍政委員會). His open attack of Hu Shi had, in fact, not been the first since the CCP's rise to power. On May 11, 1949, historian and president of the then still extant Furen University (a Catholic institution) in Beijing, Chen Yuan 陳垣 (1880-1971), had already published an open letter attacking Hu in *Renmin ribao*. In this case, because of his earlier collaboration with Hu and his affiliation with a Western-run academic institution, the “pressured” origin of Chen's attack appears as plausible as in Hu Sidu's case. For a summary of Chen's essay and Hu Shi's response, cf. (Sun Yuming 2003, 260 f.).

¹⁹⁵ Cao Boyan 曹伯言 (comp.). *Hu Shi riji, 1950-1962* 胡適日記, 1950-1962 (Hu Shi diary, 1950-1962) (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), 63. Chan Lien notes that the article is reproduced *in toto* in Edward Hunter's *Brainwashing in Communist China* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1951), Appendix I, 331-335 (Chan Lien 1968, 552 fn. 6). It is also reproduced in Hu Shi's diary, cf. (Cao 2001, 63-68). A partial English translation is also included in (T. H.-e. Chen 1960, 45). To Sun Yuming, Hu Sidu's public break with his father was a clear precursor to later such forced breaks between family members and loved ones during the Cultural Revolution (Sun Yuming 2003, 262).

Grand Strategy”, which was taken as a serious attack against both the Soviet Union and the CCP in the P.R.C.¹⁹⁶ By that point, as Sun Yuming has noted, a large-scale movement against “Hu Shi-thought” had become inevitable in the P.R.C.¹⁹⁷ It would, however, take another four years for that movement to take place and reach the scale originally envisioned by the CCP leadership.

The criticisms that were published in the wake of the *Honglou meng*- and Anti-Hu Shi-Campaigns in 1954/55 did indeed reflect that larger scope, turning from the targeting of an individual into a cultural thought reform campaign within a matter of months. Between September, 1954, and June, 1955, articles both criticizing Yu Pingbo and Hu Shi’s approach to *Honglou meng*, and offering the new, Marxist-Leninist perspective on the novel appeared in journals in every Chinese province, as well as the larger national periodicals and newspapers.

Acting as a reversed role model, Hu Shi’s literary research came to represent nearly everything Chinese Marxist-Leninist criticism would not stand for. In terms of content, his endorsement of just a small part of the literary heritage written in the vernacular (baihua 白話) was seen as an act of national betrayal. In terms of rhetoric, his open identification with American pragmatism as represented by his teacher John Dewey (1859-1952) led to his being labeled a “bourgeois idealist” (zichanjieji weixinzhuyizhe 資產階級唯心主義者), a “running dog of American imperialism” (Meidiguo zhuyi de zougou 美帝國主義的走狗), and a “reformist” (gailiangzhuyizhe 改良主義者) rather than a revolutionary. Though more generally ideological in its nature, the Anti-Hu Shi-Campaign endorsed a rethinking of academic genres and categories according to principles that had rarely been defined, let alone exemplified prior to 1954.

4. Protagonists

On March 15, 1954, an article by Wang Peizhang, Yu Pingbo’s research assistant, was published in the *Guangming ribao*. In it, Wang, articulating Yu’s opinion, criticized Zuoja chubanshe’s 作家出版社 (Writers’ Publishers) recently published new three-volume edition of *Honglou meng*. It was this article and Zuoja chubanshe’s immediate and very

¹⁹⁶ Available in Chinese from the Hu Shi Memorial Publishing House (Hu Shi jinianguan 胡適紀念館), Taipei/R.o.C., 1967. The English original was published by the Council on Foreign Relations in 1950.

¹⁹⁷ (Sun Yuming 2003, 260 f.).

apologetic response to Wang Peizhang's criticisms that prompted Li Xifan and Lan Ling to write their first criticism of Yu Pingbo, which eventually ignited the *Honglou meng*-Campaign.¹⁹⁸ At the time, Yu Pingbo was already an established *hongxue jia*, who was leading a fairly quiet and politically inconspicuous life as a researcher at the academically prestigious Literature Research Institute in Beijing. By contrast, the belligerent Li Xifan and Lan Ling were recent graduates in the field of literary studies with an educational background that linked them via their affiliation with East China University to the revolutionary cadre school legacy of the CCP Yan'an days. In this section, we will take a closer look at these three protagonists and the intellectual antagonisms that fueled the dynamics of the *Honglou meng*-Campaign.

Yu Pingbo

Yu Pingbo, the initial target of the campaigners, was in many ways a suitable object of criticism in the eyes of his Communist contemporaries, as his biography contained various elements that lent themselves readily to political attacks.¹⁹⁹ Stemming from a prominent Zhejiang family of literati (his great-grandfather was the Qing-dynasty scholar Yu Yue 俞樾), Yu Pingbo's upbringing had implied an early and thoroughly classical literary education, which he received at various stages of his childhood either

¹⁹⁸ (Sun Yuming 2003, 58).

¹⁹⁹ A brief English biography spanning the years from Yu's birth up to the late 1950s is to be found in BDRC IV, 67-70. This is, however, to be treated with some caution, as crosschecking that against Chinese language sources revealed several inaccuracies and omissions. For a more detailed overview, which however also only leads up to some years before his death, one should consult Sun Yurong 孫玉蓉. *Yu Pingbo yanjiu ziliao* 俞平伯研究資料 (Research materials on Yu Pingbo) (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1986). This compilation contains some useful chronological tables on both his life and works, as well as a list of the most important essays attacking him during the 1954 campaign. This too, though, lacks detailed information on the 1954 case, as well as what exactly happened to Yu during the Cultural Revolution. The same author, however, also compiled an extremely detailed *Yu Pingbo nianpu* 俞平伯年譜 (Yu Pingbo chronicle) (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 2001), which makes up for all the earlier lacunae, and appears to be the most extensive reference work so far published on Yu. Mentioned in the section on sources of the present chapter, the full biography written by Yu's grandson Wei Nai 韋奈 does not contain either an index or footnotes, and relies as much on personal memories as on factual data, thus blurring the boundaries of reliability. Sun Yuming's aforementioned and often cited *Hongxue: 1954*, an extremely useful work for studying the 1954 case, also contains some biographical information on Yu, but as biographies are not its focal point, it is not complete in this respect. Yu Pingbo's son Yu Runmin 俞潤民 and daughter-in-law Chen Xu 陳煦 co-authored a family history, *Deqing Yu shi* 德清俞氏 (The Deqing Yu's) (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 1999), which revolves around three eminent men from four generations of the Yu family: Yu Pingbo's great-grandfather Yu Yue 俞樾 (1821-1907), his father Yu Biyun 俞陛雲 (1886-1950), and Yu Pingbo himself. Though informative in terms of the family and their origins, the section on Yu Pingbo contains hardly any information on the 1950s, and none at all on the 1954 case. The following sketch of Yu Pingbo's background draws on all of the above sources.

from his parents or a private tutor, and from 1915 at a local middle school.²⁰⁰ Moving from his birthplace Suzhou to Beijing in 1916, he pursued his interest in classical literature under professor Huang Kan 黃侃 (1886-1935)²⁰¹ at Peking University, where he focused his studies mainly on the Song poet Zhou Bangyan 周邦彥 (1056-1121) and his *Qingzhen ci* 清真詞 (Qingzhen's ci poetry).²⁰²

In 1917, Yu married his cousin, Xu Baoxun 許寶馴 (1897-1982), with whom he was to have two daughters and one son. Around this time, in the wake of the New Literature Movement, Yu became interested in the new form of poetry (xinshi 新詩) written in the vernacular (baihua 白話), and began composing both verse and prose in this style.²⁰³ During the May Fourth Movement, he was active in the *Xin Chao she* 新潮社 (New Wave Society), a student group that also included Zhu Ziqing 朱自清 (1898-1948), Feng Youlan (1895-1990), Fu Sinian 傅斯年 (1896-1950) and Ye Shengtao 葉聖陶 (1894-1988) among its members. Neither of his short stints to foreign countries, to England in 1920 and the United States in 1922 respectively, lasted longer than a few months and they were to remain Yu's only attempts at spending time studying outside of his native country.

The first of the two however, despite its brevity, marked Yu's first serious encounter with *Honglou meng*. In his own words (in his preface to *Honglou meng bian*),

²⁰⁰ (Sun Yurong 1986, 3). Yu Yue, who had attained the highest (jinshi 進士) degree at the metropolitan round of the civil service examinations and became a member of the Hanlin Academy at the early age of 29, is perhaps best known for his two works on the Confucian classics and the "Philosophers", *Qunjing pingyi* 群經評議 (Appraisal of the Classics, 35 juan, 1867) and *Zhuzi pingyi* 諸子評議 (Appraisal of the Philosophers, 35 juan, 1870) (ECCP II, 944 f.), (Yu and Chen 1999, 29-69). As a child, Yu Pingbo lived for some years with his great-grandfather in Suzhou, and it was apparently also Yu Yue who taught him to write his very first characters.

²⁰¹ Huang Kan, whose curriculum of classical studies has been highlighted in the first chapter of the present thesis, was a native of Hubei province, was a classical philologist and poet best known for his studies on Liu Xie's *Wenxin diaolong* and Gu Yanwu's 顧炎武 (1613-1682) *Rizhilu* 日知錄 (Record of Daily Knowing, 1695). He left Peking University during the May Fourth Movement in 1919 to go south, eventually settling in Nanjing to teach at Central University (Zhongyang Daxue 中央大學). A critic of Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1897-1942), and a follower of Liu Shiwei 劉師培 (1884-1919), Huang's resignation at Peking University was a gesture of protest against the leadership of the former two at that institution (BDRC II, 197 f.).

²⁰² In 1948, he published a commentary on selected poetry by Zhou Bangyan entitled *Qingzhen ci shi* 清真詞釋 (Explanation of the Qingzhen ci) in three volumes (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian). "Qingzhen", it should be pointed here, was Zhou Bangyan's *hao* 號.

²⁰³ As has been noted elsewhere, Yu's writing at the time was partly in classical *wenyan*, partly already in vernacular *baihua*, and partly in "that strange mixture of the two which is particularly characteristic of his style" (BDRC IV, 69).

he took the novel with him to read aboard the ship to England, and it was during this trip that talks with his friend and shipmate Fu Sinian initially sparked his interest:

In the past, not only did I not have any interest in studying *Dream of the Red Chamber*, but when I read it for the first time considering it a light read at the age of twelve or thirteen, I didn't even think it that good. At that time, the books that I considered worthwhile were *Journey to the West*, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *Quell the Bandits*,²⁰⁴ and the likes, not *Dream of the Red Chamber*. (...) It was not until later, during my time in Beijing, after I had graduated from Peking University that I developed a minor appreciation for it. In 1920, while on the ship to Europe in the company of Mengzhen [i.e., Fu Sinian], we began to have lively discussions about *Dream of the Red Chamber* and to read it closely. This book eventually became our daily sailing companion. Mengzhen often criticized it from a literary angle, at times offering intriguing opinions. Thereupon I succeeded in understanding the meaning and value of this book on a deeper level. Nevertheless, I still had no interest in studying it systematically.²⁰⁵

After his return from London, Yu Pingbo taught at a teacher's college in Suzhou and continued to publish poetry and studies on the new vernacular style of writing. In 1921, he was invited by Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸 (1898-1958) to join the newly established *Wenxue yanjiu hui* 文學研究會 (Literature Research Association), and from then on began to seriously engage in *hongxue*, following Hu Shi's call to *zhengli guogu* 整理國故 (reorganize the cultural heritage). It was also in 1921 that Yu exchanged his famous letters on *Honglou meng* with his friend Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893-1980), which were to influence the composition of *Honglou meng bian* 紅樓夢辨 (Analyzing *Dream of the Red Chamber*) of 1923.²⁰⁶

Yu Pingbo's life in the 1920s was not unlike the one that Lu Kanru, Yu's junior by three years, was leading at that particular time. It was characterized by much moving around, publishing activity, and teaching at various institutions, among which were

²⁰⁴ This is a sequel to *Shuihu zhuan* by one Yu Wanchun 俞万春 (1749-1849), whose peculiarity lies in the treatment of the protagonist Song Jiang 宋江 and his group of bandits as the *villains* of the story (Nienhauser 1986, 715). Taking into account that the character of Song Jiang was emphatically glorified by the Communist Party from the start of the P.R.C. onwards until 1975, Yu's choice of this particular book as one he considered "worthy" from an early age may well have contributed to his ideological downfall.

²⁰⁵ Preface to *Honglou meng bian* (1923), as quoted in (Sun Yuming 2003, 5).

²⁰⁶ They are included in a volume edited by Sun Yurong 孫玉蓉. *Yu Pingbo shuxin ji* 俞平伯書信集 (Collected letters of Yu Pingbo) (Zhengzhou: Henan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1991). A decade earlier, they were also published in an edition of the journal *Honglou meng xuekan*: Yu Pingbo. "Yu Pingbo he Gu Jiegang taolun 'Honglou meng' de tongxin 俞平伯和顧頡剛討論《紅樓夢》的通信" (Yu Pingbo and Gu Jiegang's exchange of letters on "Dream of the Red Chamber"). In: *Honglou meng xuekan* 3 (1981), 180-238.

Shanghai University, Yenching University, Peking University, and Qinghua University. He continued to write both poetry and prose until 1936, when his final two essay collections, *Guhai mengyu* 古槐夢遇 (Dream encounter by the pagoda tree) and *Yanjiao ji* 燕郊集 (Collection from the outskirts of Yan), were published. After that, his focus rested solely on academic writing, specifically literary history and criticism.

A full-time lecturer at Qinghua University since 1931, he was unwilling to follow that institution into exile to Yunnan during the Second Sino-Japanese War, and instead remained in Beijing at his parents' home where he led an inconspicuous life, teaching at China University (Zhongguo Daxue 中國大學), a privately run school in Xidan 西單 district, tutoring students at his home, and publishing little.²⁰⁷ After the war ended in 1945, he became a full professor at Peking University, a position he only quit in 1952 to become a full-time researcher at that university's newly founded Literature Research Institute, which was later incorporated into the Chinese Academy of Sciences. From that time, Yu dedicated himself completely to *Honglou meng*-studies, specifically a commentated edition of the first eighty chapters, which was published in 1959 with Renmin chubanshe.

Though otherwise not known to be particularly politically active, Yu joined the *Jiusan xueshe* 九三學社 (September Third Society)²⁰⁸ in late 1945 upon a personal invitation from its president at the time, Xu Deheng 許德珩 (1890-1990). He became an active member of the Society, especially in the years preceding 1949, urging his students at the university to participate in rebuilding post-war China and to protest the ongoing civil war.²⁰⁹

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, when in December, 1953, Zuoji chubanshe brought out their new three-volume edition of *Honglou meng*, Yu Pingbo and his assistant at the Literature Research Institute, Wang Peizhang 王佩璋, were the first

²⁰⁷207 (Yu and Chen 1999, 191).

²⁰⁸ The September Third Society is one of currently eight formally recognized, so-called "democratic" parties in the P.R.C. It was officially founded on May 4, 1946, though it had been active since before the end of the war when several intellectuals from both the humanities and the sciences convened a Democratic Science Forum (minzhu kexue zuotanhui 民主科學座談會) in Chongqing. Initially, most members consisted of academics and intellectuals, which is why other prominent members of the literary field included He Qifang 何其芳 (1912-1977) and Lu Kanru. For further information and a link to the September Third Society's chronological history since 1944, see their website (in Chinese), URL: <http://www.93.gov.cn/history/index.shtml> (last accessed: June 25, 2010).

²⁰⁹ (Sun Yurong 1986, 7).

to criticize its textual inaccuracies in a *Guangming ribao* article signed solely by Wang. This resulted in an open letter by Zuo Jia chubanshe in *Guangming ribao's* cultural supplement *Wenxue yichan* on the same day the criticism was published on March 15, 1954, in which the editors admitted their errors and thanked Wang Peizhang for her corrections. At the time he was first criticized by the two young men reacting to Wang's article, Li Xifan and Lan Ling, Yu was already an established literary professional at the Literature Research Institute in Beijing. Interestingly, it was Yu's academic "guidance" of Wang's article that had been taken as a point of departure by Li and Lan to criticize the teacher-student relationship and its influence on the field of *Honglou meng* studies.

Li Xifan

Li Xifan was born on December 11, 1927, in the suburban Tongxian 通縣 district of Beijing to a family of low-ranking intellectuals (xiao zhishifenzi 小知識分子) originally from Shaoxing in Zhejiang province.²¹⁰ During the Second Sino-Japanese War, Li's father lost his work and the family of eight (Li had five siblings) met with severe economic difficulties. Li was forced to discontinue his public middle school education and was from then on tutored privately by his father. In Li's early teenage years, however, his father suffered a stroke and eventually became paralyzed, which also ended Li's phase of private schooling. By then, his two eldest siblings had left home to participate in the war, and his second-eldest brother died of meningitis. By the age of fourteen, pressed by economic needs, Li also left home first to be apprenticed in a clothing store in Beijing

²¹⁰ As far as I am aware, there does not exist a comprehensive Chinese or Western-language biography of Li Xifan. While Wolfgang Bartke's *Who is Who in the People's Republic of China* (Munich: Saur, 1997) features a short entry, it does not contain much information, and the entire period of the 1950s and 1960s is omitted. On the Chinese side, much information on his life and work is to be found online, as most editions of his collected or selected works do not contain more than the most basic biographical information. The biographical data given in the following passages consequently mainly rely on three online articles, of which two can also be found as print editions: Liu Tianshi 劉天時. "Li Xifan: Da renwu shidai de xiao renwu mingyun 李希凡:大人物時代的小人物命運". In: *Nanfang renwu zhouban* (July 26, 2005); online at: <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/p/2005-07-26/18317330491.shtml> (last accessed: February 12, 2011); "Wenxue pinglunjia, hongxue zhuanjie Li Xifan xiansheng xiaozhuan 文藝評論家紅學專家李希凡先生小傳" (Brief biography of literary critic and redologist Li Xifan). In: *Wenshizhe* 5 (1999), available online at ChinaVR.net: <http://www.chinavr.net/magazine/lixifan.htm> (last accessed: February 11, 2011). The third article is available on the website of the Shandong University CP Committee graduate student work unit. "Li Xifan: Cong 'xiao renwu' dao hongxue mingjia 李希凡:從小人物到紅學名家" (Li Xifan: from a "nobody" to distinguished redologist) (2004): <http://www.ygb.sdu.edu.cn/html/xwsd/jyrw/200412/15-584.html> (last accessed: February 12, 2011). Additional personal records and details are, if not otherwise indicated, taken mainly from Li Xifan's memoirs as recorded in the aforementioned (Li Xifan 1997).

and work as a child laborer in a print shop, later becoming a librarian at Shijiazhuang library (Shijiazhuang tushuguan 石家莊圖書館) in Hebei province.

In 1947, as his situation had not improved after the war, he went to live at his elder sister's home in Shandong province for two years, where his brother-in-law Zhao Jibin, a CCP member and at the time vice-head of Shandong University's school committee (xiaoweihui), recruited him as his personal secretary.²¹¹ It was through his brother-in-law that Li was first introduced to Marxist theories and literature, of which he had initially been completely ignorant: "When my brother-in-law spoke of Marx, he did not say Marx, he said Karl; Stalin was Joseph. And I used to think was: who is this Karl? Who is this Joseph?"²¹² With Zhao Jibin, Li read translations of Marxist classics and soon became familiar with Communist political theory. It was also Zhao Jibin who arranged for Li to become a guest auditor at Shandong University's humanities department (wenshixi 文史係) in 1947.

In 1949, Li passed the entrance examination for East China University, and when that was merged with Shandong University in 1951, he was automatically admitted as a regular second-year student at Shandong University's Chinese department, where he specialized in literature. At Shandong University, Li first began to develop a professional interest in reinterpreting the classical literary canon according to Marxist literary theory. Even though he only spent two years there until his graduation in 1953, his time at Shandong University would in his memory always remain his "formative years." It was there that he studied the classics under Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun, wrote his first academic article (on the literary creation of the "typical protagonist", *dianxing renwu* 典型人物) that was published in *Wenshizhe* as the first ever contribution by a student, and met his fellow student Yang Jianzhong 楊建中, a.k.a. Lan Ling, with whom he was to initiate the *Honglou meng*-campaign in 1954.

At Shandong University, as he later related himself, Li also learned to appreciate the "real ideological value and artistic achievements" of *Honglou meng*, which he reread

²¹¹ Because of a prison trauma during the GMD rule, Zhao suffered from hand tremors and was unable to write by himself, even after the war against Japan had ended. In the years that he stayed at his sister's house, Li Xifan therefore became Zhao Jibin's secretary, writing as his brother-in-law dictated, and thus experiencing the process of Zhao's most influential compositions at first hand. In this way, Li would later argue, he had had to read a lot of university-level material in advance, so as to be able to understand the contents of Zhao's written work (Li 1997, 414).

²¹² (Liu Tianshi 2005).

in Feng Yuanjun's classes. Having first encountered the book in a crevice of the wall in the women's bathroom of his home near Beijing as a young teenage boy, he had indulged in it realizing, without understanding the reasons, that his sisters were reading a novel "forbidden" by their father. When studying it on an advanced academic level, his interest was, however, less spurred by an initial delight in the story, but rather by the various possibilities of interpreting it. As he stated:

Only this time when I read it [i.e., at university], it was no longer just out of interest, but I began to gradually form a few opinions of my own, and felt dissatisfied, even to the point of open disagreement, with the views of some of its previous scholars, especially the *kaozheng* and explanations of *Dream of the Red Chamber* by the Mr.s Hu Shi and Yu Pingbo.²¹³

After his graduation in 1953, Li was assigned to the recently established People's University (Renmin daxue 人民大學) in Beijing as a graduate student in philosophy and Marxism-Leninism.²¹⁴ In his own recollection, he studied there grateful for the opportunity to further his education, but otherwise without much enthusiasm, as his academic interests revolved around literary studies, rather than "philosophy".²¹⁵

In 1955, after the initial wave of attacks against Yu during the *Honglou meng*-campaign had subsided enough to reconsider the positions of its two young originators, it was decided that Li take up a post at *Renmin ribao*, despite his written request to Zhou Yang that he may be allowed to continue as an academic at the Literature Research Institute. Zhou Yang's reply is quoted as firm: "You both [i.e., Li and Lan] took a very good first step, and I hope you will continue your efforts, but you must not entertain even a trace of proud feelings, because scholarship and battle are both without limits." When the editor-in-chief of *Renmin ribao*, Deng Tuo, related Li's wish to Mao Zedong, the latter allegedly merely commented: "That [i.e., the Literature Research Institute] is not a combat post."²¹⁶ Thus, Li Xifan came to work for the literary arts group (wenyizu 文藝組) of *Renmin Ribao* in early 1955, and was to remain working there until late 1986.

²¹³ (Li 1997, 379).

²¹⁴ (Ibid., 412).

²¹⁵ (Ibid., 392 and passim).

²¹⁶ Li Xifan 李希凡, Wu Xiaomei 吳曉梅 and Bian Yanjun 邊彥軍. "Mao Zedong yu Honglou meng: fang Li Xifan 毛澤東與紅樓夢:訪李希凡" (Mao Zedong and Dream of the Red Chamber: Interview with Li Xifan) (1992) In: (Li Xifan 1997), 385-399, 392.

Lan Ling

Lan Ling was born as Yang Jianzhong to a peasant family of Yangji village (Yangji cun 楊集村) in Shan county (Shan xian 單縣), Shandong province, on July 3, 1931.²¹⁷ At the age of seventeen, he left his village for Jinan, where he was admitted as a student to East China University's College of Social Studies (Huadong daxue shehui kexueyuan 華東大學社會科學院). In 1951, when the two schools were merged and the campus moved to Qingdao, Lan became a regular student at Shandong University's Chinese department like Li Xifan, with whom he had little contact until later that year when they were coincidentally placed in the same study group (xuexi xiaozu 學習小組).²¹⁸

It was from then on that the two young men began their literary collaboration. Their first co-authored article criticized the poem *Renmin de erzi* 人民的兒子 (Sons of the people) by Zhang Yongmei 張永枚 (*1932), and though it was never officially accepted for publication, Lan retained fond memories of its coming into being:

Though the manuscript was never published, it was our first act of collaboration as fellow students. And it was a cheerful collaboration, an unselfish collaboration, a collaboration of mutual improvement and one which deepened our friendship. If it hadn't been for this collaboration, I am afraid there would have been no collaboration afterwards. Later, I was transferred to another study group, but our mutual ties were still different from the other students'.²¹⁹

After his graduation in 1953, Lan was assigned a teaching post in Beijing within the "short course middle school for workers and peasants" (gong-nong sucheng zhongxue) attached to Beijing Normal University. However, like Li, Lan also thought that he was destined for a career in the literary world, and sought an opportunity to request a transfer to a new work unit. This opportunity presented itself in early 1954 with the

²¹⁷ To find reliable biographical information on Lan Ling is even more difficult than in Li Xifan's case, which probably relates to the fact that Li is the more widely known of the two. The following passages are mainly based on two obituaries: one was written by Ji Yin 季音 (who was Lan's colleague at *Renmin Ribao* in the fifties and was sentenced to manual labor as a rightist together with him, first in the library of the *Renmin Ribao* press office, later in a village near Tangshan) and published in *Yan-Huang Chunqiu* 炎黃春秋 in 2005, entitled "Lan Ling de kanke rensheng 藍翎的坎坷人生 (The rough life of Lan Ling)". The second one was written by Yuan Ying in 2005, carries the title "Dao Lan Ling 悼藍翎" (Mourning Lan Ling) and is available online at: <http://www.huaxia.com/zt/whbl/05-106/2005/00404183.html> (last accessed: February 22, 2011). Details about his education in Shandong, his encounters and cooperation with Li Xifan, and his initial career in Beijing are taken from his memoirs of 1995, *Longjuanfeng*.

²¹⁸ (Lan 1995, 18).

²¹⁹ (Ibid., 20).

publication of Yu Pingbo's "Honglou meng jianlun". As it turned out, Li and Lan's response would not only initiate the *Honglou meng*-campaign, but would also prompt changes in both of their careers, taking each of them a step further on the literary path.

In mid-October, 1954, as a consequence of his role in the *Honglou meng*-campaign, Lan Ling was transferred by Deng Tuo to *Renmin ribao*, where he became the youngest editor of the literary arts group (wenyizu) which was at the time headed by Yuan Shuipai 袁水拍 (1916-1982), among others.²²⁰ Though in this position he was still not able to specialize in classical literature like he had originally planned, he soon became a prolific copy-editor, mainly for the essay section of the literary supplement established by *Renmin ribao* in 1956.²²¹ In 1956, he went on a prolonged trip to the Shandong countryside to, as he put it, "familiarize himself with the conditions of rural life", and only returned to the capital in July 1957, when the first wave of the Anti-Rightist-Campaign (fan youpai yundong 反右派運動) had already begun.

Two Generations

From the short portraits of the three main protagonists of the *Honglou meng*-Campaign presented above, it appears obvious that the antagonism between Yu Pingbo on one side and Lan Ling and Li Xifan on the other was to a great extent caused by the generation gap that divided the established scholar from the two upcoming graduates. This generation gap was further deepened by the divergent social backgrounds of both parties and the worldviews they had been mainly exposed to.

Yu Pingbo's upbringing in a prominent and traditional literary household suggested a life of economic and educational privilege which would come to be seen as an inherent flaw of the existing social order. Li Xifan, by contrast, could with some justification partly claim his rise to the intellectual elite from working class means, which granted him the status of a "role model" for other young Communist intellectuals, an ideological advantage Yu clearly did not share.

²²⁰ Li Xifan would follow him there only half a year later. As Li had been granted a prestigious educational opportunity at Renda after his graduation from Shanda, Renda's president at the time Wu Yuzhang 吳玉章 (1878-1966) was initially not keen to let him go and consented to the transfer only in early 1955 (Lan 1995, 37).

²²¹ (Ibid., 71, 146).

Yu's political involvement with a party tolerated by, perhaps also infiltrated by, but nevertheless unequal to the Communist Party, suggested that his interests in the political realm were at best superficially in line with mainstream CCP policy. Had he been a staunch adherent of the latter, he might have opted, as was common in his time, for a double membership of both the September Third Society and the CCP. In fact, Yu never joined the CCP even after he emerged from the 1954 case more or less unscathed.

More importantly, Yu was by all objective standards very much an intellectual of the "old order", who had been active in the still controversially appraised May Fourth Movement and had at the time unfortunately aligned himself with the "wrong" people, specifically Hu Shi and his followers. Not only had he been supportive of Hu Shi's reordering of the literary canon according to linguistic criteria, but he had also adopted some key concepts of Hu's *hongxue*, such as the *kaozheng* method and the autobiographical interpretation, which the Communist critics came to assert as running counter to their main evaluative basis, i.e., their definition of "realism".

Yu thus represented a certain kind of intellectual, whose biography allowed for two academically distinct, but politically related levels of contemporary criticism. On the one hand, his background revealed a life of privilege that Yu inherited from the "feudalistic" residues of the imperial bureaucratic system. On the other, his intellectual profile could be closely linked to one of the main "traitors" to the Communist system, Hu Shi.

From what one can officially know about Li Xifan's career and background until the mid-1950s, it becomes difficult to imagine anyone more apt – from an early Chinese Communist point of view – to criticize an antiquated academic position while at the same time representing a veritable model of young, academic, and ideologically sound endeavor. Born into a family of modest means and forced into child labor to support his family, Li Xifan had managed to make his way in the scholarly world from the periphery to the capital in less than a decade. His schooling had entailed autodidactic elements and a consciousness that was readily shaped by Marxist influence. His studies at Shandong University had been preceded by a year of cadre training at East China University, and even his earliest academic publications had demonstrated that he was capable of understanding one of the most central concepts of Marxist literary theory, i.e., the

decisive role of the “model” or “type” as a precondition for the creation of realist literature.

Very much in keeping with such a type himself, Li Xifan came to be considered the academic opposite of Yu Pingbo and his traditional and outdated perspective on literature. At the same time, both Li and Lan on account of their age were seen as writing on behalf of an entirely new generation of young and vigorous Communists, namely the so-called *xinsheng liliang*. And this focus on the younger generation would also come, in a less academic and more militant context, to be so important to Mao Zedong’s maintenance of governing power during the Cultural Revolution just a little over a decade later.

Raised to a higher level, the antagonism between Yu Pingbo and his attackers manifested what had changed in the epistemological landscape in the P.R.C., especially in higher education. A primarily meritocratic system, at least in principle, in which expertise and solid scholarship were the standards of selection, was being gradually replaced by what has been called by Susan L. Shirk a “virtuocracy”:

A revolutionary regime that attempts to bring about the moral transformation of society by awarding life chances to the virtuous may be called a “virtuocracy”. The contrast is with “meritocracies”, which select according to professional or intellectual ability, and “feudocracies”, which select according to ascriptive status such as caste, class, origin, race, nature, region, sex, or religious origin. In a virtuocracy, merit and ascriptive status sometimes enter into occupational selection and promotion, but a person’s moral worth remains a major criterion. No one who is not judged morally acceptable is allowed to succeed. As the Chinese put it, everyone must be “red” as well as “expert” (politically correct as well as skilled in work.²²²

This sense of virtuocracy was instilled on the micro-level through small groups and the political rituals that their members were expected to perform. Whoever was involved in higher education was required to participate in one or several small groups such as “teaching and research groups” or “study groups”.²²³ Yu Pingbo, Li Xifan and Lan Ling

²²² Susan L. Shirk. *Competitive Comrades. Career Incentives and Student Strategies in China*. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1982), 4. On the formation of the “virtuous” model, see also Chapter 4 “The Sufan Campaign, the Orthodox Personality, and the Political Climate” and Chapter 6 “Shaping the New Personality” of (R. G. Wagner 1992).

²²³ The best study of these small groups is still Martin King Whyte. *Small Groups and Political Rituals in China*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

were no exceptions to this rule. The difference was, however, that Yu Pingbo had been exposed to a different academic regime in the Republican years of his life. He was aware of alternatives to the content and method of the socialist thought reform that was being carried out via the small groups. For Li Xifan and Lan Ling, the situation was radically opposed. Intellectually, they grew up in and were from the very beginning exposed to the socialist academic setting, in which moral worth was prioritized over professional expertise. As it happens, moral worth can only be made visible through externalization in the form of words and deeds. This leads to social constellations in which people are constantly watching and also evaluating each other in a specific group, but at the same time also being observed and judged by outside authorities.²²⁴

What it meant to be in this intellectual environment on a daily basis has been aptly described by Maria Yen, who studied at Peking University in the early years of the P.R.C.:

Suppose you were a third-year student in the Department of Western Languages and Literature living in one of the men's dormitories. To begin with, you would belong to your mutual-aid circle within the junior class. You would be a member of the junior class organization, of course, and a member also of the all-department union. That takes care of your regular academic courses. Now in your political classes you would belong to another mutual-aid circle. You would also have to go to meetings of the squad made up of three mutual-aid circles. To discuss really important matters your squad would join four or five others in a section meeting. When you went back to the dormitory in the evening, you might have to attend a meeting of your living circle with your next-door neighbours. You also belonged to your floor group and to the dormitory union. Like all Peida students, you would have to join the Student Union. If you did not want to be accused of "isolationism" it would be a good idea to join the department chores. If you belonged to the Youth League, you belonged to your cell, your

²²⁴ Since the criteria of moral worth in P.R.C. were never anchored through unambiguous definitions, thus remaining rather vague and malleable, it could happen – and it did quite often – that those considered to be virtuous would not match the required moral features anymore and as a consequence fall out of grace. The political fates of the virtuous Li Xifan and Lan Ling are paradigmatic of the insecurities intrinsic to socialist "virtuocracy". Both young men boasted class backgrounds traditionally favored by the Communist authorities (Lan perhaps even more so than Li), and both were members of the Communist Youth League. Both had risen to the challenges of their economic and social situations and had eventually been admitted to one of the best universities in the country. Both had been assigned posts in the national capital upon graduation, and though Li Xifan was given the more prestigious opportunity as a Renda graduate student, both were eventually transferred to *Renmin ribao* as a result of their political activism in 1954/55. By late 1957, however, the tide had turned, and while Li Xifan had been admitted as a full member into the CCP, Lan Ling was labeled a "rightist" (youpai 右派) and sentenced to menial labor in Beijing as well as in the countryside.

branch office (one in each college of the university), and the main office. Count them up: you belonged to exactly thirteen different groups. Of course, if you were all active, you might also belong to the Library Group, a special political discussion group of something else. [...] All of the things we heard in the classroom and over the radio we had to discuss again in the mutual-aid circles. We quoted positions of our notes back and forth at one another under the gaze of our leader, who had to make sure that we all chimed in.²²⁵

It seems likely that both Li and Lan, who got to know each other in a student study group, were even more involved in political activities than the average university student in the 1950s. As a matter of fact, they had both been educated at East China University, which was, as we have seen in the first chapter, a revolutionary cadre school, for around two years prior to becoming regular students at the newly reformed, comprehensive Shandong University. Their ideological formation had therefore been more intensive than that of the greater part of their fellow students at Shanda. They believed in the Marxist-Leninist version of virtocracy and tried, already from very early on, to apply virtocratic criteria to classical literature.

A member of the CCP from 1957, and a staunch follower of Marxist literary doctrine already long before then, Li Xifan's reading of *Honglou meng* along the lines of political criticism also extended to other works of the literary tradition. An early example of these tendencies on the subject of *Shuihu zhuan* was published in 1954 even before Li and Lan wrote their first essay on *Honglou meng*. In it, Li expounded, among other things, on the character Song Jiang who, in his opinion, was not to be equated with the historical figure, but instead represented a "model" or "type" character which deserved only positive connotations for his role in the "peasant uprising" that the plot of *Shuihu zhuan* had come to be interpreted as.²²⁶ Similarly to Li Xifan, Lan Ling's initial academic interest in *Honglou meng* had arisen at Shandong University, where he had encountered the novel in Feng Yuanjun's classes on literary history. Anxious to apply Marxist literary theory to China's classical heritage, Lan recalls answering an essay question during his final exam in literary history, in which he refuted the earlier autobiographical interpretation provided by Hu Shi and Yu Pingbo's generation of *hongxue jia*:

²²⁵ Maria Yen. *The Umbrella Garden. A Picture of Student Life in Red China* (New York: MacMillan, 1954), 127-128.

²²⁶ Li Xifan. "Lüe tan 'Shui hu' pingjia wenti 略談"水滸"評價問題" (Brief discussion of the problem of evaluating "The Water Margin"). In: *Wenshizhe* 4 (1954), 15-17.

... though it [i.e., *Honglou meng*] summarized a few events from his family background, it still wasn't to be equated with Cao Xueqin's autobiography. And I drew on two Soviet novels, Gorky's *My University Days* and Ostrovsky's *How The Steel Was Tempered*, to expound on and prove my theory. I did not agree with the "autobiographical theory", which was not quite what our teacher had spoken about in the classroom. Thankfully, professor Feng Yuanjun had an open mind in academic matters, [so] even though her student hadn't answered completely according to her lectures, she still gave me the high mark of 91 points, which was the highest mark I ever achieved in several years of literary history classes.²²⁷

If one is to believe this anecdote, it would appear that Lan Ling, like Li Xifan, was already keenly aware of changes in exegetic standards taking place both before he graduated, and before these standards were officially promulgated at the universities through nationwide teaching plans.

Yu Pingbo at the time represented the majority of working academics at the start of the P.R.C., a classical intellectual of privileged background, influenced by the May Fourth Movement and somewhat reluctant to sweepingly replace the old standards with Marxist-Leninist educational principles. Li Xifan and Lan Ling, on the other hand, represented the "newly emerging forces" of Communist China, whose minds had not been set to the tune of May Fourth intellectualism. Rather, they were still open to be shaped by standards set from above, and to implement them in their respective academic environments, creating the conditions for further thought reform and intellectual adaptation among the older generation. At the same time, the internal changes towards the criteria of socialist virtuocracy that were forced upon inside the minds of the old generation, since they were not tangible, had to be externalized on a ritualistic basis, i.e., iteratively and publicly. Self-critically, Yu Pingbo was eventually made to revoke his former opinions on the *Dream of the Red Chamber*:

²²⁷ (Lan 1995, 28). Li Xifan, however, in an essay defending himself against Lan Ling's claims that he was given preferential treatment after their first critiques of Yu Pingbo's *hongxue* were published, accused Lan of making this anecdote up. In his words, the first time he ever heard of the story of Lan's "high marks" in Feng Yuanjun's classes despite differing opinions between teacher and student was when he read it in Lan's essay, over forty years after it allegedly happened. According to Li, Lan never mentioned the incident even when they were freshly graduated and working together on the *Honglou meng*-essays in Beijing in 1954. Moreover, Li wrote that he could not remember nor imagine Feng Yuanjun still teaching Hu Shi's "autobiographical theory" in her classes on *Honglou meng* at Shanda, as she was the commonly considered a "progressive" teacher and writer who had received personal backing from Lu Xun in the thirties. Given, however, that both men by the 1990s were engaged in a war of words about the "correct" historiography of their role in the campaign, both validity and relevance of Li's argument here can and should be questioned. Cf. (Li 1997, 403 f.).

The origin of these mistakes is of course to be found in [my] position, perspective and method. Although I have recognized the main line of politics [as transitioning] from the New Democracy to socialism, I have not established a Marxist-Leninist perspective in [my] scholarship. My study of literary and art theory is very poor. In terms of general literary research, whenever talking about the ideological content of a work, I have frequently been unable to evaluate it from its historical and social elements; whenever talking about the artistic quality of a work, I have also been unable to take on the correct aesthetic perspective to measure it. All of these faults are demonstrated in [my] research of *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Not only have I failed to thoroughly criticize Hu Shi, not only have I continued down the road of Hu Shi's research of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, but I have [even] extended it and spread the poison of Hu Shi's reactionary ideology in society in his stead. This error is extremely serious.²²⁸

5. Texts

By the time Yu Pingbo had written these words, in February 1955, the campaign against his reading of *Honglou meng* had turned into a full-blown national movement against “Hu Shi thought” in all areas of the humanities. As the CCPCC propaganda department related in a communiqué released in May 1955, over 200 articles criticizing “Hu Shi thought” had been published in national newspapers and periodicals between November 1954 and March 1955. In places like Beijing, Shanghai, Changchun, Guangxi, and Jiangsu, regular symposia to criticize Hu Shi thought (jingchangxing de Hu Shi sixiang pipan taolunhui 經常性的胡適思想批判討論會) were organized. In other parts of the country these symposia were also held, albeit less regularly (linshixing de 臨時性的). Across the country, humanities departments and teaching and research sections of every comprehensive and normal university had held all kinds of criticisms, debates and general conference sessions on the matter. As the propaganda department emphasized, the main significance of the campaign was that it went beyond individual thought reform, and therefore represented an initial step to thoroughly reshape the entire academic landscape:

This is the first nationwide ideological struggle by the Party leadership against bourgeois idealism. (...) This critical movement has

²²⁸ Yu Pingbo. “Jianjue yu fandong de Hu Shi sixiang huaqing jixian 堅決與反動的胡適思想劃清界限” (Determinedly make a clear cut with Hu Shi's reactionary ideology), 319. Yu Pingbo's self-criticism was written in February, 1955, and originally appeared in *Wenyibao* 1955.5. The text (and page number) I refer to is a reprint in the collection *Honglou meng wenti taolunji*, vol. 2, which was published by Zuoji chubanshe in Beijing in June, 1955.

had a direct, deep impact on China's academic circles. Previously, intellectual thought reform movements generally did not touch upon problems of academic thought, and studying Marxism-Leninism was also rarely linked to criticism of academic thought. This time, however, the central criticism of idealist philosophy has incidentally also touched upon bourgeois idealist academic thought in all branches of the social sciences and the literary arts, this cannot but cause an uproar in China's academic circles. At present the manifestation of the Hu Shi clique's idealist ideology in every academic branch is being exposed in its earliest stages and subjected to criticism. These criticisms are all based on a definite degree of research work, which is why they are quite powerful. The formerly oppressive atmosphere of a peaceful coexistence between academic circles and bourgeois idealism is already changing, and a critical atmosphere is beginning to develop.²²⁹

The main goal of this section is to hit the slow-motion button and show the different phases of the textual frenzy that the *Honglou meng*-Campaign turned into within the short time span of several months, before it shapeshifted and became a campaign mainly targeted against Hu Shi and his thought. Essentially, it tries to capture, as much as possible, the cacophony and massiveness of the campaign's literary production.

At its start there were five core reference texts that set the tone for the *Honglou meng*-Campaign, and would continue to fuel its process from a focus on Yu Pingbo and *Honglou meng* in particular to Hu Shi and the humanities in general by the start of 1955. On the side of the works that were most criticized, there were Yu Pingbo's "Honglou meng jianlun" (1954), *Honglou meng yanjiu* (1952), and *Honglou meng bian* (1923). These will be dealt with in the sub-section "Target texts". On the side of the critics, there were Li Xifan and Lan Ling's first two articles, "Guanyu 'Honglou meng jianlun' ji qita" and "Ping 'Honglou meng yanjiu'" (both 1954). These will be the focus of the sub-section "Core texts".

The core texts were soon supplemented by texts whose goal was to set the key tone for and as such direct the campaign. These texts will be treated in the sub-section "Policy texts". The core and the policy texts were the thematic corpus around which the

²²⁹ PLA Defence Academy Party Building and Political Teaching and Research Section 中國人民解放軍國防大學黨建政工教研室. "Zhong-gong zhongyang pizhuan zhongyang xuanchuanbu "Guanyu Hu Shi sixiang pipan yundong de qingkuang he jin-hou gongzuo de baogao" 中共中央批轉中央宣傳部《關於胡適思想批判運動的情況和今後工作的報告》"(The CCPC comments and transmits the Ministry of Propaganda's "Report on the current situation and future work of the movement to criticize Hu Shi's thought"). In: *Zhonggong dangshi jiaoxue cankao ziliao* 中共黨史教學參考資料 (History of the CCP Teaching Reference Material) (Beijing: Guofang Daxue chubanshe, 1985), 562-565: 563.

many conferences revolved which took place all over the country in the fall of 1954. The main result of these conferences was an even larger number of articles, which will be dealt with in the sub-section “Conference texts”. Finally, since the production of campaign literature was prolific, the need came up for representative collections that could be distributed all over the country in order to divulge the orthodox language and content required for the academic study of *Dream of the Red Chamber*. These texts will be the focus of sub-section “Campaign anthologies”.

Before diving into this vast ocean of campaign literature, let us first take a brief look at the content and pre-P.R.C. historiography of the literary text that this campaign set its eyes upon, i.e., *Honglou meng*, which will be dealt in sub-section “Text of Departure”.

Text of Departure

Together with *Xiyouji* 西遊記 (Journey to the West), *Sanguozhi yanyi* 三國志演義 (Romance of the Three Kingdoms) and *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳 (The Water Margin), *Honglou meng* (Dream of Red Chamber) is considered to be one of the four great novels of the Chinese literary heritage.²³⁰ Written in the late 18th century, it tells the story of the Jia household, a wealthy and well-connected family that gradually declines as the novel progresses. While its cast of protagonists is immense, the novel revolves mainly around three *dramatis personae*: Jia Baoyu 賈寶玉, the precocious son of the Jia family; Lin Daiyu 林黛玉, Jia Baoyu’s frail and beautiful cousin, who after the death of her own mother comes to live with the Jia family; and Xue Baochai 薛寶釵, another girl-cousin of Jia Baoyu, whom he is tricked into marrying. After hearing the news of the wedding, the heart-broken Lin Daiyu dies a tragic death of consumption. As for Jia Baoyu, he tries to accept the situation he was tricked into and fulfill the obligations expected from him by his family. Ultimately, however, he renounces the world and, at the end of the novel, simply vanishes in order to become a Buddhist monk.

Besides depicting this complex triangle relationship between Jia Baoyu and his two cousins, the book chronicles in great detail the personal and power relations of the

²³⁰ For a good English-language introduction to the *Hongloumeng*, see the chapter on this novel in C.T. Hsia. *The Classic Chinese Novel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967). For a concise introduction, see John Minford and Robert E. Hegel. “Hung-lou meng”, in: *Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*. W.H. Nienhauser ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 452-456.

Jia family, which ultimately lead to its decline. Through its rich and realistic descriptions, the book is encyclopedic in the sense that it is a mine of information on various aspects of late imperial material culture and social institutions. At the same time, the story is embedded in a mythical setting in which goddesses, sylphs, and magic objects play a key role as they have a direct impact on the events that take place in the novel's mortal plane. In other words, the novel has a metaphysical dimension that connects its overall architecture to Buddhist notions of karma and redemption.²³¹

Unlike the other three great novels of Chinese tradition mentioned above, which evolved all of them from long-term oral traditions before they became stable texts that were then integrated into the literary canon, *Honglou meng* is a work of authorial fiction. Specifically, it was written by Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹 (1715-1763), who was the member of a prestigious family with very close ties to the imperial household. In the Yongzheng period, as a consequence of power struggles at the court, the Cao estate was confiscated, which led to the decline of the family. This change of fortune seems to have had a huge impact on Cao Xueqin and to have caused him to write *Honglou meng*. Always short of money, Cao Xueqin tried to get by by selling his painting, but he and his family had to survive on very scarce means, a situation that was further exacerbated by Cao's drinking habits and the large wine-shop debts they resulted in. Sadness over the death of his infant son made him so sick that he died prematurely, leaving behind a manuscript of the *Honglou meng*, which consisted of 80 chapters. After Cao's death, the scholar Gao E 高鄂 (1740-1815) added another 40 chapters so that the received text until today has a total of 120 chapters, a third of which was not written by the original author.²³²

First circulating as a manuscript, fiercely and widely so for that matter, *Honglou meng* was published for the first time in 1791, i.e, nearly thirty years after the author's death and half a century after Cao had started writing the text. Over time it attracted an enormous number of readers, some of whom dedicated their time to reading it over and over again, thus becoming what later came to be known as *hongxuejia* 紅學家, "redologists", i.e., experts on "red studies" a.k.a. "redology", *hongxue* 紅學. Obviously, different readers had different opinions on what the novel was all about so that various

²³¹ For the structure and different planes of *Honglou meng*, see Andrew Plaks. *Archetype and Allegory in the Dream of the Red Chamber* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

²³² On the life of Cao Xueqin, see Chow Tse-tsung. "Ts'ao Hsüeh-ch'in", in: *Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*. W.H. Nienhauser ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 791-794.

schools of interpretation emerged starting from the late 18th century onwards.²³³ According to the historiography of redology, the 19th century was mainly dominated by the so-called “Annotating School” (pingdian pai 評點派), which read the novel as if it were a canonical book, punctuating the text while making comments on the margin, often in an attempt to identify the real persons and events behind this novel which was perceived to be a *roman à clef*. In the Republican era, the *roman à clef* approach was further systematized, mainly by Cai Yuanpei, who was the leading figure in what came to be known as the “Hidden Meaning School” (suoyinpai 索引派), mainly because it was focused on the political aspects of the novel. In the first half of the twentieth-century, the focus began to shift towards the literary aspects of the novel, including its philosophical implications. Wang Guowei 王國維, for example, in his *Honglou meng pinglun* 紅樓夢評論 (Critical Discussion of the Dream of the Red Chamber; first published 1904) combined the novel’s pessimistic outlook on life with the philosophy of the German thinker Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860).

In contrast to Wang Guowei, Hu Shi tried to apply the methodology of classical studies to *Honglou meng*, thus expanding the focus of traditional philology to an area of research that had been conventionally regarded as being inferior, i.e., fiction. Focusing on Cao Xueqin as author, he developed an approach in his *Honglou meng kaozheng* 紅樓夢考證 (*Dream of the Red Chamber* philology, first published 1927) which, instead of being centered on the political or scandalous dimension behind the novel, was focused on the author himself. Essentially, for Hu Shi *Honglou meng* was an autobiographical novel. This “autobiographical paradigm” (zizhuan shuo 自傳說) meant for researchers that they should focus on collecting and investigating data related to Cao Xueqin and the composition of his text. In other words, they should behave like *kaozheng*-scholars, which is why Hu Shi’s school of *Hongloumeng*-interpretation became known as the *kaozheng*-school (*kaozhengpai* 考证派).²³⁴ This school’s second most famous scholar happened to be Yu Pingbo, which brings us to the next sub-section, “Target texts”.

²³³ On the evolution of redology, see Chen Weizhao 陳維昭. *Hongxue tongshi* 紅學通史 (General history of redology, 2 vols.) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2005), especially 19-230.

²³⁴ Besides Chen Weizhao’s work (see previous footnote), there is a very useful edited volume that contains insightful yet concise information on the most prominent redologists of the Republican era: Wang Yao 王瑤 (ed.). *Zhongguo wenxue yanjiu xiandaihua jin Cheng* 中國文學研究現代化進程 (The modern evolution of Chinese literature research) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1996).

Target texts

By and large, Li Xifan and Lan Ling targeted three texts by Yu Pingbo. These were:

- “Honglou meng jianlun” (1953)
- *Honglou meng yanjiu* (1952), which was a revised version of
- *Honglou meng bian* (1923)

“Honglou meng jianlun” had originally been written in 1953 at the request of the journal *People’s China*, a government-approved English-language periodical focusing mainly on Chinese cultural topics that appeared once every two weeks. It was meant to commemorate the “recent publication of a new, revised edition” of *Honglou meng*, and to introduce the novel and its main (i.e., Marxist-Leninist) themes to a foreign audience.²³⁵ After completing an initial draft version of the article, Yu Pingbo sent it to Hu Qiaomu 胡乔木 (1912-1992), who at the time was vice-director of the CCPCC’s propaganda department and seems to have supervised publications at a number of larger periodicals.²³⁶ Hu allegedly returned it with many annotations, urging Yu to rewrite the article completely.²³⁷ Instead, Yu assigned the task to his assistant at the Literature Research Institute, the young female researcher Wang Peizhang 王佩璋 (whom we have previously encountered in the present chapter). Wang wrote the text that was later translated to English and published in *People’s China* as “The Dream of the Red Chamber” under Yu’s name. He sent the unaltered version of the original article to the periodical *Xin Jianshe* 新建設 (New Construction), where it was published without much further ado on March 3, 1954. Yu’s deliberate defiance of Hu Qiaomu, as well as his use of Wang Peizhang as his ghost writer for *People’s China* later became two points of additional criticism during the *Honglou meng*-campaign.

In terms of content, “Honglou meng jianlun” does not appear to be politically neutral. In fact, one rather gains the impression that in writing the article, Yu Pingbo was attempting to fuse his earlier work with a few select principles of the new Marxist-Leninist criticism, specifically by trying to arrive at some conclusion about the author Cao Xueqin’s political stance. The article consists of three parts that roughly revolve

²³⁵ Yu P’ing-po. “The Dream of the Red Chamber.” In: *People’s China* 10 (1954[a]), 32-35: 32.

²³⁶ On Hu Qiaomu’s decisive role of the P.R.C. media landscape in the 1950s, see the fourth study “Direction of the Press: Hu Qiaomu’s 1955 Breakfast Chats” in (Schoenhals 1992).

²³⁷ (Sun Yuming 2003, 23).

around (1) earlier literary influences on *Honglou meng*, (2) original concepts in *Honglou meng*, and (3) the autobiographical dimension of *Honglou meng*. As becomes clear already from these categories, Yu Pingbo's approach was at heart very much indebted to Hu Shi's *kaozheng* method of textual philology: his main concerns were focused on a close reading of the novel and its contextualization within other textual traditions, as well as its relation to the biography of its author.

The first part of "Honglou meng jianlun" is entitled "Honglou meng de chuantongxing" 紅樓夢的傳統性 (Literary legacies in *Dream of the Red Chamber*), and talks about the influences of earlier literary works on the novel.²³⁸ On the level of genre development, Yu argued that *Honglou meng* conjoined two formerly separate fiction (*xiaoshuo* 小說) traditions, namely Tang *chuanqi* 傳奇 and Song *huaben* 話本. In support, Yu cited examples of these and similar kinds of influences in direct and indirect quotes within *Honglou meng*, specifically from *Xixiang ji* 西廂記 (Romance of the West Chamber), *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳 (The Water Margin), *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (Journey to the West), and *Jinping mei* 金瓶梅 (The Golden Lotus). But he also named much older canonical works, such as the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (Zuo Commentary), *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian), and *Zhuangzi* 莊子, as well as *Li Sao* 離騷 (Encountering Sorrow) from the *Chu Ci* 楚辭 (Songs of Chu) as profoundly influential in *Honglou meng*.

The second part of "Honglou meng jianlun" is entitled "Honglou meng de duchuangxing" 紅樓夢的獨創性 (The Originality of *Dream of the Red Chamber*), and treats some central themes and devices that Yu Pingbo saw as original to the novel. He began by reiterating what *Honglou meng* shared with earlier works. There were, for example, the notions of *se* 色 (substance) and *kong* 空 (void), which he maintained were essentially taken from *Jinping mei*. The way the characters were developed also derived from earlier sources like *Jinping mei* and *Shuihu zhuan*. But in terms of the novel's language, Yu argued that *Honglou meng* reached a new level in using the contemporary

²³⁸ Though a more literal translation of the original Chinese term *chuantongxing* could be "traditional character", the term here is more specific in its literary implications. It refers to the incorporation of a literary legacy into *Honglou meng* via direct and indirect quotes from earlier works of literature (as understood especially by Yu Pingbo), as well as via the progressive development of the entire genre of the fiction novel (in the "realist" tradition as understood by the Chinese Communist critics, and in the *xiaoshuo* traditions of the Tang and Song as understood by Yu Pingbo). For further differentiation, see Li Xifan and Lan Ling. "Guanyu "Honglou meng jianlun" ji qita 關於《紅樓夢論》及其他" (On "Short Dissertation on Dream of the Red Chamber" Et Cetera). In: *Wenshizhe* 9 (1954[a]), 20-25: 23-25.

vernacular and mixing it with classical allusions. Although he acknowledged that the language of a given work is but an “instrument” (gongju 工具) to convey its underlying thought structure, he argued that the two were somewhat mutually dependent:

The large main narrative of the entire book’s first eighty chapters is vast, and I wanted to talk about it from the two aspects of its conception and writing style, that is, I wanted to look at it from the two aspects of thought and technique. Later, I realized that technique has to complement thought, which is why the style of writing precisely develops the meaning, and that it is not necessarily appropriate to talk about them separately. If you want to know about the style of writing, you must first understand its meaning; if you want to understand its conception, you must first clarify what its main target theme is.²³⁹

After establishing the main target theme of the book to be the “feudalist landlord family on the verge of collapse” (xingjiang bengkuai de fengjian dizhu jiating 行將崩潰的封建地主家庭), Yu Pingbo turned to the question of Cao Xueqin’s attitude towards such a family structure, and tried to find an answer in the novel’s rhetorical devices.

One such device, in his argument, was the metaphorical homophonic use of the characters Zhen Shiyin 甄士隱 and Jia Yucun 賈雨村, who are introduced in *Honglou meng*’s first two chapters and represent a kind of narrative framework for the novel’s main plot: while the former name plays on the “hidden meaning” of the book, the latter comments on its linguistic intricacies.²⁴⁰ In this way, Yu Pingbo explained, the first two

²³⁹ Yu Pingbo. “Honglou meng jianlun 紅樓夢簡論” (Short Dissertation on Dream of the Red Chamber). In: *Xin Jianshe* 3 (1954[b]), 34-38; 17: 36.

²⁴⁰ A brief elaboration on this point: The characters Zhen Shiyin and Jia Yucun can be seen as bracketing the novel’s main story, and their destinies as forebodings of what will happen to some of the actual main protagonists. While Zhen Shiyin starts the novel as the wealthy benefactor of Jia Yucun, he soon loses his home to a fire and his family to bad luck, which causes him to eventually forsake the material world to become a monk. Jia Yucun, on the other hand, rises from poverty and follows a career of success, until he, too, is forced into the renunciation of worldly values, and ends up a monk like his former mentor. The word play here is essentially in the surnames Jia 賈 (a homophonic variant of *jia* 假 = false, fake, phony) and Zhen 甄 (a homophonic variant of *zhen* 真 = real, true, genuine), which constitutes a central theme in the novel. The Jia family of the Ningguo and Rongguo Houses have a counterpart family Zhen situated in Nanjing, and just as the fortunes of the Jia’s begin to dwindle, the Zhen’s manage to rise from poverty and ill fortune to fame and riches. These types of parallelisms and cyclical elements to *Honglou meng* have been discussed in (Plaks 1976), and I do not seek to redress the issue of their validity for the understanding of the novel. Suffice it to say that both the terms and the concepts of “true” and “false” are recurrent motifs in *Honglou meng*. Furthermore, the names Jia Yucun and Zhen Shiyin can also be read in their character compounds as (nearly) homophonic variants of the compounds *jiayucun* 假語存 (“false words are stored”) and *zhenshiyin* 真事隱 (“a true story is hidden”), which seem to point the reader to both the fact that the narrator is unreliable (a hypothesis further substantiated by the origin of the story in the so-called “Land of Illusion” [taixu huanjing 太虛幻境], where the boundaries between truth and fiction become blurred – even for the protagonists of the novel), and that there is a metaphorical level to the text,

chapters serve as an overture to the novel, while the proper story only begins with Lin Daiyu's arrival at Rongguo House (Rongguo fu 榮國府) in chapter three of *Honglou meng*. Given that the key chapters for understanding the book are the first two, Yu expounded, the contents of the rest of the novel were quite self-explanatory, and consisted mainly of the following three elements: (1) the element of the real (xianshi de 現實的), (2) the element of the ideal (lixiang de 理想的), and (3) the element of critique (pipan de 批判的). About these he wrote:

These elements are all interwoven, but they are unified under one basic concept. Despite [the concept of] the void, it [i.e., *Honglou meng*] is not a castle built on air, despite [the concept of] the real, one cannot assume it to be a biography or a chronology. Despite its praises, when does it truly eulogize? Despite its censures, it is not that it ruthlessly exposes. (...) Most of the women in the book are modeled on his [i.e., Cao Xueqin's] real acquaintances, and he uses praise and censure mutually according to each individual's disposition. For example, his denunciation of Older Sister Feng [i.e., Wang Xifeng] and Qinshi [i.e., Qin Keqing] is very harsh. As for the Jia family's highest-ranking dominant males, like Jia Jing, Jia Zhen, Jia Lian, etc., as well as those officials aiding the Jia family in wrongdoings like Jia Yucun, he displays severe abhorrence and makes no allowance for them. There are numerous similar cases, [and from these] one can deduce the author's attitude, [which is] quite objective and also very impartial. While he naturally cannot betray the class he belongs to, he manages to free himself of class prejudice, and though his criticism does not go far enough, it is already a first step.²⁴¹

In this passage, Yu Pingbo's attempt at merging earlier scholarship with Marxist-Leninist literary criticism is clearly discernible. Despite his misgivings about oversimplifying Cao Xueqin's attitude towards and purpose in creating his characters, he tried to ascribe some sense of class consciousness to the work by focusing on Cao's "attitude" towards the feudalist family structure. Though he could not bring himself to brand Cao Xueqin a "critic of feudalism", he at least granted him the ability to see beyond the constraints of his own class – a necessary precondition for the "realist author" according to the argumentation of Friedrich Engels in which he had elaborated on why Balzac had to be included in the socialist canon of literature.²⁴²

which has led some later scholars to conclude the existence of several hidden autobiographical references inserted by Cao Xueqin.

²⁴¹ (Yu Pingbo 1954b, 36).

²⁴² On this point, cf. Chapter 1.

The third part of “*Honglou meng jianlun*” is entitled “Zhushu de qingkuang” 著書的情況 (The Circumstances of Composition), and most importantly revisits the hypothesis (most prominently supported by Hu Shi, as we have seen above) that *Honglou meng* is an autobiographical work. Blaming his former autobiographical conjectures on the influence of the “Hidden Meaning School” (suoyinpai) of redology, Yu Pingbo compared Cao Xueqin’s modeling of characters on actual people to Lu Xun’s modeling of his character “Ah Q” (阿 Q) on the real person of A Gui 阿桂. In both cases, abstraction and fictional remolding by the author made up a substantial part of creating a character that was merely based on a real-life counterpart, and could not be read as a literal representation of a real person.²⁴³ To Yu, this meant that the “real character” (xianshixing 現實性) of the book’s protagonists was limited. Even though he stated that all the characters in *Honglou meng* to some extent represented elements of the author himself, he concluded that “Jia Baoyu is not Cao Xueqin, and Cao Xueqin is not Jia Baoyu.” Thereby, Yu distanced himself somewhat from Hu Shi’s *hongxue*, albeit without explicitly alluding to either Hu nor any of his writings on *Honglou meng*.²⁴⁴

Yu Pingbo also severely criticized Gao E’s 高鶚 (1758-ca. 1815) 40-chapter sequel to the 80-chapter original text of *Honglou meng*. He summed up his appraisal of the novel and the field of *hongxue* as follows:

The misfortune of the book, the misfortune of the author, is that, firstly, the book was never completed; secondly, that the sequel [i.e., the last forty chapters by Gao E] is ordinary and rash; moreover, there is the absurdity of the Hidden Meaning School; furthermore, [there are] problems that *kaozheng* cannot resolve. Of these, especially the fact that the book was never completed is an innate flaw, and there is no way to make up for it. (...) Simply for this reason, it is much easier to draw false conclusions. Those that oppose the book, who read it as a pornographic novel that incites sex, will burn it; those that endorse the book become enraptured and spend day after day lying on the bed reading. It seems that its correct approach is definitely the opposite, and mistaken attitudes are all the same: they all read this book literally, but, as the author says time and time again, this book must be read metaphorically. In the final chapter he wanted to resolve it, [but] unfortunately this wish was never fulfilled. Until the present day, who

²⁴³ (Yu Pingbo 1954b, 38).

²⁴⁴ (Ibid., 38).

can borrow the stones from the Great Fable Mountains to complete the repair of the broken sky?²⁴⁵

As this passage suggests, Yu Pingbo's appraisal of the novel was far from decisive and final. The greatest lacuna of the text to him was its fragmentary nature, on which he blamed the difficulty of arriving at any kind of definitive conclusion. At the end of the essay, he inserted his most prominent passage trying to endorse a Marxist-Leninist reading of *Honglou meng*, so as to "render it more readily accessible to the people and at the same time diminish the occurrences of its abuse [i.e., by previous, non-Marxist inspired scholarship]."²⁴⁶ Despite this final paragraph, however, the rest of the text at best appeared to prove Yu Pingbo's disinterest in the new standards and rhetoric.²⁴⁷

In "Guanyu 'Honglou meng jianlun' ji qita", Li Xifan and Lan Ling also targeted an earlier text of Yu Pingbo's, specifically a book entitled *Honglou meng yanjiu* 紅樓夢研究 (Study of Dream of the Red Chamber), which they would focus even more on in their second critique, "Ping 'Honglou meng yanjiu'" 評《紅樓夢研究》 (Criticism of Study of Dream of the Red Chamber), published in *Wenxue yichan* on October 10.

Yu Pingbo's *Honglou meng yanjiu* had appeared already in 1952 as the revised edition of his first larger study of the novel of 1923, entitled *Honglou meng bian*.²⁴⁸ Like its predecessor, it consisted of three volumes, but additionally included two supplements, as well as an author's preface and a postface by Wen Huaisha 文懷沙 (*1910), which replaced the original preface by Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893-1980). The following table represents the contents of the 1952 edition of *Honglou meng yanjiu* with (my) English translation:

²⁴⁵ (Yu Pingbo 1954b, 17).

²⁴⁶ (Ibid., 17).

²⁴⁷ As Sun Yuming points out, quotes from the Marxist-Leninist canon in academic texts were part of the standard code of conduct in the mid-fifties. Especially since the establishment of a new government office for the translation of works by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin in 1953, and since the start of the publication of the *Mao Zedong xuanji* 毛澤東選集 (Selected works of Mao Zedong) in 1951 (until 1953, three volumes had been issued), it was almost impossible not to refer to either in academic publications of the time, as Yu had done. Cf. (Sun Yuming 2003, 28).

²⁴⁸ The reason why Yu chose to revise *Honglou meng bian* in the early fifties apparently had less to do with scholarly ambition than with economic needs. As Sun Yuming relates, Yu at the time was in dire straits on account of his father's funeral, and contacted his friend and fellow *hongxuejia* Wen Huaisha 文懷沙 (*1910), who was at the time editing a series on Chinese classical literature with Tangdi publishers in Shanghai for assistance. The nature of this assistance, however, is controversial. In one version of the story, Wen helped Yu secure a contract with the publishing house, in another he merely helped procure an advance payment for Yu. For details, cf. (Sun Yuming 2003, 30 f., fn. 15).

	紅樓夢研究 (原版:上海,棠棣, 1952)	<i>Honglou meng yanjiu</i> (yuanban: Shanghai, Tangdi, 1952)	<i>Study of Dream of the Red Chamber</i> (original edition: Shanghai, Tangdi, 1952)
i	自序	Zixu	Author's preface
1	論續書底不可能	Lun xushu di bukeneng	On the impossibility of a sequel
2	辨后四十回底回目 非原有	Bian hou sishi hui di huimu fei yuanyou	Arguing that the last forty chapters are not a part of the original text
3	高鶚續書底依據	Gao E xushu di yiju	The foundations of Gao E's sequel
4	後四十回底批評	Hou sishihui di piping	Critique of the last forty chapters
5	高本戚本大體的比 較	Gaoben Qiben dati de bijiao	General comparison of the Gao and the Qi editions
6	作者底態度	Zuozhe di taidu	The attitude of the author
7	紅樓夢底風格	<i>Honglou meng di fengge</i>	The style of <i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i>
8	紅樓夢地點問題底 商討	<i>Honglou meng didian wenti di shangtao</i>	Discussion of the problem of <i>Dream of the Red Chamber's</i> setting
9	八十回後的紅樓夢	Bashi hui hou de <i>Honglou meng</i>	<i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i> after [the first] eighty chapters
10	論秦可卿之死	Lun Qin Keqing zhi si	On Qin Keqing's death
11	所謂〈舊時真本紅 樓夢〉	Suowei "jiushi zhengben <i>Honglou meng</i> "	The so-called "old original manuscript of <i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i> "
12	前八十回紅樓夢原 稿殘缺的情形	Qian bashi hui <i>Honglou meng</i> yuangao canque de xingqing	The fragmentary character of the first eighty chapters of the original manuscript of <i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i>
13	後三十回的紅樓夢	Hou sanshi hui de <i>Honglou meng</i>	The last thirty chapters of <i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i>
14	〈壽怡紅群芳開夜 宴〉圖說	"Shouyi hong qunfang kai yeyan" tushuo	Illustrated description of "Flower maidens combine for nocturnal birthday revels; And a grass widow copes with funeral arrangements single-handed" ²⁴⁹
15	紅樓夢正名	<i>Honglou meng zhengming</i>	The true name of <i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i>
16	紅樓夢第一回校勘 的一些材料	<i>Honglou meng di yi hui jiaokan de yixie cailiao</i>	A few materials for the collation of the first chapter of <i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i>
	附錄:	Fulu:	Appendices:
A	紅樓夢脂本(甲 戌)戚本程藝本文 字上的一點比較	<i>Honglou meng Zhiben</i> (Jiaxu) Qiben Cheng- Yiben wenzi shang de yidian bijiao	Small comparison of the Zhiyanzhai (Jiaxu), Qi, and Cheng-Yi manuscripts of <i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i>
B	讀紅樓夢隨筆而則	Du <i>Honglou meng</i> suibi erze	Second random jottings on reading <i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i>

²⁴⁹ The English title of Chapter 63 is taken from the 1973 translation of *Honglou meng* by David Hawkes.

C	跋 (文懷沙)	Ba (Wen Huaisha)	Postface (Wen Huaisha)
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The first five chapters of *Honglou meng yanjiu*, which originally made up the first *juan* 卷 (volume), mainly deal with the last forty chapters of the novel, and thus with the problem of the “original manuscript” and its “sequel”. The generally accepted premise here was that Cao Xueqin’s original text had remained incomplete, and in fact merely consisted of the first eighty chapters of the popular 120-chapter version, the final forty being partly compiled and partly written by Gao E. These chapters remained the same as in the earlier *Honglou meng bian* of 1923.

The next six chapters made up the second *juan*, and discuss everything from the author’s attitude to the time and setting of the novel, as well as the style of the first eighty chapters and possible scenarios deriving from that for the original ending that was never written. The final five chapters made up the third *juan*, and again talk about the novel’s manuscript versions and their various differences and lacunae, as well as research materials for an annotated first chapter, reflections on the novel’s title, and a very detailed and philological description of a dinner party held in *Honglou meng*’s chapter 63.

In sum, *Honglou meng yanjiu* represented in extenso what would later be criticized about “*Honglou meng jianlun*”: it was an all-out philological and politically at best unconscious reading of the novel, which in fact owed many of its premises to Hu Shi’s *xin hongxue* 新紅學 (new redology), such as the idea of extant autobiographical elements, and the strict adherence to the eighty/forty chapter division.²⁵⁰ Despite its later criticism, however, the initial publication of *Honglou meng yanjiu* met with much enthusiasm in academic circles, and by November 1953 it had reached its sixth printing with 25,000 copies sold.²⁵¹ Critical acclaim apparently did not falter until the publication of Li Xifan and Lan Ling’s critique: even in 1953, an article published in *Wenyi bao* was still able to praise Yu Pingbo’s use of the *kaozheng* method as breaking with a previous

²⁵⁰ In his excellent history of *hongxue* in China, Chen Weizhao describes the main trope of Hu Shi’s “redologist” followers as based on a liberal use of textual source material. By taking literary texts as a basis for historical conjectures (and vice versa), the *xin hongxue jia* like Hu Shi, Yu Pingbo and Zhou Ruchang 周汝昌 (*1918) mingled the story of *Honglou meng* with Cao Xueqin’s own family history. Chen coins this method *shizheng yu shilu heyi* 實證與實錄合一 (literally: uniting substantial proof and true records), whereby the former concept, *shizheng*, pertains to philological literary studies, the latter, *shilu*, to traditional historical studies, and both derive from earlier notions in imperial times (Chen Weizhao 2005, 144-147).

²⁵¹ (Sun Yuming 2003, 20).

tradition, i.e., Cai Yuanpei's *suoyin pai*.²⁵² But in 1954, with the appearance of "Guanyu 'Honglou meng jianlun' ji qita" and "Ping 'Honglou meng yanjiu'", the tone towards Yu Pingbo and his *kaozheng* of *Honglou meng* was changing.

Some of the main points of criticism raised in the 1954 campaign against *Honglou meng yanjiu* were related to the two chapters "Zuozhe di taidu 作者底態度" (The attitude of the author) and "Honglou meng di fengge 紅樓夢底風格" (The style of Dream of the Red Chamber) of the second *juan*, as it was in these that Yu's crucial view of the novel as an autobiographical account was most elaborated upon. Communist objection to the autobiographical reading rested on the expectation of the novel as a model of instruction, rather than the detailed portrayal of an individual family's misfortune. By denying *Honglou meng* this wider dimension, Yu Pingbo – following Hu Shi – had again read as "naturalist" what was supposed to be regarded as "realist" fiction.

Many of Yu's subsequent reasonings were seen as based on the at least partial autobiographical premise. These included, for example, Yu's reading of the style of *Honglou meng* as "resentful, but not angry" (*yuan'er bu nu* 怨而不怒), his notion that the "twelve beauties" (*shi'er chai* 十二釵) were based on real individuals from Cao Xueqin's family, his equation of the protagonist Jia Baoyu with Cao Xueqin himself, and his rendering of Baoyu as a "passive defeatist" rather than an "active fighter". Then again, more idealist concepts endorsed by Yu, like that of Baochai and Daiyu forming a kind of charismatic unity (i.e., a concept he called *Chai-Dai heyi* 釵黛合一, see below for details), were seen as contradicting the autobiographical, naturalist premise, and such mock dichotomies were pointed out several times to accuse Yu of ideological inconsistency.²⁵³ Additionally, though Yu had already revised this point in *Honglou meng yanjiu*, Li Xifan and Lan Ling criticized an overall evaluation of *Honglou meng* that Yu had passed in his original *Honglou meng bian*, namely that its literary value on the whole was not to be equaled with the "true masterpieces of world literature". Needless to say, this statement was read by Yu's critics as an overall attack on the Chinese literary heritage as inferior to Western traditions of literature.

²⁵² (Ibid.).

²⁵³ (Li and Lan 1954a); cf. also Li Xifan and Lan Ling. "Ping 'Honglou meng yanjiu' 評《紅樓夢研究》" (Critique of Study of Dream of the Red Chamber). In: Idem. *Honglou meng pinglun ji* 紅樓夢評論集 (Collection of commentary on Dream of the Red Chamber) (Beijing: Zuoja chubanshe, 1957), 21-33.

Core texts

The core texts of the *Honglou meng*-Campaign were two articles written by Li Xifan and Lan Ling, specifically:

- “Guanyu ‘Honglou meng jianlun’ ji qita” 關於《紅樓夢簡論》及其他 (On “Short Dissertation on Dream of the Red Chamber” Et Cetera) (published March 3rd, 1954, in *Xin Jianshe*, September 1st, 1954, in *Wenshizhe*, and September 30th, 1954, in *Wenyibao*)
- “Ping ‘Honglou meng yanjiu’” 評《紅樓夢研究》 (Criticism of “Study on Dream of the Red Chamber”) (published October 10th, 1954, in *Guangming ribao*’s cultural supplement *Wenxue yichan*)

In their first text, Li Xifan and Lan Ling demanded a rethinking of received literary categories and genres along the lines of Marxism-Leninism:

This is to say, reality has imposed a task on researchers of *Dream of the Red Chamber* which is serious and brimming with militancy: to correctly analyze and evaluate the *Dream*, to deliver it of all types of fallacious arguments, so that the broad masses of the people can appreciate it even more, and that the literary and art workers can accurately study it, has also become the most pressing task of the present.²⁵⁴

As they saw it, Yu Pingbo’s article 1953 “Honglou meng jianlun” had made it blatantly clear that the urgency of reevaluating the novel according to Marxist-Leninist principles had so far been ignored and underestimated.

Mr Yu Pingbo fails to explore the clear anti-feudalist tendencies of *Dream of the Red Chamber* from a realist principle, and is instead puzzled about certain chapters and sections, as well as the author’s attitude towards some issues. Thus he can only draw ambiguous conclusions. In “Short Dissertation on Dream of the Red Chamber” [*Honglou meng jianlun*] he says: “What kind of attitude does he [i.e., the author] have towards this family, or these types of family in general? Does he support and praise them, or does he expose and

²⁵⁴ (Li and Lan 1954a, 20). My translations are based on the text of “Guanyu ‘Honglou meng jianlun’ ji qita” as it first appeared in *Wenshizhe* 9 (1954), 20-25. For another English translation of the relevant passages, see also *Current Background* 315 (1955), although that translation is based on the later *Wenyibao*-version of the text, and therefore differs in some places from the original version (albeit to a minor extent).

criticize them? A close reading of the text appears to deny us a simple black and white answer.”²⁵⁵

Li Xifan and Lan Ling criticized Yu Pingbo’s interpretation by re-analyzing the novel according to three main criteria: (1) its political and social background as evidence to classify it as “realism”, (2) further evidence of realism in its protagonists, and (3) the literary traditions it stood in and developed. It is notable that their approach to *Honglou meng* was structurally inverse to Yu Pingbo’s: starting with the social context (which also meant an expansion from the author’s biography as a source of “realism”), they only turned to a closer reading of the text in the second part of their essay. Despite their use of select quotations from Yu’s previous work on the novel, as well as from *Honglou meng* itself to support their views, their essay was not philological (i.e., based on *kaozheng*) as Yu Pingbo’s had been.

After an introduction to *Honglou meng*’s general significance and a brief overview of its previous exegetic “distortions” by Yu Pingbo and his predecessors, the second part of Li and Lan’s essay began with a description of the novel’s historical backdrop, namely the reign period of the emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (r. 1735-1796) during the Qing dynasty. According to Li and Lan, this era showed the first symptoms of imperial decline with the gradual internal collapse of the “rotten” (fuxiu 腐朽) feudalism-bureaucrat ruling class. Cao Xueqin, himself a descendant of such a “rotten” family, was seen as a bearer of the inevitable historical destiny of his kind. He was a “realist” author, in that the events portrayed in *Honglou meng* could, in fact, be read as abstractions modeled on Cao’s experience of his own life and times.²⁵⁶

In fact, Li and Lan were adamant that one examine Cao Xueqin carefully before coming to any conclusions about his writing. But they did not mean that in the way Yu Pingbo had, as a focus was on biographical research. To them, an autobiographical reading of *Honglou meng* was not the correct approach. Rather, Li and Lan advocated research into Cao’s social background. Quoting the 19th-century Russian literary critic Nikolay Dobrolyubov (1836-1861), they wrote:

We think that if one truly wants to evaluate the realist meaning of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, one cannot simply come to a biased

²⁵⁵ (Li and Lan 1954a, 21). For the quoted passage of Yu’s original text, cf. (Yu Pingbo 1954b, 36).

²⁵⁶ (Li and Lan 1954a, 21).

conclusion based on some backward elements in the author's world view and his problematic attitude as expressed in the book. Rather, one should investigate this problem from the depth of the real character of the artistic imagery he uses. Because "when we observe an artist, we should not treat him as a theorist, but as an embodiment of a real life phenomenon." (Selected Works of Dobrolyubov, vol. I, p. 268)²⁵⁷

The author being what he was, namely a representative of his own times and class prejudices, was not expected to spearhead the revolt that would lead from one historical stage to the next. But, as Li and Lan knew from having read Engels' letter to Margaret Harkness, it was possible for the great writers of the past to nevertheless describe all the inherent flaws and contradictions of their own class by employment of realism, thereby "overcoming" their own class-based limitations.²⁵⁸ Therefore, they argued, it was only by reading *Honglou meng* as a masterpiece of realism that one could come to a correct conclusion about an author's "tendentiousness" (qingxiangxing 傾向性).

Cao Xueqin's "tendency" clearly being an opposition to feudalism, one could only conclude that Yu Pingbo had not read *Honglou meng* correctly, seeing in it no anger, in its author no tendency, and in its characters little more than operatic type casts. To Li and Lan it was clear that the main protagonists, Lin Daiyu and Jia Baoyu, were traitors to their feudal-bureaucratic family who opposed the Confucian ethical code and despised official positions and wealth.²⁵⁹ As for *Honglou meng* containing other literary traditions (chuantongxing), these lay in the novel's development of the realist method, as well as of the popular nature (renminxing 人民性) and national character (minzu fengge 民族風格) of literature. It was the more abstract themes and categories like these that Li and Lan were interested in, and not what Yu Pingbo promoted as *Honglou meng's* "traditionality", namely quotes and other traces of previous literary works and genres in the novel. That, they stated, only resulted in reading Cao Xueqin as a master copyist, rather than a profoundly observant realist.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ (Ibid., 21).

²⁵⁸ The Chinese rendition of this letter (originally translated by Lu Kanru, as mentioned in Chapter 1) had in fact been canonized in an 1950s anthology entitled *Makesi, Engesi, Liening, Sidalin lun wenyi* 馬克思, 恩格斯, 列寧, 斯大林論文藝 (Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin on Literature). Li Xifan and Lan Ling quoted from the translation of the letter included in this anthology, perhaps also because it had formed part of the required reading materials already during their student years.

²⁵⁹ (Li and Lan 1954a, 22).

²⁶⁰ (Ibid., 24).

Li and Lan saw all of these characteristics represented in *Honglou meng's* exposure of the fundamental social and political inequalities and injustices prevalent within the “feudalist bureaucrat and landowner class”, i.e., of their “ruthless exploitation, merciless rule, fake Neo-Confucianist appearance, and licentious shameless spirit”.²⁶¹ About the author of *Honglou meng*, Cao Xueqin, who revealed said inequalities while at the same time himself a member of the exploiting class, they passed the following judgement:

... even though Cao Xueqin is a bit biased on the political level, this does not cause him in any way to write about real life in an unrealistic or glossed-over manner, or to distort the true face of life. Instead, he has reflected it according to the facts, objectively from its substance. The author's world view has been overcome by his realist method of writing, and has retreated to an irrelevant position. This also is in keeping with what is most to be valued in the tradition of China's classical realist authors, and caused *Dream of the Red Chamber* to reach a new realist peak.²⁶²

This passage towards the end of the text again emphasized that an author's “world view” did not necessarily impede his writing great literature, provided, of course, that literature be realist. A key element and corner stone of literary historiography, it was also another reference to the commonly used “Balzac-argument” in Engels' letter to Margaret Harkness, which Lan and Ling had quoted in the beginning of the text.

By thus placing themselves in the tradition of Engels and the *Yan'an Talks* – which had further developed the idea of the possible discordance between an author's “world view” and his “writing technique” – Li and Lan understood their approach to what they termed “realism” as diametrically opposed to Yu Pingbo's use of the term. Rejecting Yu's autobiographical or “naturalist” (ziranzhuyi 自然主義) reading of *Honglou meng*, they had learned that an autobiographical novel could never achieve the level of abstraction needed to ascribe to it and its backdrop “model” (dianxing 典型) characteristics, which accounted for the main difference between what the Chinese Marxist critics understood as “realist” and “naturalist” prose.

Li Xifan and Lan Ling saw one of the most prominent examples of Yu Pingbo's “anti-realism” (fanxianshizhuyi 反現實主義) in his evaluation of *Honglou meng's*

²⁶¹ (Li and Lan 1954a, 24).

²⁶² (Ibid., 25).

protagonists, specifically his understanding of the complementary characters of Lin Daiyu and Xue Baochai. To Yu, the two young women were indeed not only complementary in character, but literally two sides of the same coin, a notion he had subsumed under the term *Chai-Dai heyi* 釵黛合一 (lit: Baochai and Daiyu are merged into one). In brief, the idea was that the merging of the characteristics of both young women would yield the “perfect woman”, whose accomplishments and bearing left nothing to be desired, and that Cao Xueqin had deliberately modeled both protagonists according to this principle. To Li and Lan the notion was preposterous, mainly because it was built on an idealist assumption and left the two female characters without possible realist counterparts to account for their “model characteristics”. For this reason, Yu Pingbo’s so-called “*Chai-Dai-heyi lun*” 釵黛合一論 (theory of the merging of Baochai and Daiyu) became a popularly cited example for his departure from the realist standards of literary criticism in the course of the *Honglou meng*-campaign.

Specifically, Li Xifan and Lan Ling’s “Guanyu ‘Honglou meng jianlun’ ji qita” accused Yu Pingbo of the following eight, somewhat mutually dependent and overlapping fallacies: (1) of failing to analyze *Honglou meng* as work of realism, (2) of neglecting both his own and Cao Xueqin’s “definitive class standpoint” (mingque de jieji guandian 明確的階級觀點), (3) of instead taking on an “abstract artistic position” (chouxiang de yishu guandian 抽象的藝術觀點), (4) of depicting *Honglou meng* as a “resentful, but not angry” (yuan’erbunu) novel and contrasting it in this respect with *Shuihu zhuan*, which he termed a mere “angry book” (nushu 怒書), (5) of interpreting it via the complementary concepts of “substance” (se) and “void” (kong), which from a realist standpoint were completely irrelevant and even considered nihilist (xuwuzhuyi 虛無主義), (6) of denying the novel a clear-cut, anti-feudalist, and realist interpretation, (7) of drawing the wrong conclusions about *Honglou meng*’s literary influences (i.e., by looking for direct quotes and literary allusions based on *kaozheng*, rather than looking for an overall evolution in the realist tradition of literature), and (8) of failing to see the significance of the main characters Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu and their love story as a symbol of protest against feudalistic society.

The main points of later criticism were therefore already quite clearly formulated in Li and Lan’s first attack, and though Hu Shi as the originator of this kind of “anti-realist”, “bourgeois-idealist” scholarship was not yet actually named, the reference in the

final passage of “Guanyu ‘Honglou meng jianlun’ ji qita” to the *kaozheng*-tradition of earlier *hongxuejia* somewhat addresses the issue:

In his *Study of Dream of the Red Chamber*, Mr Yu Pingbo criticized the old redologists, and in his “Brief Dissertation on Dream of the Red Chamber” he also criticized the New Kaozheng School of recent years, who read *Dream of the Red Chamber* completely as its author’s biography. These criticisms naturally have a definitive value. And yet we cannot help but point out that from *Study of Dream of the Red Chamber* [*Honglou meng yanjiu*] to “Brief Dissertation on Dream of the Red Chamber” [*Honglou meng jianlun*] Yu Pingbo’s research method still basically copies the *kaozheng* perspective of the old redologists, and that in the “Brief Dissertation” text he even takes its development a step further. The *kaozheng* method can only be used in specific circumstances, to discern chronologies or differentiate between the true and the false [of a historical period]. But Mr Yu has already employed the *kaozheng* perspective in his analysis of artistic imagery, and the result is that he has come to a series of anti-realist, formalist conclusions.²⁶³

Li Xifan and Lan Ling’s second critique, “Ping ‘Honglou meng yanjiu’” consists of five parts and begins by roughly summarizing Yu Pingbo’s main concern with finding the original text version of *Honglou meng* as “separating the false, so as to keep the true” (‘bianwei’ yu ‘cunzhen’ de gongzuo 〈辨偽〉與〈存真〉的工作). They saw his effort mainly represented in his insistence on the eighty/fourty chapter division of the text. Li and Lan ascribed this kind of philological nitpicking to Yu’s heritage as a “feudalistic scholar”, who could not treat the text as a valuable whole unless he was able to relate the author’s thought to his work.²⁶⁴ Nevertheless, they lauded his dedication to finding the original manuscript through careful collation, a task, they stated, that has “of course been definitely helpful for the readers of *Dream of the Red Chamber*”.²⁶⁵

However, the main focus of redology, Li and Lan continued, should not be on the fine points accessible through *kaozheng*, but on the grander, theoretical scheme of things, which Yu Pingbo completely failed to acknowledge. To them, *Honglou meng* represented a “great contribution to the development of realist literature in China”, and Yu Pingbo not only neglected this point, he even called its validity into question by asserting that

²⁶³ (Li and Lan 1954a, 25).

²⁶⁴ (Li and Lan 1957, 21).

²⁶⁵ (Ibid.).

the novel was an autobiographical work. Thus it was from reading *Honglou meng* as an autobiography that all of Yu's subsequent "errors" arose.²⁶⁶

Though for the most part merely elaborating the main concepts of "Guanyu 'Honglou meng jianlun' ji qita", "Ping 'Honglou meng yanjiu'" brought up two extra points of criticism that set it apart from the former, drawing the focus away from Yu Pingbo alone and resetting it within a wider, political realm. The first was that in this text Yu's "erroneous point of view" (cuowu guandian 錯誤觀點) was linked for the first time to his friend and mentor Hu Shi, specifically the latter's "pragmatism" (here: gongyongzhuyi 功用主義, literally: "functionalism") and "relativism" (xiangduizhuyi 相對主義).²⁶⁷ In part five of their critique, Li and Lan even stated that Yu Pingbo was but an heir to Hu Shi's *hongxue*, specifically his "Honglou meng kaozheng 紅樓夢考證" of 1921. In this last part, they also for the first time defined both Hu Shi and Yu Pingbo's *hongxue* as the *Xin suoyin pai* 新索隱派 ("New Hidden Meaning School"), thereby ranking them only as marginally different from the earlier Cai Yuanpei-tradition which Hu and Yu had sought to set themselves against.²⁶⁸

Thus, Li and Lan's second attack of October 10 already pointed to the gradual turn of events which would transform the *Honglou meng*- or Anti-Yu Pingbo-Campaign into the Anti-Hu Shi-Campaign by the end of the year. Chronologically speaking, this means that Hu Shi was already implicated in the *Honglou meng*-Campaign even before Mao Zedong held his speech "Guanyu Honglou meng yanjiu wenti de xin" before the CCPC Politburo on October 16.

The second point of novel criticism in "Ping 'Honglou meng yanjiu'", though somewhat related to the first, was that Yu Pingbo was given the definitive political label of "bourgeois subjective-idealist scholar" (zichanjieji zhuguan weixinlun de xuezhe 資產階級主觀唯心論的學者), which again was related to Hu Shi's influence, as "bourgeois subjective idealism" was exactly what Hu Shi's scholarship stood for in a Maoist context.

²⁶⁶ (Li and Lan 1957, 22 f.).

²⁶⁷ The term "pragmatism" – as it was used to refer to Hu Shi and his mentor John Dewey's methodology – was later on during the Anti-Hu Shi-Campaign mostly either translated as *shiyongzhuyi* 實用主義 or *shiyanzhuyi* 實驗主義 (literally: experimentalism). As far as I am aware, *gongyongzhuyi* was at that point no longer in use.

²⁶⁸ (Li and Lan 1957, 33).

Policy texts

In order to anchor the orthodox reading of Lan and Ling's articles, the major cultural politicians held (ghost-written) speeches that became (heavily edited) articles, which were systematically diffused via the main party organs, such as the *Renmin ribao* and *Guangming ribao*, as well as in nationally distributed campaign anthologies. In this section, we are going to look at three of the most important samples, specifically:

- Guo Moruo 郭沫若: "San dian jianyi" 三點建議 (Three Proposals),
- Mao Dun 茅盾: "*Lianghao de kaiduan*" 良好的開端 (A good start)
- Zhou Yang 周揚: "*Women bixu zhandou*" 我們必須戰鬥 (We must fight)

All three were originally speeches held in December 1954 at a joint conference of the presidia of the *Wenlian* and the Chinese Writers' Union, i.e., of the two most powerful organs in cultural policy making and execution in the P.R.C. This conference was to some extent a key turning point of the campaign, as it was with Guo's speech "San dian jianyi" that the official start of the campaign against Hu Shi was proclaimed, and the focus on Yu Pingbo gradually began to decline.

Subsequently printed in *Renmin ribao*, Guo's "San dian jianyi" is split into five sections and links contemporary criticism of Yu Pingbo to the problem of "Hu Shi thought" in society at large, offering advice on how to eliminate it, so as to avoid any further negative effect on China's youth.²⁶⁹ A far cry from what could be considered even attempted literary criticism, the speech was instructive in pragmatic, rather than content-based terms. Accordingly, the "three proposals" alluded to in its title were of a more general and binding nature, advertising the smallest common methodological denominators for all campaign participants:

In four days of concentrated debate I believe we have already come to a few common understandings in terms of how to correct our mistakes: firstly, we must determinedly launch an ideological struggle against bourgeois idealism; secondly, we must launch wide-spread

²⁶⁹ The speech is also included as a policy text in *Honglou meng wenti taolunji* 紅樓夢問題討論集 (Collection of debates on the problem of Dream of the Red Chamber) (4 vols., Beijing: Zuoja chubanshe), vol. I, 1-15.

free discussions in academia, and raise constructive criticism; thirdly, we must intensify the fostering of the newly emerging forces.²⁷⁰

Rather than giving an opinion on the revaluation of the literary heritage – which Yu Pingbo was being criticized for – Guo Moruo’s speech offered a view of the bigger picture and reemphasized the measures taken in the wake of any thought reform process: the elucidation of a principle (i.e., “bourgeois idealism”) was to be heuristically achieved through common sessions of “discussion” and “criticism”, and the younger generation was to be included in the process, just like Li Xifan and Lan Ling had been included in the formulation of the problem via their criticisms of Yu Pingbo.

In a supportive gesture, Mao Dun’s speech “Lianghao de kaiduan”, already affirms the policy-building character of Guo Moruo’s speech:

We have already held eight sessions of our plenum, and just now president Guo Moruo gave some instructions on the goals and tasks of the present debate, as well as on how to continue developing the opposition to bourgeois ideology, criticisms of Hu Shi, etc., after today. The instructions of president Guo were extremely profound, extremely sincere, and full of encouragement for our spirit of helping others, while at the same time admonishing us to avoid errors that are likely to occur. I wholeheartedly support president Guo’s instructions, and I think that all friends attending the conference, both old and young, surely also completely support [them].²⁷¹

Like Guo Moruo, Mao Dun spoke of the necessity to eliminate “Hu Shi thought”, both in general and in terms of the research methods currently being practiced. He added a passage of self-criticism, in which he admitted to having adhered to Hu Shi’s opinions on *Honglou meng* in a preface he wrote in 1935, but also warned of an incomplete understanding of Marxism-Leninism, which could lead to abuse and failure to thoroughly replace the old, academic standards of the May Fourth era.²⁷² Like Guo, Mao Dun also referred to the methods to achieve said “thorough replacement” decided on by the plenum for the upcoming six months, naming, among others, “report” (baogao 報告)

²⁷⁰ (Guo Moruo 1955, 3).

²⁷¹ (Mao Dun 1955, 16). This speech, like that of Guo Moruo, is also included in *Honglou meng wenti taolunji* 紅樓夢問題討論集 (Collection of debates on the problem of Dream of the Red Chamber) (4 vols., Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe), vol. I, 16-19.

²⁷² (Ibid., 18).

sessions and study in “small groups” (xiaozu 小組), i.e., methods already in use in the P.R.C. since its very beginning.²⁷³

Zhou Yang’s “Women bixu zhandou” is the lengthiest of the three texts, and, like “Lianghao de kaiduan” reaffirms Guo Moruo’s authority in the matter. Unlike his predecessors, however, Zhou Yang did dwell on the actual issue of *hongxue* in the P.R.C., and made an effort to explain what was wrong about Hu Shi’s May Fourth legacy:

The May Fourth Movement revalued *Dream of the Red Chamber*, as well as *The Water Margin*, the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and other classical works; because the May Fourth New Culture Movement advocated new ethics and opposed old ethics, advocated the vernacular and opposed classical Chinese, these works received renewed value and esteem from a widespread readership. But Hu Shi’s research of *Dream of the Red Chamber* and other Chinese classics proceeded completely from the perspective of American bourgeois subjective idealism – [i.e.,] pragmatism, consequently it could not come up with the correct, truly rational evaluation. Firstly, his [i.e., Hu Shi’s] textual analyses and evaluations of the classical works all had the goal of opposing the revolution. This he has already understood and proclaimed himself. Secondly, he only looked at the classical works simply from their linguistic form, thus at the vernacular, and did not pay attention to the works’ ideological content and artistic value. Whenever he passed some kind of judgment on the ideological content and artistic value of a work, it was almost always completely mistaken. (...) But Hu Shi’s thought has for a long time had the dominant position in the field of classical literary research.²⁷⁴

Zhou Yang was very explicit about Yu Pingbo standing in the tradition of Hu Shi’s bourgeois-idealist *hongxue*, and he argued that Yu’s most significant mistake had been his absolute denial of *Honglou meng*’s all-pervading criticism of feudal society, reading it instead as a novel “bemoaning its own fate”.²⁷⁵ He listed some of the arguments against Yu that were already in circulation, such as Yu’s appraisal of *Honglou meng* as “resentful, but not angry” (yuan’er bunu), his use of *kaozheng* as not aiding in better understanding the novel, and his neglect of Cao Xueqin’s originality for the benefit of establishing useless “literary legacies” in *Honglou meng*.²⁷⁶

²⁷³ (Mao Dun 1955, 16).

²⁷⁴ (Zhou Yang 1955, 22 f.). Cf. *Honglou meng wenti taolunji* 紅樓夢問題討論集 (Collection of debates on the problem of Dream of the Red Chamber) (4 vols., Beijing: Zuoqia chubanshe), vol. I, 20-41.

²⁷⁵ (Ibid., 23).

²⁷⁶ (Zhou Yang 1955, 23).

Zhou Yang further insisted that Marxism-Leninism was the only method capable of combatting Hu Shi thought (specifically “idealism” and “pragmatism”) in literary scholarship, and he repeatedly cited Li Xifan and Lan Ling as pioneers in this respect.²⁷⁷ However, like his colleagues Mao Dun and Guo Moruo, Zhou Yang also did not name any concrete examples of how to correctly apply Marxism-Leninism to the study of the literary heritage, instead settling for examples of how best not to do it.

The second and third parts of his speech therefore focus on concrete cases of “Hu Shi thought” acting in the guise of “Hu Shi criticism”. The first and at the time popularly cited case was the failure of *Wenyibao* to support Li Xifan and Lan Ling’s initial attempt to print their attacks of Yu. This had already been pointed out by Yuan Shuipai in his *Renmin ribao* article of October 28, “Zhiwen Wenyibao bianzhe 質問文藝報編者” (Questioning the editors of *Wenyibao*), and subsequently led to the targeting of Feng Xuefeng in a spin-off campaign and to the complete reordering of the *Wenyibao* editorial board by late December, 1954. The second case had at the time not yet been brought to large-scale public attention, but it would by mid-1955 turn into one of the harshest purges of an individual prior to the Anti-Rightist-Campaign in the early P.R.C. The reference is, of course, to the attacks on Hu Feng 胡風 (1902-1985). An old rival of Zhou Yang’s from their times as Communist base associates in Yan’an and Shanghai respectively, Hu Feng had never sat comfortably with the faction of Yan’an Communists ultimately in governing power after 1949. Thus, when Hu Feng seized an opportunity to criticize *Wenyibao* for not having paid enough attention to the efforts of the two young scholars Li Xifan and Lan Ling at the conference of the joint presidia of the Writers’ Union and the *Wenlian* in December, Zhou Yang in turn attacked Hu Feng.

Referring to him as a “fake Marxist”, Zhou called into question Hu Feng’s most basic assumptions about literature before May Fourth. Unlike the official standpoint at the time, which differentiated between “feudalist” and “popular” literature, Hu Feng had referred to all literature before May Fourth as “feudalist”, thereby distorting the development of “realism” that the Chinese Marxist critics were looking for.²⁷⁸ At the time, much importance was given to the so-called “popular” literature (minjian wenxue 民間文學) in this quest. Two of Zhou’s most poignant attacks on Hu Feng’s literary criticism

²⁷⁷ (Ibid., 24 ff.).

²⁷⁸ (Zhou Yang 1955, 31).

revolved around *Honglou meng* and Hu's use of the term "vulgar sociology" (yongsu shehuixue 庸俗社會學) in connection with the *Wenyibao*-case, respectively.

The first attack was a fairly typical example of accusing the opponent of "missing the point" and thereby failing to take into account the bigger picture. In his earlier speech, Hu Feng had stated his opinion that *Honglou meng's* main strong point, which ranked it above all previous Chinese literature, was its egalitarian attitude towards women. If this was truly what made *Honglou meng* greater than its predecessors, Zhou Yang scoffed, then what about the rest of the earlier literary heritage? Should all previous Chinese literature be discarded because its attitude towards women was not as "progressive"?²⁷⁹

In terms of "vulgar sociology", the attack was a little more intricate. Hu Feng had accused *Wenyibao* of promoting vulgar sociology as their guiding principle, and Zhou Yang conceded that *Wenyibao* in the past indeed had committed several mistakes of that kind. They had, for example, promoted the kind of literary criticism that mistook literature for a literal representation of political and social circumstances, criticizing everything that was particular to literary creation and too far removed from "real life". Hu Feng's attacks, however, went decidedly too far in Zhou Yang's opinion.

According to Zhou Yang, Hu Feng had equated *Wenyibao's* "vulgar sociology" with "formalism" (xingshizhuyi 形式主義), and accused them of having created a fundamental "vulgar sociologist" ideology that guided their entire work, when in fact they had also published a fair amount of articles criticizing vulgar sociology and vulgar Marxism.²⁸⁰ Zhou Yang also polemicized Hu Feng's vague take on the term and contrasted it with his own understanding of "vulgar sociology":

You want to promote knowledge of social real life and a Communist world view as important to a revolutionary author? If you don't emphasize some kind of "individual fighting spirit", "the strength of personality", etc., but rather put an emphasis on immersing oneself in mass struggle, studying politics and studying Marxism, well then your "focal point" is wrong and you are guilty of vulgar sociology! You want to show the workers, peasants and soldiers in your work? If you don't show their physical "trauma of an enslaved spirit", the "spontaneity", "convulsiveness" and "madness" of their struggle, but rather show

²⁷⁹ (Ibid., 31).

²⁸⁰ (Zhou Yang 1955, 34 f.).

their organized battle, and their noble, progressive and heroic character, well then your focus is [also] out of place, and you are guilty of vulgar sociology! You want to study and raise your literary technique and promote the national form of literature? Then you are a formalist, which means “to compromise with bourgeois aesthetics”. Also, formalism is “one mark of vulgar sociology expressing itself in aesthetics”!²⁸¹

In this passage – as in the rest of his speech – Zhou Yang clearly spoke up against literature focusing too much on individual suffering, and instead promoted a positive portrayal of revolutionary efforts, an undercurrent that ran through most of literary criticism and revaluation at the time. As much as this was an attack against the individual Hu Feng, this was also an emphatic promotion of “socialist realism” as contrasted with “naturalism”: in the latter mode, the suffering and arduous struggle of a well-characterized individual is emphasized, rather than the model attitude and forced positive outcome of the coordinated efforts of many similarly characterized individuals, as in the former case.

Considering the call for more “model characters” in literature (meaning characters worthy of real-life emulation by the common people) that was also going on at the time, there appears to have been a very fine line between creating a “model world” in socialist realist literature and its negative counterparts, “formalism” and “vulgar sociology”. While the former was understood as too focused on the form of literature at the expense of its contents, the latter was at times described as an all too literal representation of reality (resulting in naturalism), or other times as an all too rigid application of social theory resulting in “lifeless characters” – depending each time on the critic and who was being criticized.

As the attack of Hu Feng on *Wenyibao* and the subsequent attack of Zhou Yang on Hu Feng demonstrates, opposing parties could very well make use of the same terminology to attack each other for completely different reasons, and the references made and arguments found in applying these fickle terms were able to signify completely different perspectives. While Hu Feng had used “vulgar sociology” to mean the forcefully cheerful and positive depiction of the revolutionary struggle, Zhou Yang used the same term to mean the superfluous and possibly demoralizing literal

²⁸¹ (Ibid., 35 f.).

representation of the suffering and oppressed working class individual driven to revolt out of desperation and necessity rather than coordination and choice.

Conference texts

On November 7, 1954, Shandong University in Qingdao held the first session of a large-scale symposium on *Dream of the Red Chamber*, which was attended by over two hundred professors and students of every *danwei* 單位 (here: Shanda work units).²⁸² It was the first recorded conference on *Honglou meng* at that university since the establishment of the P.R.C., and one of the first held at a large comprehensive university since the start of the campaign against Yu Pingbo 俞平伯 (1900-1990) in October of that year.²⁸³ The symposium was to continue well into December, comprising a total of five sessions dedicated to criticizing Yu Pingbo's "bourgeois idealist" take (*zichanjieji weixinlun guandian* 資產階級唯心論觀點) on *Honglou meng*, and what had become outdated *hongxue* 紅學 in general.²⁸⁴ After November 7, which had been the first of a series of conference sessions to discuss *Honglou meng* and its new significance, there followed further large- and small-scale debates at Shanda, the results of which were initially published in *Renmin wenxue* (People's Literature) on February 1, 1955, as a report entitled "Women duiyu Honglou meng de chubu renshi 我們對於紅樓夢的初步認識" (Our preliminary understanding of Dream of the Red Chamber).

Shanda's was just one of the many *Honglou meng*-conferences that took place in the fall of 1954. As it happens, Peking University had convened their *Honglou meng* symposium one day before Shandong University, on November 6.²⁸⁵ Beijing Normal University had begun to convene a similar symposium already on October 29, and continued with their second session on November 4, 1954.²⁸⁶ People's University

²⁸² Liang Xiyan 梁希彥. "Women duiyu Honglou meng yanjiu de chubu yijian 我們對於紅樓夢研究的初步意見" (Our preliminary views on studying Dream of the Red Chamber). In: *Wenyibao* 22 (1954), 27-30.

²⁸³ The Literature Research Institute was at the time actually already a part of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, but for reasons of space had retained its offices on the campus of Peking University. Therefore, it is sometimes still referred to in contemporary sources as "Peking University Literature Research Institute" (Beijing Daxue Wenxue yanjiusuo 北京大學文學研究所) Cf. (Sun Yuming 2003, 330, fn. 26).

²⁸⁴ *Wenshizhe editor*. "Bianzhe de hua 編者的話" (Editor's note). In: *Wenshizhe* 1 (1955), 28.

²⁸⁵ Xinhua News Agency. "Beijing Daxue zhaokai guanyu Honglou meng yanjiu de zuotanhui 北京大學召開關於紅樓夢研究的座談會" (Peking University convenes a symposium on the study of Dream of the Red Chamber). In: *Renmin ribao* (November 9, 1954[a]).

²⁸⁶ Yang Jianzhong 楊建中 (Lan Ling). "Zhongguo Renmin Daxue deng gaodeng xuexiao shisheng dui Honglou meng yanjiu zhong de cuowu guandian zhankai piping 中國人民大學等高等學校師生對紅樓夢讚酒中的錯誤觀點展開批評" (Teachers and students of China People's University and other institutions of

followed suit on November 15.²⁸⁷ Yu Pingbo's own *danwei*, the Literature Research Institute (Wenxue yanjiusuo 文學研究所) began organizing discussions in late November 1954.²⁸⁸ All of these conferences generated legions of papers that were discussed, circulated and occasionally also published. In the case of Shanda, for example, the papers of the November conference deemed most relevant were published in the January 1955 issue of *Wenshizhe*. Taking a closer look at the Shanda symposium, the main goal of this sub-section is to provide a concrete glimpse of the academic production and discussion caused by and at the service of the *Honglou meng*-Campaign.

In total, Shandong University's journal for the humanities, *Wenshizhe*, recorded that twenty-eight speeches were held at the first Shanda *Honglou meng*-symposium of early November 1954. Seventeen of these were printed in the January 1955 issue. The topics somewhat varied from general criticisms of Yu Pingbo's *Honglou meng* research and Hu Shi's influence on literary studies, to concepts in literary theory ("naturalism" versus "realism", "historical" versus "artistic truth") and particular issues in *hongxue* (character portrayals, historical backdrop of the novel, etc.).

As Liang Xiyan 梁希彥, an English professor at the Foreign Languages Department, summarized it, the central concern of the discussions in Shandong was the "struggle between the bourgeoisie and the working classes as reflected in literary criticism". What China needed, according to the participants of the symposium, was a new literary criticism based on Marxism-Leninism, which would also help promote the creation of a new socialist-realist literature.²⁸⁹ The editors of *Wenshizhe* summarized the goals of the conference as threefold:

- (1) To criticize the attitude and method of bourgeois idealist research of classical literature;
- (2) to initiate an enquiry into the social meaning and literary value of the book *Dream of the Red Chamber*;
- and (3) to raise the level of teaching and researching classical literature.²⁹⁰

higher learning launch criticisms of erroneous perspectives in the research of *Dream of the Red Chamber*). In: *Renmin ribao* (November 17, 1954).

²⁸⁷ (Ibid.).

²⁸⁸ Lei Peng 雷朋. "Yu Pingbo zai Beijing Daxue yanjiusuo taolun "Honglou meng" zhong de biao xian 俞平伯在北京大學文學研究所討論《紅樓夢》中的表現" (Yu Pingbo's comportment during the "Honglou meng" debates at Peking University's Literature Research Institute). In: *Neibu cankao* (February 9, 1955), 123-124: 123.

²⁸⁹ (Liang Xiyan 1954).

²⁹⁰ (*Wenshizhe* editor 1955).

To meet these demands, Liang Xiyuan relates three main points that were brought up in the criticisms of Yu Pingbo and his mentor Hu Shi's *hongxue*. The first was Hu Shi's vision of "literary criticism for its own sake" ("wei kaozheng er kaozheng 為考證而考證", i.e., *l'art pour l'art*). From this premise, it was argued, there followed a general negation of the concept of "objective truth", and one thus easily arrived at a reading of *Honglou meng* as a "naturalist" work, rather than the "realist" masterpiece that it was. And this conceptual difference was perhaps the most crucial in early P.R.C. literary historiography and criticism.

The one fundamental underlying creed behind all of the seemingly diverse aesthetic evaluations of *Honglou meng* at the Shanda conference was the concept of the novel as a work of *realism* (xianshizhuyi 現實主義). The natural precursor of the new slogan in literature and art since 1953, "socialist realism" (shehuizhuyi xianshizhuyi 社會主義現實主義), "realism" was set against the concept of "naturalism" (ziranzhuyi 自然主義) in early P.R.C. critical theory. The main argument was that naturalism gave room to expressions of "idealism" (weixinzhuyi 唯心主義) and "formalism" (xingshizhuyi 形式主義), which pertained to the ideology of the reactionary bourgeois classes seeking to obscure social reality for fear of losing their ruling power. Realism as an aesthetic category, on the other hand, was firmly grounded in "materialism" (weiwuzhuyi 唯物主義) and as such could not but correctly reflect class society and its inherent conflicts. To identify and ascribe realism to works of the classical heritage therefore became the most potent tool in the hands of the Communist critics and literary historians.

Honglou meng, and this was the general consensus, was a realist work. This was the most basic standard exegetic premise. From that, all other arguments assessing the novel and its previous criticism could be deduced. Therefore, the speeches at the Shandong symposium almost always contained a passage establishing the fact that *Honglou meng* was a realist masterpiece, or that Cao Xueqin had been a realist author. Some, like Lu Kanru, though not mentioning the term "realism" in his speech, condemned Hu Shi's interpretation of *Honglou meng* as "naturalist" or as Cao Xueqin's "autobiography", thus signaling that he was at the very least not openly opposed to the realist premise.

Others, like former Harvard graduate and professor of English literature Wu Fuheng 吳富恆 (1911-2001), focused almost exclusively on the distinctions between realism and naturalism in their speeches:

Realist literature uses artistic imagery to reflect the important, fundamental, and typical things in real life (xianshi shenghuo 現實生活), to explain society – the rules and trends of its historical development, criticisms of its dark and outdated, moribund aspects, and praises of its bright, progressive and newly emerging (xinsheng 新生) aspects. It has the use or effect of educating the people and changing society. Realist literature reflects objective reality (keguan xianshi 客觀現實), and so it is materialist in explaining society – the rules of historical development have a social and political meaning, and realist literature must reflect the important and fundamental aspects of objective real life through artistic imagery, so “besides truth of detail, it must also reproduce typical characters under typical circumstances.”²⁹¹ Towards their objects of description – events and the love and hatred between people, realist authors truly have the aim of educating the people and changing society.²⁹²

“Naturalism” by contrast, as Wu further related quoting Émile Zola, did not focus on the meta-levels of society and served no other aim than to describe in minute detail the intricacies of daily life, failing to pass judgment.²⁹³ The description of detail versus focusing on the big picture, mere narration versus the higher aim of (political) education, social criticism versus an uncritical depiction of society: it was thus that the differences between literary concepts underlying *Honglou meng* and other works from the literary heritage were distinguished by the Chinese Marxists, both in Shandong and elsewhere.

The second point that was brought up at the symposium according to Liang Xiyan regarded Yu Pingbo’s and Hu Shi’s obliteration of “class contradictions” (jieji maodun 階級矛盾) inherent in the novel. This was a problem that pertained mainly to the evaluation as “positive” or “negative” of *Honglou meng*’s protagonists. Most famously, there was the issue of the characters Lin Daiyu and Xue Baochai – while both Yu Pingbo

²⁹¹ This is a quote from the letter by Friedrich Engels to Margaret Harkness of April 15, 1888. As mentioned before in chapter 1, the letter was perhaps one of the most popular sources of Marxist authoritative, “nomadic” quotation in early P.R.C. literary criticism, and one of the passages cited the most was the one above, on “typical characters”. The original sentence ran as follows: “Realism, to my mind, implies, besides truth of detail, the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances.”

²⁹² Wu Fuheng. “Lun xianhizhuyi yu ziranzhuyi de qubie 論現實主義與自然主義的區別” (On the differences between realism and naturalism). In: *Wenshizhe* 1 (1955), 7-9: 7 f.

²⁹³ (Ibid., 8).

and Hu Shi had asserted that Cao Xueqin had been impartial in their creation, and Yu even suggested they represented “two sides of the same coin”, the Communist redologists insisted on being partial. Thus, Feng Yuanjun argued that there were “character groups” in *Honglou meng* which necessitated a definitive moral/political judgment. On the positive, “anti-feudalist” side were Lin Daiyu, the maids Skybright (Qingwen 晴雯) and Chess (Siqi 司棋), as well as Third Sister You (You Sanjie 尤三姐), and others.²⁹⁴ On the negative, “feudalist” side were Xue Baochai, Grandmother Jia (Jia Mu 賈母), Lady Wang (Wang Furen 王夫人), Wang Xifeng 王熙鳳, and others. Also, there were apparent contradictions between several characters due to differences in class and internal hierarchies, such as between Xifeng and her maid Patience (Ping'er 平兒), or between the chief maids and the old servant women of Prospect Garden (Daguan yuan 大觀園). All of these issues, Feng Yuanjun criticized, had been ignored in Yu Pingbo and Hu Shi's *hongxue*.²⁹⁵

Though the general distinctions between two camps of positive and negative protagonists were agreed on by all, there was still some controversy as to how exactly some of the characters were to be read. Two speakers, professor Pan Yingshu 潘穎舒 and graduate student Lu Shulun 陸樹崙, expressed their conviction that the appraisal of Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu as “anti-feudalist heroes” (fan fengjianzhuyi de yingxiong 反封建主義的英雄), popular among “some young readers” (yixie qingnian duzhe 一些青年讀者) - meaning Li Xifan 李希凡 (*1927) and Lan Ling 藍翎 (1931-2005), the initiators of the campaign against Yu Pingbo - was stretching the truth a little.²⁹⁶ They maintained that despite the “progressive” (jinbu de 進步的) attitudes of these characters in the face of oppressive feudal social rules, the author Cao Xueqin could not have transcended

²⁹⁴ For the English renditions of the character names in *Honglou meng*, I follow the conventions of the David Hawkes translation. Cf. Cao Xueqin/David Hawkes (transl.). *The Story of the Stone*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980). For those unfamiliar with his translation it should be noted that the names of the actual Jia-family and clan members are generally transcribed (i.e., Lin Daiyu, Jia Baoyu, Xue Baochai) whereas the names of the maids and other servants are translated (i.e., Ping'er 平兒 becomes “Patience”, Qingwen 晴雯 becomes “Skybright”, Siqi 司棋 becomes “Chess”, etc.). Exceptions are when titles or ranks are part of the name, such as in Wang Furen 王夫人 (“Lady Wang”) or Liu Laolao 劉姥姥 (“Granny Liu”). The names of the in-house child actresses are rendered into French (i.e., Parfumée or Nénuphar), whereas the names of monks and nuns are given a Latin approximation (i.e., Miaoyu 妙玉 becomes “Adamantina”).

²⁹⁵ Feng Yuanjun. “Yu Pingbo xiansheng zai yanjiu fangfa shang de cuowu 俞平伯先生在研究方法上的錯誤” (Mistakes in Mr Yu Pingbo's research method). In: *Wenshizhe* 1 (1955[a]), 3-4: 3.

²⁹⁶ Pan Yingshu. “Lüe tan Honglou meng de renminxing 略談紅樓夢的人民性” (Brief discussion of Dream of the Red Chamber's affinity with the people). In: *Wenshizhe* 1 (1955), 20-22,15; Lu Shulun. “Tantan Jia Baoyu he Lin Daiyu de xingxiang 談談賈寶玉和林黛玉的形象” (On the imagery of Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu). In: *Ibid.*, 24-25.

the constraints of his own class to portray any truly “revolutionary” actions on the part of his protagonists. They duly emphasized that at the end of the novel, both Lin Daiyu and Jia Baoyu succumb to feudalist suppression: Daiyu dies, and Baoyu marries according to his parents’ choice, takes part in the civil service examinations, and finally opts out of that life by becoming a monk, *not* a revolutionary.

Especially Lu Shulun emphasized the difference between the so-called “revolt” (fankang 反抗) of the two characters Daiyu and Baoyu against their own feudalist background, and what he saw as true class warfare at the time, namely peasant uprisings. Daiyu and Baoyu, like Cao Xueqin, were themselves a part of the feudalist class, and therefore they represented the contradictions inherent in that social stratum, rather than a hierarchical struggle between distinct classes. They were ambiguous, in that on the one hand they refused to conform to the standards of their class, but on the other they were unable to see past their own feudalist smokescreens, and regard the social stratum they were from as fundamentally flawed. Daiyu’s admiration for Baochai and Baoyu’s privileged life of ease, were but two cases in point.²⁹⁷

Despite their objections to oversimplifying the character divisions in *Honglou meng*, both Pan and Lu were specific in saying that this did not in any way decrease the novel’s “affiliation with the masses” (renminxing 人民性). To substantiate this point, Pan focused on a different means Cao Xueqin had utilized to reach out to “the people”: his choice of serial fiction (zhanghui xiaoshuo 章回小說) as a medium was of common appeal, as was the fact that his novel was not written in the classical language (guwen 古文) of the educated elite, but in the people’s spoken vernacular (baihua 白話). Here, for example, Pan stated, one could see that the author’s choice of language in addition to Baoyu and Daiyu’s “opposition” to the civil service examination system and the strict format of the eight-legged essay (baguwen 八股文) was indeed deliberate and could be understood as a criticism of the feudalist order they were a part of.²⁹⁸ As she summarized it:

We think that Cao Xueqin’s time truly was a time in which the rulers used the dead classical language as a tool to dominate the people. It was a time in which the rulers held “civil service examinations”,

²⁹⁷ (Lu Shulun 1955, 25).

²⁹⁸ (Pan Yingshu 1955, 21).

promoted “eight-legged essays”, and insulted the Chinese language. However, Cao Xueqin used the vernacular, which the rulers were opposed to, he used the Beijing dialect (Beijing hua 北京話), which accorded with the rules of historical development and was rich with the flavor of the entire nation (quanminxing 全民性). He used a lively language crystallized from the lives of the masses, reflected the contradictions in contemporary feudal society, and attacked the superstructure of the contemporary feudal base. How does that not accord with Lenin’s principle of dealing with literature and art – the principle of the popular nature of artistic content and form (yishu neirong he xingshi de renminxing yuanze 藝術內容和形式的人民性原則)?²⁹⁹

The third major point brought up against Yu Pingbo and Hu Shi at the Shanda conference went by the epithet of “agnostic philosophy” (bukezhilun de zhexue 不可知論的哲學), and raised the issue of depriving *Honglou meng* of its political and social meanings in general. To do so, the argument went, meant to essentially take away its integrity by subjecting it to an unwarranted exegetic openness or even “mysticism” (shenmizhuyi 神秘主義). As Shandong University president Hua Gang argued, this was also the reason why Yu Pingbo had never come to any meaningful conclusion as to what *Honglou meng* was really about, complaining instead “the more you study it, the more confused you become” (“ni yue yanjiu bian yue hutu 你越研究便越糊塗”). Furthermore, this “mystification” of the novel ran counter to the Marxist belief in the explanatory force of “science” (kexue 科學), which would eventually and progressively dispel all the apparent mysteries of the material world - and *Honglou meng*, being a book, was very much a part of that material world.³⁰⁰

Liang Xiyan’s summary of the symposium ended on a warning note: idealism and anti-realism, in his view, often masked as materialism and realism, and Hu Shi’s was just one example of how bourgeois ideology had influenced recent literary studies, particularly in the *hongxue* department.³⁰¹ He therefore strongly encouraged further study of Marxism-Leninism, and its exclusive application to studying and producing all literature and art, thereby expanding the concept of Marxist-Leninist methodology to the entire field of literary research:

²⁹⁹ (Pan Yingshu 1955, 22).

³⁰⁰ Hua Gang, “Zenyang zai gudian wenxue yanjiu lingyu qingchu zichanjieji fandong sixiang 怎樣在古典文學研究領域清除資產階級反動思想” (How to eliminate bourgeois reactionary ideology from the field of classical literature studies). In: *Ibid*, 6-7:7.

³⁰¹ (Liang Xiyan 1954, 187).

We must be on our guard, so that fields like that of classical literary research, because of past neglect on the part of progressive literary workers, don't become favorable positions for the bourgeoisie. Now that the struggle regarding the work of studying *Dream of the Red Chamber* has begun, the meaning of that struggle should not be restricted to the correct reading of that one piece of literature, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, alone. It rather lies in defeating the bourgeoisie in the entire field of literary research (wenyi yanjiu 文藝研究), and in establishing a stronghold of Marxist-Leninist literary science (Makesi-Liening zhuyi wenyi kexue 馬克思列寧主義文藝科學), so as to guarantee a successful development of the work of literary research (wenyi yanjiu gongzuo de shengli fazhan 文藝研究工作的勝利發展).³⁰²

At the time of the first symposium, the school president, Hua Gang, and the school scientific research committee (kexue yanjiu weiyuanhui 科學研究委員會) decided to hold two more debates on the influence of Hu Shi's pragmatism on the subjects of the humanities, i.e., literature, history, and philosophy. At the same time, a regular study group of was formed at Shanda to intensify research and discussions on *Honglou meng's* "social meaning" and "artistic value". This, in turn, was to serve as a first step for the eventual correct reevaluation of the entire literary tradition. The ultimate goal of these combined efforts, according to the authors of the article, was to formulate a written thesis on the subject of criticizing bourgeois idealism in academic thought through reevaluating *Honglou meng* by the final conference session scheduled for mid-March, 1955.³⁰³

The themes of these follow-up debates were provided in a report published in *Renmin wenxue* in February 1955. They revolved around criticizing the "bourgeois" method of studying *Honglou meng* on the one, and defining how to best approach the literary heritage on the other hand.³⁰⁴ Also, a few opinions, albeit still immature, had been offered on how to evaluate *Honglou meng* after the criticism of Yu Pingbo. In terms of results, the authors declared that although time constraints had left them as yet inconclusive on many fronts, these debates had at least served to clearly draw the line between the "bourgeois" and the "working class" position in academic thought and scientific research. Some of the topics that the report mentioned as being discussed by

³⁰² (Liang Xiyan 1954, 188).

³⁰³ (Ibid.).

³⁰⁴ This report was reprinted in *Honglou meng wenti taolunji* 紅樓夢問題討論集 (Collection of debates on the problem of Dream of the Red Chamber), vol. 3, 196-218. Cf. (Shandong University 1955, 196).

the (otherwise undefined) group of Shanda professors and students reveal both a fairly academic level of interest, and a perhaps surprising offshoot of interdisciplinary meta-topics, considering that the origin of the debate was initially restricted to *Honglou meng* only.

The main three points discussed in the later debates again took their cues from Li Xifan and Lan Ling's critiques. Therefore, the first part of the report dealt with discussions at Shanda on the periodic background of *Honglou meng*. The second part reflected debates on *Honglou meng*'s "tendentiousness" (qingxiangxing 倾向性) and "popular character" (renminxing), while the third part went into particular opinions on some of *Honglou meng*'s most centrally discussed characters (i.e., Jia Baoyu, Lin Daiyu and Granny Liu). Of these, especially the first part constituted one of the broader themes in contemporary studies of the humanities: the question of periodization.

In terms of writing literary history, the question of periodization resulted from the new Marxist reading of *Honglou meng* and the endeavor to mark it clearly as a realist piece of writing. In ascribing it a "realist" value, scholars had to touch upon the characteristics of its period of origin within the Marxist framework of history as a succession of socially progressive stages. In short and on a broader level, the debate at Shanda revolved around the origin of capitalism in China. Among the faculty, opinions were divided, reflecting a similar divide across the country.³⁰⁵ Thus, according to the report, some supported a historiography that defined the appearance of the first signs of capitalism already during the Ming-Qing transition period.

At the time, this first group claimed, Chinese society was at different developmental stages with the Han Chinese on the one hand, and the nomadic Manchus which would emerge as the new ruling power on the other. They maintained that at the time there existed a combination of an emerging peasant and waning slaveholder-society, which by the Qianlong reign had developed into an all-out "feudalism on the verge of collapse" with the first signs of capitalism already in the making. *Honglou meng* in their view was a realist work mainly because it had managed to show all of the various co-existing strata of that mixed society to their fullest. The view of this group

³⁰⁵ For a more detailed discussion, cf. Chapter 3, section 4. "The Experts On Periodization" of the present thesis.

was later criticized, and Zhou Ruchang was mentioned in the report as one scholar affiliated with that position.³⁰⁶

The second group, to which Li Xifan and Lan Ling belonged, did not believe in this confusing mixture of co-existing different stages, but instead maintained that the Qianlong reign had been a well-defined period of “feudalism on the verge of collapse”, and contained no traces of capitalism whatsoever. This group’s main argument against the latent existence of capitalism at the time were contemporary peasant uprisings, which still signified that although capital was amassed by an elite, broad capitalist production per se had not yet had a chance to develop. In other words: without the prior “liberation” of the peasants and a clear end to the feudalist system of land distribution and agricultural production, “capitalism” as a force of production independent of feudal hierarchies could not exist. As this group emphasized, the mere existence of capital in the hands of an elite did not signify the same as the birth of capitalist production.³⁰⁷ The Jia family of *Honglou meng*, they maintained, were not capitalists, despite the fact that some characters are described as finding alternative sources of income buying and reselling goods. Their main source of income, the money circulating inside the novel, was gained through feudalist practices.³⁰⁸

As becomes clear from the above, the criticisms of “Hu Shi thought” had an impact on research areas and philosophical questions that went well beyond the strict boundaries of literary history and criticism. As we will see in Chapter 3, the question of periodization was, in fact, central to historical debate at the time, and as such affected all other academic fields that looked into their own histories. Chinese literary history could not be written without a clear picture of how the Marxist model of history in stages leading up to communism translated into the Chinese context, and how that model in turn led to the birth and development of various corresponding stages of “realism” in art and literature.

The constraints and limitations of a society’s economic base on its cultural production were also discussed by the Shanda group of students and professors with regard to the story and the protagonists of *Honglou meng* itself. After presenting an overview of their analyses of the special economic forms described in *Honglou meng*, the

³⁰⁶ (Shandong University 1955, 197-201).

³⁰⁷ (Ibid., 202-205).

³⁰⁸ (Shandong University 1955, 205 f.).

article turned to a further conundrum, which had already been voiced by Pan Yingshu and Lu Shulun at the first Shanda symposium: despite the fact that the main protagonist, Jia Baoyu, was presented as a “critic” and “dissenter” of the feudal system he was born and raised in, he left his home at the end of the novel not to stir up a revolution, but to become a monk. This, according to the Shanda authors, showed that Jia Baoyu clearly preferred to escape reality than to confront and try to change it. How was that to be explained as permissible from a perspective of Chinese Marxism-Leninism?

On one side, it again appeared that a double standard for individuals past and present was applicable: Cao Xueqin, the authors state, was himself unable to escape the system he was a part of, unable to see past the limits of his own class. Escape by worldly renunciation to him was simply the best he could come up with to reject the life he had been raised to live. In other words, the economic base that would have aided in fostering a more materialist cultural solution was not yet in existence in Cao Xueqin’s times. Therefore, neither Jia Baoyu nor his creator could expect to be more than perspicacious members of their class. Here again, though not specifically mentioned, Engels’ apologetics of Balzac had been applied literally to Cao Xueqin and his novel.³⁰⁹

On the other side, the authors later conceded that although Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu were to be seen as “positive” characters in *Honglou meng*, their “positive” characteristics referred more to the contradictions within their own class, rather than contradictions between different classes of people. Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu merely stood for a certain section within their own social stratum that was doomed to fail eventually for reasons they had no influence on. Baoyu and Daiyu, though admirable in their own right, did not represent the oppressed, and neither did they represent the masses.³¹⁰ Therefore, the authors concluded, Cao Xueqin’s greatest achievement still lay in his ability to draw a realistic portrait of that social class and its inherent contradictions.³¹¹

While the themes of the uneven development of the economic base and its superstructure or of periodization were not particular to literature, and therefore drew people from outside the immediate circle of literary historiography and criticism to contribute to the debate, other themes were more readily applicable by trained academics of the literary field. One example was, of course, the theme of realism, which

³⁰⁹ (Ibid., 205-207).

³¹⁰ (Shandong University 1955, 215).

³¹¹ (Ibid., 218).

in its general approach however ran somewhat parallel to the debates on periodization. But the question of realism as an aesthetic category brought with it a subset of themes that were discussed with more references to actual literary texts, such as, for example, the concept of a “model character” (*dianxing renwu* 典型人物) in literature. This topic had been inherited from the Soviet debate on socialist realism and would be continued in China into the Hundred-Flowers-Campaign. The main issue at hand was again the search for realist precedents of the method of socialist realism, and for its greater part affected contemporary writers in their literary projects. At the same time, since the debate had originated in the Soviet Union, it was a chance for China’s literary academics to not only fulfill the national literary policy, but to also try to place China’s literary heritage within a larger realm of global literary concepts.³¹²

Campaign anthologies

The conference texts were the materials that campaign anthologies selected their main materials from. To provide pointers for how the conference essays selected should be read, anthologies were always preceded by policy texts such as the ones discussed above. Two anthologies were compiled, which contain materials relevant to the *Honglou meng*-Campaign. These are the *Honglou meng wenti taolun ji* 紅樓夢問題討論集 (Collection of debates on the *Honglou meng* issue), 4 vols., (Beijing: Zuoji chubanshe, 1955) and the *Hu Shi sixiang pipan* 胡適思想批判 (Criticisms of Hu Shi thought), 8 vols. (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1955/56), respectively.³¹³ Let us take a brief look at general layout of the former collection, since it reflects the more specifically literary topics: all of the essays contained therein to some extent revolve around *Honglou meng* and its reinterpretation.

Honglou meng wenti taolunji also tends to represent the arguments mainly brought forth during the first stage of the Anti-Hu Shi-Campaign, when the focus was still largely on the area of literary criticism and the refutation of May Fourth-inspired *hongxue*. *Hu Shi sixiang pipan*, by comparison, is a more general collection of essays

³¹² On the Soviet concept of “the typical”, see the excellent and concise summary provided in (Günther 1984), specifically chapter 2, “Die ideologischen Postulate des sozialistischen Realismus”, section 3, “Das Typische” (32-35).

³¹³ In 1959, a further condensed selection of Anti-Hu Shi-Campaign essays was published, also by Sanlian shudian.

criticizing “Hu Shi thought” in all areas of the humanities, including not only literature, but also philosophical and historical studies.

Of the four volumes that encompass *Honglou meng wenti taolunji*, the first contains essays focusing on criticisms of Yu Pingbo’s *Honglou meng* studies, and covers the period from September, 1954, through the first half of February, 1955. Here, we find some of the key texts that started the campaign, such as Li Xifan’s and Lan Ling’s initial criticisms of Yu Pingbo, as well as Yuan Ying’s (Tian Zhongluo’s) *Renmin ribao* editorial of October 23. Also included in this volume are the three speeches held by Guo Moruo, Mao Dun and Zhou Yang at the occasion of the joint meeting of the presidia of the *Wenlian* and the Writers’ Union, as well as the resolution concerning the reorganization of the editorial board of *Wenyi bao* passed at that meeting. This volume also contains a statement by Yu Pingbo’s assistant Wang Peizhang, written to define her position in the debate, and to clarify which of the texts and passages written in Yu Pingbo’s name were actually authored by her.

The second volume covers roughly the same period, but here the theme is already of a more general nature, as the essays mostly relate Yu Pingbo’s errors to Hu Shi’s “bourgeois-idealist” influence on classical literary criticism by way of his *hongxue* and general method of literary criticism.³¹⁴ It contains, for example, an essay written by Lu Kanru in October, 1954, as a reaction to the *Renmin ribao* editorial by Yuan Ying, as well as essays by such prominent figures as Shu Wu 舒蕪, He Qifang 何其芳, Yao Xueyin 姚雪垠, Wu Fuheng 吳富恒, Yu Guanying 余冠英, Wang Yao 王瑤, Liu Shousong 劉綬松 and Chu Binjie 褚斌傑. Yu Pingbo’s self-criticism was also included in this volume.

The third and fourth volumes cover the period from November, 1954, to June, 1955, and are largely composed of specific studies on *Honglou meng*. In these last two volumes, criticism of Yu Pingbo’s and Hu Shi’s studies of the novel is merely seen as the foundation on which to build a new *hongxue*, and it is therefore no longer the sole theme. Authors here again include Li Xifan, Lan Ling, Wang Peizhang and Shu Wu, but also Liu Dajie 劉大傑, Wang Kunlun 王崑崙, Deng Tuo 鄧拓, Feng Yuanjun, Yang Xiangkui 楊向奎, Yuan Shishuo 袁世碩, and even a Russian sinologist, Lyubov Dimitriyevna Podzyeva, among others. According to its editors, the texts included in volumes 3 and 4 of *Honglou*

³¹⁴ Writers’ Publishers. *Honglou meng wenti taolunji* 紅樓夢問題討論集 (Collection of debates on the Honglou meng issue), vol. 2: editor’s note.

meng wenti taolunji mainly focused on three sets of questions: 1) the “social background” of *Honglou meng* (Honglou meng de shehui beijing 紅樓夢的社會背景), 2) the most important contents and themes of *Honglou meng* (Honglou meng zhuyao neirong he zhuti sixiang 紅樓夢主要內容和主題思想), and 3) *Honglou meng*'s artistic method and character analysis (Honglou meng yishu fangfa de tantao he renwu fenxi 紅樓夢藝術方法的探討和人物分析). Volumes 3 and 4, therefore, contain the most “academic” texts of the collection, i.e. those that focused the most on questions directly related to studying *Honglou meng*.

Many of the authors represented in *Honglou meng wenti taolunji* were, in fact, scholars from Shandong University, and the only two essays included as *Honglou meng*-conference results were written by Shanda professors. Though the editors did not elaborate on their selection of essays, the fact that the *Honglou meng*-campaign to some extent originated in Shandong may have played a part in their final selection process. As already described in the case of the Shanda-conference, it is conspicuous that many of the contributors were of a similar generation of scholars, i.e., that educated pre-1949 elite which had been in a state of perpetual thought reform since 1949. This again seems to corroborate the double function of the campaign as an effort to “marxify” the reading of the Chinese literary heritage on the one, and as a progress report on a specific generation’s thought reform process on the other hand.

6. “A Poisoned Mind”

After this grand tour of the *Honglou meng*-Campaign, let us conclude this chapter by revisiting Lu Kanru in order to get a sense of his position and perspective in these eventful period. The focus of this section will be one two texts, one of which is “ritualistic” in the sense that it was to be a public self-criticism, the other “academic” in that it was presented at a scholarly conference. The first text is entitled “Yansu de suqing Hu Shi fandong sixiang zai Zhongguo xueshujie li cancun de duhai 嚴肅地肅清胡適反動思想在中國學術界里殘存的毒害” (Rigorously eliminate the poison of Hu Shi’s reactionary thought left over in China’s academic circles) and was included in volume 2 of the campaign anthology mentioned above. Originally, however, it was a text written as a reaction to Yuan Ying’s *Renmin ribao* editorial and published in *Guangming ribao*'s cultural supplement *Wenxue yichan* on October 31, 1954. The second one is the speech

that Lu Kanru gave on November 7, 1954, during the first session of the large-scale symposium on *Dream of the Red Chamber* held at Shandong University. Entitled “Hu Shi fandong sixiang jiyu gudian wenxue yanjiu de duhai 胡适反动思想给予古典文学研究的毒害” (The poison instilled by Hu Shi reactionary thought in the research of classical literature), it was published almost immediately after its delivery in *Wenyibao*.³¹⁵

“Rigorously eliminate the poison of Hu Shi’s reactionary thought left over in China’s academic circles” included a passage of self-criticism, in which Lu compared his methods of literary criticism with those of Yu Pingbo: like Yu, Lu wrote, he too had been influenced by Hu Shi and composed subjective and formalist studies that engaged in petty *kaoju* prior to 1949.³¹⁶ And it seemed that Hu Shi’s influence continued to “poison” his mind, as he had initially failed to understand the significance of Li and Lan’s critique:

Li Xifan and Lan Ling are both students of mine, and I already had read their article several months ago as [a member of the] *Wenshizhe* editorial board, but I absolutely did not ascribe enough importance to it [then]. Later, I came to Beijing to attend the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circle’s National Committee, and I heard friends discuss the issue of *Dream of the Red Chamber* and thus began to view the matter as urgent. Most recently, I read comrade Zhongluo’s [i.e., Yuan Ying’s] article which alerted me even more, and I thought it was time to examine myself a little.³¹⁷

In this passage, Lu affirmed the policy-making role of *Renmin ribao* editorials of the time, especially for his particular caste of scholars. Placing himself on the same level as Yu Pingbo in terms of political consciousness, Lu Kanru turned the necessity for self-criticism into a generational theme, while at the same time confirming a beginning inversion of the traditional relationship between teacher and student: acknowledging that the two young originators of the campaign were actually his very own students made Lu even more liable to pay attention to their message than others, and he seemed very aware of that.

In the following paragraphs, Lu tried to analyze his own take on *Honglou meng* and where he had adopted it from. Unsurprisingly, he reminisced about his first reading of Hu Shi’s “*Honglou meng kaozheng*”, and about how he, like all young people at the time influenced by feudalist and capitalist education, had admired it. Consequently,

³¹⁵ Specifically, in *Wenyibao* 21 (1954), 4-5.

³¹⁶ (Lu Kanru 1955b, 11).

³¹⁷ (Ibid.).

though he had disliked Yu Pingbo's complicated style of writing, he had also thought that his *Honglou meng bian* was a contribution to the field of *hongxue*.³¹⁸ From then on, Lu reiterated, he had believed in the theory of *Honglou meng* as Cao Xueqin's "autobiography", and considered the work an "unremarkable" and "naturalist" piece of writing.

He maintained further that the influence of Hu Shi and the early Yu Pingbo were still very much present in contemporary *hongxue*, and cited Zhou Ruchang's *Honglou meng xinzheng* 紅樓夢新證 (New Evidence on Dream of the Red Chamber) as an example, which had only appeared a year earlier. Therefore, Lu emphasized, the current debate and reevaluation of *Honglou meng* was entirely necessary. But despite his earlier shortcomings in this field, Lu conceded, Yu Pingbo had improved his attitude somewhat since the Liberation:

I have carefully read Mr Yu's essay of more than a year ago, and I think that Mr Yu has also started to change, that he took some first steps in acknowledging the hatred of the feudalist system aroused by *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and he also mentioned the "great realist accomplishments" of *Dream of the Red Chamber*. I myself am also like that, it is only since the Liberation that I have begun to appraise this masterpiece from a realist angle. But the transformation has only just begun, and my knowledge is still very shallow, I still do not grasp very well the fundamental spirit of realism. Above all, I have not yet fully eliminated Hu Shi's poison from my thought, so there still must be serious bourgeois idealist mistakes in my research method. Together with Mr Yu and all friends researching classical literature I want to make an effort to receive the profound teachings of this debate with an open mind, to strictly examine myself, to correct mistakes, so that the democratic character and quintessence of the literary heritage can freely bring into play their necessary functions in the building of a Chinese socialism.³¹⁹

In his text, Lu Kanru notably only criticized Yu Pingbo's works written prior to 1949, even going so far in the passage quoted above as to state that Yu had made some ideological advances since 1949. This meant that he to some extent defended Yu's essay *Honglou meng jianlun*, as well as the disputed *Honglou meng yanjiu* of 1953, which had been the target of Li and Lan's second critique of October 10, as we have seen earlier. Though his text may not be equated with an all-out defence of Yu, it appears as though Lu's singular emphasis on the source of all evil, namely Hu Shi, had a reason. Perhaps he

³¹⁸ (Lu Kanru 1955b, 11).

³¹⁹ (Ibid., 12).

did realize that it was impossible to criticize Yu without recognizing his own failings as similar in origin and appearance: as he would in his speech of November 7, Lu tried to diffuse the criticisms by drawing attention to his own faults, and in so doing he emphasized that Yu's "problem" was not necessarily of an individual, but a generational nature. Specifically, Lu drew the attention to the fact that this was a problem shared by the generation formerly educated under the "influence" of Hu Shi.

In contrast with "Rigorously eliminate the poison of Hu Shi's reactionary thought left over in China's academic circles", "The poison instilled by Hu Shi reactionary thought in the research of classical literature", the speech that Lu Kanru held in the November 1954 *Honglou meng*-symposium at Shanda, tries to combine self-critical aspects with hands-on literary issues:

As the Chinese Communist Party attaches great importance to the work of critically receiving the literary heritage, the national publishing houses have printed many classical literary works, and periodicals have issued many an essay studying classical literature since the liberation. However, recent debates on *Dream of the Red Chamber* have revealed facts that one cannot condone, namely: the bourgeois reactionary position (*lichang* 立場), standpoint (*guandian* 觀點) and method (*fangfa* 方法) still retain a dominant status in research work of the literary heritage. We must absolutely take this extremely dangerous phenomenon seriously, and rigorously criticize and eliminate it.³²⁰

Following this introduction, Lu Kanru in a move not untypical of such criticisms at the time related the origins of this "phenomenon" to the May Fourth Movement, and one of its founding fathers, Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962). Before explaining the literary aspects of this relation, Lu reminded his listeners why Hu Shi was a *persona non grata* in the P.R.C., why he had in fact been labeled an "enemy of the people": Hu had collaborated with Chiang Kai-shek and "American imperialism" before 1949. But despite his obvious political shortcomings, Hu Shi's "reactionary ideology" still met with broad acceptance by a small part of the intellectuals.

These intellectuals, Lu explained, had been born and raised by the exploiting classes (*boxue jieji* 剝削階級), and had for the greater part of their lives been exposed to feudal and capitalist education. It was only after 1949, that they had begun to study

³²⁰ (Lu Kanru 1955a, 1).

Marxism-Leninism and to undergo a process of thought reform (sixiang gaizao 思想改造). And yet, as he knew from his own example, Lu went on, it was impossible to eliminate every reactionary element in one's thinking, if one did not undergo a "tortuous and painful struggle with oneself" (quzhe er tongku de ziwo douzheng 曲折而痛苦的我鬥爭). He himself had still not completely eradicated all of Hu Shi's influence from the past, a fact which he felt deeply. Being of the same generation of intellectuals, Lu concluded, Yu Pingbo's studies of *Honglou meng* revealed similar issues.

From this Lu Kanru turned to the literary aspects of Hu Shi's "erroneous ideology", which was, after all, the root of the problem of Yu's research. He described the "evils" bestowed upon classical literature studies by Hu Shi as twofold. The first was his general attitude towards the objectives of study: derived from nineteenth-century French art theory, "l'art pour l'art" was translated to mean "research for its own sake" (wei yanjiu er yanjiu 為研究而研究) or "textual research for its own sake" (wei kaoju er kaoju 為考據而考據) by Hu Shi. This engagement in literary studies for one's own selfish pleasures and not for the benefit of one's country or people, Lu maintained, was as useless as it was dangerous.

To underscore his point, Lu cited a popular image Hu Shi himself had conjured up of the quintessential German national poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) sitting calmly in his study immersed in scholarly work, completely ignoring the Napoleonic siege of his city Weimar. This, Lu maintained, was exactly the mindset that Hu had wished for in a dedicated scholar.³²¹ And under his influence, both Lu himself

³²¹ This image, like several others used in Lu Kanru's text, was one popularly used in essays during the *Honglou meng*- and, later, the Anti-Hu Shi-Campaign to criticize Hu Shi's political attitude. It originated in Hu Shi's own diary of his time as a Boxer Indemnity student in the U.S.A. – in an entry of December 9, 1914, Hu recorded with some admiration that Goethe had remained calm during the Napoleonic siege of Weimar, and had not let the turmoils of his time interfere with his studies. Cf. Hu Shi. *Hu Shi liuxue riji* 胡適留學日記 (Hu Shi's study abroad diary) (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1999), 455-456. In the 1950s under the new Communist regime, this anecdote was cited often to demonstrate Hu Shi's lack of political involvement, and his intended sabotage of the Communist purpose. The image of the intellectual detached from worldly affairs was, of course, diametrically opposed to the "Communist" intellectual, whose work primarily served "higher" political goals. Originally, this criticism of Goethe as a "mediocre man" had come from a series of essays written by Engels in 1846/47 criticizing Karl Grün's take on the poet in his "Über Goethe von menschlichen Standpunkte" (On Goethe from a human perspective, 1846), and published in November and December 1847 in *Deutsche Brüsseler Zeitung* (no.s 93 to 98). Engels' series of essays, abbreviated into one text and translated as "Lun Gede 論歌德" (On Goethe) was incorporated into Chinese Marxist-Leninist anthologies from the early P.R.C. onwards. In a 1964 two-volume anthology "Makesi, Engesi, Liening, Sidalin lun wenyi 馬克思恩格斯列寧斯大林論文藝" (Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin on Literature and Art), for example, it is the first text in the collection. Cf. (CCPCC Office for the translation of works by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin 1964, 8).

and Yu Pingbo had fallen into that trap during the time of the Northern Warlords (Beiyang Junfa 北洋軍閥, ca. 1916-1928), preferring intellectual to political activity: while Yu had written his first concise study on *Dream of the Red Chamber*, (i.e., *Honglou meng bian* 紅樓夢辨 [Discussing Dream of the Red Chamber]), Lu had co-published an apolitical periodical, the *Chinese Culture Monthly* (Guoxue yuebao 國學月報).

In a similar vein, Lu continued, Hu Shi's self-proclaimed "search for truth for truth's sake" (wei zhenli er qiu zhenli 為真理而求真理) became a meaningless phrase. On the one hand, Hu Shi had maintained that "truth was man-made" and "could be altered according to personal preferences", but on the other he encouraged scholars to "search for truth" in their studies. How could one deny the existence of objective truth?, Lu asked. What was that if not a game devised by someone belonging to the waning bourgeois class and representing "reactionary idealist experimentalism" (fandong de weixin zhexue shiyanzhuyi 反動的唯心哲學實驗主義)?

Of course, Lu Kanru continued, criticizing Hu Shi did not mean that one should completely condemn textual research and dedicated philology. But textual research could never be an end in itself. It should rather serve as a preparatory stage to "true" research, which had to be carried out under the guidelines of Marxism-Leninism. Yu Pingbo's frustrating enquiries into seating orders and other miniscule details in *Honglou meng bian* in Lu's view certainly could have used some Marxist-Leninist succinctness.

The second point of contention in Lu Kanru's speech was even more focused on Hu Shi's alleged political egalitarianism, or worse, his political indifference regarding his objects of study. To strip classical literature of its "active meaning" (jiji yiyi 積極意義) meant to disregard its political content and its "function for struggle" (douzheng zuoyong 鬥爭作用). The heritage therefore lost its most basic purpose: to inspire the people of the present day to contribute to building a socialist society. The past in Lu Kanru's argument had to become fodder for the present, which was exactly what Hu Shi and like-minded cronies had been afraid of: that people might learn from the past, understand what had been flawed, and try to amend the injustices portrayed in such novels as *Honglou meng* – at the expense of the reigning "bourgeoisie".

Lu recalled Hu Shi's criticisms of previous "redologist" studies like Cai Yuanpei's 蔡元培 (1868-1940) *Shitouji suoyin* 石頭記索隱 (The Hidden Meaning of Dream of the

Red Chamber, 1917), which he had suggested were ridiculous in their attempt to attribute any kind of secret message about mid-Qing politics to the novel. According to Hu, the only real knowledge to be gained from studying *Honglou meng* pertained to textual philology: the origins and editions of the text, its authors, and its historical context. Lu Kanru strongly disagreed: Cai Yuanpei, he said, though also flawed in his attempts, had at least considered the possibility of a hidden political message, something Hu Shi had flat out denied. In fact, Lu scoffed, Hu had come to the conclusion that *Honglou meng* was a work of “naturalism” (ziranzhuyi 自然主義), that it even represented the author Cao Xueqin’s autobiography. It was unfortunate, he went on, that this interpretation of the novel was still found in present-day publications (such as Yu Pingbo’s). Instead, one should take *Honglou meng* as a work representing “typical dispositions within a typical context” (dianxing huanjing de dianxing xingge 典型環境的典型性格), just like Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936) had done when ridiculing Hu Shi for taking the autobiographical aspects of the novel too literally.³²²

In a third step, Lu Kanru compared Hu Shi’s flawed exegesis of *Honglou meng* to his other works of literary criticism, particularly his take on *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳 (The Water Margin). Here, as in the case of China’s ancient national poet Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca. 340-278 BC), Hu Shi had had the audacity to doubt the existence of the author Shi Nai’an 施耐庵 (ca. 1296-1372). He had dismissed one of the novel’s main characters, Song Jiang 宋江, as a bandit, and ignored the fact that it actually reflected the political reality of peasant uprisings.

To Hu Shi’s defamation of Yuan literature as “childish” (youzhi 幼稚) in style, Lu responded with a reference to one of the main ideas expressed by Mao Zedong in his *Yan’an Talks on Literature and Art*, namely that in evaluating literature of all ages, political criteria ranked above artistic criteria. At the end of his speech, Lu Kanru again drew the full circle to his own generation of scholars:

Hu Shi’s reactionary ideology is persistent, and it is not only represented in studies of fiction (xiaoshuo 小說), but also in essays pertaining to all other aspects of literature. Since May Fourth, these essays have continuously disseminated their poison, and they continue to do so at present, a fact we can absolutely no longer ignore.

³²² (Lu Kanru 1955a, 2).

It is especially us, the people of a relatively advanced age, on whom Hu Shi's influence was comparatively strong, who must be even more vigilant and arm ourselves with Marxism-Leninism even more quickly, so as to determinedly destroy the enemy's final stronghold.³²³

It is not known whether Lu Kanru's speech was met with much applause, comments, or in fact any immediate reaction. If we take a look at some of the other speeches held at the symposium at Shandong University, we may actually gather that his speech was just one of many other, seemingly uniform expressions of criticism of Yu Pingbo, Hu Shi, and *Honglou meng*. Though at times there were differences in tone or emphasis, the impression is nevertheless one of almost perfect synchronicity, of opinions completely conforming to set standards which themselves, however, remained largely unreferenced. In the next chapter we will explore how these new standards, instead of just being embodied in programmatic *Honglou meng*-Campaign speeches held by Lu Kanru and legions of other scholars, were put into practice in the writing of literary history.

³²³ (Lu Kanru 1955a, 2).

Chapter Three. Red Discipline: The Rewriting of Literary History

To write a literary history is to introduce and familiarize the broad populace with the great literary heritage of the motherland, to let the broad populace know the history of our ancestors' social struggle for a glorious future, know the excellent tradition of our nation as it is embodied in the masterpieces of the past. The Chinese people have already developed to the present shape, [and] we must further surpass the past and develop towards an even higher stage. Literary history shall help us absorb the nourishments of our rich heritage, so that [we may] gain new strength to better create New China's socialist culture.

--- Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun³²⁴

Thus reads a passage in the introductory chapter of Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun's collaborative *Zhongguo wenxueshi jianbian: xiuding ben* 中國文學史簡編：修訂本 (A short course in China's literary history: revised edition) of 1957.³²⁵ According to its authors, the purpose of writing a literary history was clear: the broad populace of potential socialist workers had to be educated to help build a new socialist nation. Following this logic, the past was once again reworked to become a streamlined narrative leading up to the present and justifying the status quo. It was therefore just as Mao Zedong had said in his "On New Democracy": "To study the development of this old culture, to reject its feudal dross and assimilate its democratic essence is a necessary condition for developing our new national culture and increasing our national self-confidence".³²⁶

And indeed, the literary history Lu and Feng called for was meant to create a tradition in which the present could stand. In this, according to Western histories of literary histories, theirs did not differ much from other literary histories written across

³²⁴ Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun. *Zhongguo wenxueshi jianbian: xiudingben* 中國文學史簡編：修訂本 (Short course in the history of Chinese literature: revised edition) (Beijing: Zuoja chubanshe, 1957a), 2.

³²⁵ Hereafter referred to as *Short course*.

³²⁶ Mao Zedong. "On New Democracy" (From: Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung). English translation available online at: http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_26.htm (last accessed: November 23, 2012).

time and national boundaries. After all, like regular historians, literary historians are involved in the building of tradition – be it that of a nation, an ethnic group, a region or locality, a social class, or any other group describing the course of poetic events that led to their presently defined identity. In his *Is Literary History Possible?* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), David Perkins affirms that, as with the national literary histories of the Western nineteenth century, the literary histories of any social group assert that group’s literary tradition:

Thus, in the strife of cultural politics, they [i.e., the literary histories] confer cultural importance on the social group. They create a sense of continuity between past members of the group and present ones and, by describing a shared past, reinforce the sense of community in the present. They define the identity of the group in a certain way in opposition to other definitions of this contested concept. To members of the group, this definition has extreme importance, since it affects the way a person views himself and is viewed by others.³²⁷

To the new Marxist historians of China, this molding of a self-image and its corresponding historical justification scheme became the quintessence of their work. In a like fashion, the literary historians followed suit in recasting the literary canon of traditional China. The result of this kind of literary historiography, as Perkins pointed out, was akin to what Nietzsche had termed “antiquarian history”,³²⁸ in the sense that “the antiquarian historian looks back ‘with loyalty and love’ to the portion of the past from which he derives. But in doing so he distorts the past, for he is interested only in what lies within his own tradition and greets even its mediocre achievements with enthusiasm.”³²⁹

Unlike Nietzsche’s antiquarian historian, however, whose unwillingness to let go of anything in the past for fear of underemphasizing its relevance for the present, the Chinese Marxist historians – as we have seen – were not afraid of severe editing and the turning of many a blind eye in the process of rewriting their own history. In this, they were supported by Mao Zedong who in his “On New Democracy” warned that “we should never swallow anything and everything uncritically”. Certainly, the kind of literary history required by the greater scheme of Marxist historiography was equally

³²⁷ (Perkins 1992, 181)

³²⁸ “The antiquarian...has an extremely limited field of vision; by far the most is not seen at all, and the little that is seen is seen too closely...[he] cannot apply a standard and therefore takes...each individual thing to be too important.” Quoted in (Perkins 1992, 182).

³²⁹ (Ibid., 181 f.)

distortive, not only of the texts it treated, but also of the contexts it chose to present. Thus, for example, the quest for the starting point of “realist” literature in the Chinese tradition was intimately linked to questions of general Marxist historiography and the historical materialist method: was it necessary that realist authors be critical of feudalism? Did the birth and development of realism coincide with the Marxist stages in Chinese history, and if so, how? Were there temporal discrepancies that might be explained with the Marxian law of uneven development (or any other way)?

Generally speaking, distortion of some sort is a necessary evil accompanying the narrating of the past. But to write the history of literature, especially when under particular ideological constraints, not only means that the literary historian has to conform his reading of poetry and prose to the general ideas about the laws of historical development proposed by the relevant ideological authorities of his time. It also entails passing a value – or even an ethical – judgment on the literature of the past. As David Perkins puts it:

Literary history differs from history because the works it considers are felt to have a value quite different from and often far transcending their significance as a part of history. In other words, literary history is also literary criticism.³³⁰

In short, the very foundation of any literary history – the actual works of literature – must be and are treated ambivalently by the literary historian (regardless of the overall value system he is working in): on the one hand as products of a specific time and place in history, and on the other as literature, a cultural phenomenon reaching out to an audience, and whose effects on said audience indeed transcend space and time, though perhaps in a less mythical manner than conventional school teachers would have their students believe. But are the academic communities of literati really the final links in the chain that bind the canon together?

Stephen Greenblatt takes the idea a step further. In his notion, the two-fold dimension of literature automatically breaches the static of the literary text, turning it into an agent of historical polyvalence that is never solely determined by academic posterity:

³³⁰ (Ibid., 177).

At a minimum, we have to acknowledge, I think, that the history of professional interpretive communities is only one fragment of the history of literature, that literature has had its own shaping effects upon the interpreters, and that the apparent transhistorical dimension of literary texts is a significant, if little understood, part of its history. The stakes of literary history lie always in the relation between the contingencies that made the work of literature possible for those who created it and the contingencies that make it possible for ourselves. In this sense, literary history is always the history of the possibility of literature.³³¹

In other words, literary history is not only made up of what professional literary historians decide upon. It is also dependent on other forces working upon the literate classes throughout their periods of reception, and these forces are manifold and more often than not impossible to reconstruct.

The following chapter represents an attempt to unravel the results of how literary historiography was being conducted in the early P.R.C. by taking all of the above into account. Thus, on the one hand, it will present some of the themes and topics that literary historians were working with at the time. Generally, the most significant of these topics – in one way or another – revolved around the question: “What is realism?” This chapter is based on close readings of literary histories that were mainly written in the post-1949 period, and it considers these, much as Greenblatt would have us consider literature itself, as ambivalent products: on the one hand, they were most certainly the results of writing practices and thinking modes of a specific time and place. On the other, they are cultural phenomena that pervade time and space in that they consider literary works as valuable based on premises that did not originate with Marxist-Leninist literary criticism and that, to some extent, are still prevalent in today’s reading of the literary tradition.

Also, as a final point in addressing what made the discipline of reading literature red in the early P.R.C., this chapter zooms out of the close perspective on individuals and singular texts that was the focus of the chapters 1 and 2, respectively. In terms of the participants of the literary field, chapter 3 concentrates on peer groups rather than individuals. In terms of material evidence, it jumps between several exemplary texts of the literary historiographic genre in an attempt to trace arguments in the progression of time. In this way, chapter 3 presents an overview of a short period within the evolution

³³¹ Stephen Greenblatt. “What is the History of Literature?” In: *Critical Inquiry* 23.3 (1997: 460-481), 470.

of modern Chinese literary historiography and brings together its shaping influences, i.e., campaigns, individuals and arguments, in an attempt to leave the reader with an impression of the process. Rather than being an all-encompassing explanation of the field, this chapter is certainly an elliptic, but also a fairly concise reading of literary historiography and its manifold constituent elements.

Finally, it should be noted that unlike in chapters 1 and 2, I have reversed the order of the first two sections on “narratives” and “sources”. This is to reflect the shift of emphasis from the “individual” (i.e., agent or text) in the first two chapters to the “genre” (i.e., peer groups and texts) in chapter 3: whereas in the first two chapters the individual sources (i.e., Lu Kanru and the texts of the *Honglou meng*-Campaign) determined the way the narrative was presented, considerations of narrative form and content determine the way the sources are presented in the third and final part of the present thesis.

Chapter 3, *Red Discipline: The Rewriting of Literary History*, is therefore structured as follows:

1. *The Problem of Narratives*
2. *The Problem of Sources*
3. *Setting the Stage*
4. *The Experts on Periodization*
5. *The Experts on Honglou meng*
6. *Reds and Experts: The Transition Phase*
7. *A Great Leap in Literary History*
8. *The Reds on Honglou meng*
9. *Red Experts: Revisions*

While the first section contains some thoughts on narrative cohesion in writing about literary historiography in the early P.R.C., the second section introduces in some detail the sources that form the basis of this chapter. Section 3 presents the first literary history that was written according to dialectical materialism, so as to highlight what was different compared to the literary histories that would ensue. Sections 4 and 5 talk about the various ways in which the older generation of experts in the field, including Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun, dealt with two of the most central topics in literary

historiography at the time: (1) the categorization of literature into ideologically correct historical periods, and (2) – as prominently shown in the campaign against Yu Pingbo and Hu Shi – how to correctly read Cao Xueqin’s *Honglou meng*. Section 6 returns to a more contextual approach, and introduces the historical prelude to the Great Leap Forward (dayuejin 大躍進) and how it affected academic work in the liberal arts. Section 7, as its title suggests, recounts what happened inside the field at the start of the Great Leap when the student generation for the first time tried to take over. Section 8 is an exploration of how this new generation viewed *Honglou meng* in their own literary historiography. And finally, section 9 revisits the late 1950s as the phase when students and teachers once again co-operated in transforming literary history into an ever more “red” (but still somewhat “expert”) discipline.

1. The Problem of Narratives

The main source of the following chapter are a selection of actual literary histories – meaning the books – written by academics in the early P.R.C. for an academic environment, i.e., by university teachers for university students. Thus on the one hand practical teaching materials, they also represented the state of the art of the field of literary historiography at any given moment. Starting out as fairly individualized lecture notes strung together into chapters to form a coherent whole, the campaign culture of the 1950s soon served as a backdrop against which these books became increasingly standardized and “textbook-like”. Aside from their political ambitions, however, their approaches to the history of literature – very broadly speaking – also varied and shifted between two main models that have been identified by David Perkins as defining literary historiography as a genre and as causing the main rift in the field in the Western context.

The two models derive from the above mentioned ambivalent nature of literature and divide the practitioners of the field into two camps, respectively. One is the that of the *contextual*, the other that of the *textually immanent* literary history. While the former mainly explores the socio-historical circumstances of a works’ coming into being, the latter focuses on the impact of texts on other texts, and how writing and genre conventions changed over time.³³² In both cases, there are a number of basic obstacles

³³² (Perkins 1992). The reason why these two approaches remain largely opposed to one another and the practitioners of one type rarely resort to the other, is that classical literary history was thrown into a crisis

literary historians must overcome: collating and distilling a vast number of sources, organizing them and deciding on how to present them, and bearing in mind that one's selection and argument aim at impacting the general concept of the canon and what it should contain.³³³

In the case of the Chinese literary histories of the 1950s, we are looking at largely contextual approaches focusing on the specific narrative of the historical development of communism. This becomes clear when looking at a passage such as the one quoted above from Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun's *Short course* of 1957. In the words of the introduction, the main purpose of the entire text was to provide a backdrop of tradition in which China's new literature was to stand – signifying the literature that was yet to be created under the auspices of socialism and communism. This meant that the entire history of classical Chinese literature was seen to have developed teleologically, its ultimate destination being an as yet unachieved ideal of communist literature. During most of the 1950s, the closest one could come to that hazily defined ideal was to write works in the mode of “socialist realism” (shehuizhuyi xianshizhuyi 社會主義現實主義). Consequently, as we have seen in chapter 2 of the present thesis, there was a strong drive in historical literary criticism (or: literary historiography) to read the entire classical tradition from the vantage point of “realism” (xianshizhuyi 現實主義) as the former method's predecessor.

The people executing this drive, the “professional interpretive communities” (to use Stephen Greenblatt's phrase), or the academics in charge of revisiting the literary canon, had their say in the matter. However, as we have seen in chapters 1 and 2, there were several other, non-academic forces at work that shaped the rewriting of the literary tradition. Without taking these into careful consideration, I have argued that it

with the advent of New Criticism in the early to mid-twentieth century. The reaction to the complete decontextualizing and de-historicizing of texts by the New Critics resulted in the rise of New Historicism by the 1980s, who focused again on the historical context of literature.

³³³ These challenges also require other decisions to be made. A common conundrum is always between the readability and the comprehensiveness of a text, see for example Heinz Schlaffer, 2002. *Eine kurze Geschichte der deutschen Literatur* (A short history of German literature, Munich: DT Taschenbuch, 2003), in which the author insists on readability rather than comprehensiveness. Then, depending on whether the literary historian decides to write contextually or immanently, there is still a large variety of possible “sub-approaches” to literary history. Thus, a contextual approach could be biobibliographical (e.g., a survey of postcolonial African writers), purely biographical (e.g., on the writings of Henry James or Yu Hua 余華), annalistic (e.g., literature of the nineteenth century), or according to a specific context or narrative (e.g., women Modernist authors in the first half of twentieth-century England). A textually immanent literary history could follow all of these categories, but focus more on the texts and their aesthetic properties than their sociohistorical backdrops.

does not make sense to revisit the subject of literary historiography in the early P.R.C. (or indeed that of anything said or done in what is today considered a field within the “humanities”).

Stephen Greenblatt also considers the issue of what defines “canonical literature” that is thought of as such throughout the ages. In his view, it is impossible that this definition solely takes place at the hands of academics:

The limits [i.e., of thinking that the academics were the sole shaping force in creating the literary canon] have to do with a considerable exaggeration of the creative power of the professoriat and a corresponding underestimation both of the independent agency of artists and of the force of popular or at least nonacademic preferences. Teachers of literature may not be hierophants altogether innocent of the mysteries they expound, but neither are they Nietzschean demigods, inventing the worlds they profess to dominate. In its sociological and psychological narrowness, the notion of the professorial will cannot adequately account for the long-term interest of certain literary works and for the cultural significance of a distinction between the literary and the nonliterary.

The compelling interest of literature suggests a quality of resistance in the objects, a will in certain cases even stronger or at least more enduring than that of professional interpreters.³³⁴

It is undoubtedly the case that the composition of the literary canon has reasons beyond what can be explained by the decision-making powers of the professional class, be it in the Western tradition that Greenblatt refers to, or the Chinese one. The actual literary histories that explain and comment upon the coming-into-being of the canon, however, were and still are written by that very class, namely the academics of the literary field. Therefore, in the context of the present chapter, the main question is not necessarily how the canon was composed in the first place, but how it was explained, justified and narrated in the real-world circumstances by the literary historians of the 1950s.

And as we have seen in the previous chapters, literature and its corresponding field of practitioners (i.e., the writers, compilers, critics or teachers) had the potential for social distinction. The Chinese literary academics of the 1950s, by writing and publishing their works, were indeed constantly put to the test: if their argument and rhetoric conformed with the expectations of the higher authorities, they had proven their “academic capability” and were able to continue to practice their art of narrating

³³⁴ (Greenblatt 1997, 470).

literature and its tradition. If not, they became targets of the ubiquitous campaign culture that pervaded daily life and work routines and which, in the course of the decade, increased in violent and segregational potential. Thus, when we read a literary history written during the 1950s in China we see, on the most fundamental level, a historically documented combination of a *normative* and at the same time *punitive* dimension to the functions of literature.

To reiterate the workings of the system: a P.R.C. campaign would mostly begin with a decision on the topmost level of the political elite, such as in the case of Mao's speech before members of the Politburo in which he defended his support for Li Xifan and Lan Ling in their attack of Yu Pingbo. This decision would soon be made public through a *Renmin ribao* editorial, such as Yuan Ying's "Yinggai zhongshi dui Honglou meng yanjiu zhong cuowu guandian de pipan" (We must take seriously the criticisms of the erroneous perspectives in the research of Dream of the Red Chamber) of October 23, 1954. Following this, representatives of the political and cultural elite (such as leading members of the Chinese Writers' Union like Guo Moruo, Zhou Yang and Mao Dun) elaborated on these directives in policy texts, which served as basic references for the participants of the academic field. These texts were often presented as speeches before they were released in print, such as in the cases of Guo Moruo's "San dian jianyi" (Three proposals) or Zhou Yang's "Women bixu zhandou" (We must fight), and were later incorporated in collections of campaign essays as lead texts and referred to in arguments made in campaign articles.

The academics (in this case: the literary historians) on the bottom rung of this hierarchical scale then basically had two sets of canons to work with. On the one hand there were the actual works of literature (such as *Honglou meng*), on the other the new, ideologically charged policies that as yet lacked proper integration into the language and daily practices of academic analysis, publishing and teaching. Unfortunately for the literary historians, the basis for the determination of whether or not their integration accorded with ideological policy was not reliable and fixed, but, quite on the contrary, unreliable and subject to constant change. Obscure, at times even conflicting guidelines and rhetorical subtleties trickling down the ladder of public information made the punitive dimension of the system difficult to assess for anyone who was not in a position of policy-making power. Thus, while one person could become the subject of a large-scale national campaign because they had followed in the footsteps of the public

intellectual “enemy no. 1”, Hu Shi and not suffer more than a few months of public humiliation (such as Yu Pingbo), others were arrested, imprisoned and left behind bars for decades for officially very similar reasons (such as Hu Feng).

The previous chapter treats the new criticism of literary history as presented by both the old and the new generation of scholars in the context of a campaign. In this chapter, the focus is on what can be considered the “purely” academic outcome of the public discourse, in the sense that it was produced within an academic context and largely for an academic readership (though some prefatory statements may lead one to think otherwise).

In dealing with literary historiography on an academic level, this chapter represents the point within the present thesis, where all previous threads come together. In it, all the elements of the chapters 1 and 2 – the biography of Lu Kanru, an academic in transition and the *Honglou meng*-campaign – are combined to offer a glimpse into how literary historiography was practiced in the early P.R.C. The campaign against Yu Pingbo’s interpretation of *Honglou meng* was the first definitive and officially sanctioned break with the tradition of literary historiography that had grown from Hu Shi’s *Baihua wenxue shi* and his version of *kaozheng*, or “contextual philology”.³³⁵ It also for the first time clearly established Marxism-Leninism (in a Maoist reading) as the one obligatory source of authority within the academic disciplines of the humanities.³³⁶ In the wake of these changes, a generational shift took place that sought to gradually replace the old “experts” of Lu Kanru’s generation of scholars with the newly emergent “red” intellectuals of the student generation. In this, too, the *Honglou meng*-Campaign with its emphasis on Li Xifan and Lan Ling as the “newly emerging forces” of the academic field had set a precedent. To show the process of writing literary history before, during and in the wake of this transitional event is the main goal of the present chapter.

³³⁵ (PLA Defence Academy, 中共中央批轉中央宣傳部《關於胡適思想批判運動的情況和今後工作的報告》(The CCPC comments and transmits the Ministry of Propaganda's "Report on the current situation and future work of the movement to criticize Hu Shi's thought") 1985).

³³⁶ Hu Xiaowei 胡小偉. “Hongxue sanshi nian taolun shuyao 紅學三十年討論述要” (Essential summary of thirty years of debate in Dream of the Red Chamber studies). In: Lu Xingji 盧興基 (ed.). *Jianguo yilai gudai wenxue wenti taolun juyao 建國以來古代文學問題討論舉要* (Summary of the debates on issues in classical literature since the founding of the nation) (Jinan: Jilu shushe, 1987), 425-457.

2. The Problem of Sources

Secondary sources

Chinese secondary scholarship on literary historiography is not abundant. There exist, however, several useful articles and one book in particular that should be pointed out as a main reference for the following chapter. The latter is a collection of articles edited by Lu Xingji 卢兴基 (*1933), a professor at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Literary Research Institute, entitled *Jianguo yilai gudai wenxue wenti taolun juyao* 建國以來古代文學問題討論舉要 (Summary of the debates on issues in classical literature since the founding of the nation) (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1987). Comprised of academic essays offering overviews as well as focusing on very specific issues in literary criticism, this volume of nearly 500 pages is a goldmine of information and detail that is generally difficult to recover elsewhere. To my knowledge, it is also still the standard reference work on the subject of literary historiography after 1949 printed in the P.R.C.

In terms of articles, two notable (and fairly recent) contributions to retracing the developments of the field of literary historiography in modern China are: (1) Dai Yan 戴燕. "Wenke jiaoxue yu "Zhongguo wenxueshi" 文科教學與“中國文學史”” (Liberal arts education and "Chinese literary history"). In: *Wenxue yichan* 2 (2000), 6-19; and (2) Gao Jiye 高積意. "20 shiji 50 niandai Zhongguo wenxue shixue de lilun wenti 20 世紀 50 年代中國文學史學的理論問題” (The theoretical issues of Chinese literary history in the 50s of the 20th century). In: *Tianjin shehui kexue* 1 (2001), 100-106. Both of these sources identify a struggle between two “models” or approaches to literary history in modern China that are to some extent reminiscent of David Perkins’ textual immanence/contextual model-dichotomy.

Thus, Dai Yan argues that literary historiography in twentieth-century mainland China has to some extent been characterized by what is termed the conflict of “shi 史” and “lun 論”, i.e., “historical facts and contexts” versus “theoretical guidelines”.³³⁷ Due to a strong drive to standardize teaching methods at universities after 1949, “lun”

³³⁷ On the more concrete theme of “shi” and “lun” in the context of modern Chinese historiography, see Edward Q. Wang. “Between Marxism and Nationalism: Chinese historiography and the Soviet influence, 1949-1963”. In: *Journal of Contemporary China* 23.9 (2000), 95-111; cf. also Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik. “On Shi and Lun: Toward a Typology of Historiography in the PRC”. In: *History and Theory* 35.4 (1996), 74-95.

eventually won over “shi” by the late 1950s which furthered the eventual standardization of academic content and the way this content was written: collectively, as textbooks, and with a strong tendency towards nationalism.³³⁸

Gao Jiye, who focuses solely on the 1950s in his article, describes the shift in approach as one from “literary evolutionism” to “dialectical and historical materialism”. Instead of looking at the literary texts and their own evolution, Gao argues, literary historians were increasingly expected to utilize a combination of theory (which set the parameters for historical contextualization) and criticism (pipan 批判), which resulted in theoretical explanations given credit over historical material evidence.³³⁹

The two latter articles represent present-day scholars in mainland China’s careful attempts at revisiting the history of their own fields, especially for the period after 1949. Their arguments appear unusually open compared to the kind of (otherwise very informative) material presented by Lu Xingji in 1987, in that for the first time, academic content from the early P.R.C. is seen in the context of “thought reform” and other campaigns and the notion of the generational rift is delicately touched upon. Also, both texts include several considerations on the change of language and rhetoric that took place within the field of the time, though in both cases a common “nationalist standpoint” (minzuzhuyi lichang 民族主義立場) – which is otherwise not described in much detail – is held responsible. Seen in context of the kind of source materials described in the previous chapter, i.e., Sun Yuming’s *Hongxue: 1954* or the memoirs of Yuan Ying, theirs may be seen as a part of a trend on behalf of mainland scholarship to genuinely understand the origins of P.R.C. intellectualism and state input.

³³⁸ Dai further traces the elements of the standardized textbook into the 1980s and beyond, ultimately defining the field of literary criticism in China today to be mired in stasis: teaching literary history has become part of a bureaucratic machine that no longer questions itself and breeds specialists unable to ask the “big questions”, but are instead stuck in eternal case studies (Dai 2000, 18).

³³⁹ He terms this the tension between “material collection” (shouji cailiao 收集材料) and “finding the rule of development” (fazhan guilü de tanxun 發展規律的探尋) in literary historiography, which became particularly strong on the later years of the 1950s (Gao 2001, 103 and passim). His outlook on the field at present is carefully more pessimistic than Dai’s: Gao, who focuses on the work of literary historian Liu Dajie in his article, subtly laments that the unification under what he terms “nationalism” in the 1950s as well as the thought reform campaigns of the time resulted in the loss of expertise of Liu’s generation of academics (Gao 2001, 106).

Primary sources

The main primary sources for this chapter are a selection of ten literary histories (or rather: nine literary histories and one collection of academic debates on literary historiography) written between 1932 and 1959, respectively. This means that among them, several were first written in the 1930s and 40s, only to be reworked into a Marxist framework and subsequently republished (sometimes more than once) by the same authors within the first ten years after 1949. As such, they provide a good overview of literary historiography in China at the start of the P.R.C., and a basis from which to trace some of the developments that occurred within the field at the time.

Firstly, it should be noted that literary histories written in the early PRC shared certain common traits, both in terms of form and content. For example, due to the strict rules governing the allocation of paper, the paper quality of printed books was quite low.³⁴⁰ Additionally, none of the literary histories I have seen so far seem to exist in hard cover prints – this appears to have been reserved for some of the more authoritative theoretical compilations, such as the very bulky Beijing Normal University compilation *Wenxue lilun xuexi cankao ziliao* 文學理論學習參考資料 (Reference materials for the study of literary theory), published by Higher Education Press in 1956.³⁴¹

In terms of authorship, the selected literary histories are somewhat diverse: beginning from the early to mid-1950s with the traditional individual authors, the break came in 1957 with the issuance of the first official syllabus for the subject of literary history at universities: working under the mandate of the Ministry of Higher Education, this was a text authored by a group of academics. Subsequently, group authorship came to dominate the realm of textbook publication, as it was further pushed during the initial surge of student activity at the very start of the Great Leap Forward. Also, there were among the academic reference works of the time certain publications that in their composition and style were very similar to the campaign volumes described in the previous chapter: in 1959, for example, the highly influential Shanghai branch of the Chinese Writers' Union published a volume of articles that dealt with certain at the time

³⁴⁰ For details on the materiality of publishing in the early P.R.C., see the respective sections in the still very useful Raymond G. Nunn. *Publishing in Mainland China* (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1966).

³⁴¹ I use the term “authoritative” in the sense that, as Lorenz Bichler writes, this was a book that was used at universities across China from 1956 as a comprehensive reference work in literary theory (Bichler, *Sowjetische Ideologeme und ihre Rezeption in Literaturtheorie und Belletristik in der Volksrepublik China* 1999, 57 f.).

prominent questions in literary historiography and criticism on the basis of a series of collective debates.

As with the variety of authorial types, the texts themselves demonstrate a variety of rhetorical attempts to (re-)define the textbook genre at the start of the P.R.C.: written largely as running text in the style and with the various focal points of their individual authors up until the mid-1950s, the 1957 syllabus by the Ministry of Education not only broke with the tradition of the individual author, but also with the concept of a fluent and running text. Unlike any of its predecessors, the publication has a queer staccato rhythm, alternating its passages between key phrases and terms and complete sentences, and thus seemingly underlining its “guideline” or “manual” (rather than full-out literal instruction) character. Though the format of the running text was again picked up in later publications, the increase in pre-formulated themes, phrases and key words mark a certain synchronicity within the late 1950s texts that appears much less stringent in the earlier years of the decade.

In terms of content, the literary histories of the 1950s had similar paratextual features. These specifically included a type of “policy chapter”, which would lay out, in more or less detail, the idea behind the literary history at hand, as well as the purpose of and challenges posed by literary historiography in general. Rhetorically, this was the portion of text within a literary history most reminiscent of a campaign essay, containing observations on the general nature and functions of literature, criticisms of past literary criticism and its mistaken views, and at times even short passages of self-criticism by the author. Naturally, the policy chapter was also the section of the literary history which was supposed to most clearly reflect the author’s stance on questions of general and literary policy, as well as of contemporary debate topics that were central to the humanities (such as, from the mid-1950s, the problem of periodization, known as the *fenqi wenti* 分期問題). The policy chapter was mostly also the introductory chapter to the text, but sometimes a portion of the information was contained in an author’s or editor’s pre- or postface (such as, for example, a statement on the writing and compiling process of the literary history at hand, or a section of self-criticism). As the policy chapters were the “bridge texts”, so to speak, between general policy and academic content, a generous part of this chapter focuses on them and their subtle changes of argument.

Additionally, it should be noted that while the following pages are a fairly detailed and philological list of the literary histories consulted in writing the present chapter, they are also meant to be a stand-alone presentation of the kind of literary histories that are available from that time. Some of them, though hardly mentioned in the course of chapter 3, were read as a contextual source for the ones highlighted in the course of the argument and they are thus presented on a par with those literary histories that are mentioned more prominently in the rest of chapter 3. If not otherwise indicated, information on the compilation processes of these texts is taken from their own prefatory sections.³⁴²

1. Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun (1932/47, 1954/55, 1957)

Lu Kanru being the main protagonist of the present thesis, chapter 3 looks at the origins and transformation of his and Feng Yuanjun's literary historiography during the first decade of the PRC, again with some emphasis on their reading of *Honglou meng*. In terms of textual sources, Lu and Feng wrote two literary histories intended for use at institutions of higher education during the 1950s.³⁴³ The first, entitled *Zhongguo wenxue shi gao* 中國文學史稿 (A draft history of Chinese literature), was serialized in eighteen installments in Shandong University's journal *Wenshizhe* between July, 1954 and December, 1955. The text then went through a public review process via a conference dedicated to it at Shandong University in the early summer of 1956. Lu and Feng responded to the criticisms in an article originally published in *Wenxue yichan*, entitled "Guanyu bianxie Zhongguo wenxueshi de yixie wenti" 關於編寫中國文學時的一些問題 (A few issues concerning the writing of the literary history of China), when they were already in the process of revising their text. Following their revision, Writer's Publishers (Zuojia chubanshe 作家出版社) in Beijing published the final version of the text as a book, namely the *Short course: revised edition* mentioned at the start of this chapter, in July, 1957 (their article "A few issues" was appended at the end of the main text).

³⁴² As the most important details about these sources are reiterated in their respective contexts within the main part of the present text, it is possible for the less philologically-minded reader to skip the following section and continue with section 3 of chapter 3: "Setting the Stage".

³⁴³ A third, condensed version of their *Short course* of 1957 was published that same year. Entitled *Zhongguo gudian wenxue jianshi* 中國古典文學簡史 (A short history of classical Chinese literature), the preface explains that it was written in 1956 and simplified compared to their *Short course*, as it was intended for use in middle school education. This is also why, unlike its predecessor, it includes the opinions of middle school teachers on the literary heritage (Lu and Feng 1957b, 3).

Both the *Draft history* and the *Short course* covered the origins and development of classical Chinese literature from the earliest oral traditions up to the May Fourth Movement, claiming to make use of the methods of dialectical materialism and historical materialism in their interpretation. However, both the *Draft history* and the *Short course* were based on an even earlier text of the same title (*A short course in Chinese literary history*), which had first been published in 1932 (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian 開明書店, Enlightened Bookstore). Reprinted until as late as 1947, this first *Short course* did not follow any Marxist, let alone Maoist, guidelines, but was instead a rather philologically kept textbook based on Lu and Feng's lectures on classical literary history (including the May Fourth Movement and its aftermath) at various universities around China prior to their departure for France.

2. Jiang Zuyi (1950)

Though barely mentioning *Honglou meng* and otherwise also hardly conforming to the later conventions of organizing literary histories, Zhejiang University professor Jiang Zuyi's 蔣祖怡 (1913-1992) *Zhongguo renmin wenxueshi* 中國人民文學史 (History of the literature of the Chinese people) was the first literary history of the P.R.C. written according to the "dialectical materialist method". A thin book comprising 244 pages, it was first published in 1950 with Beixin shuju 北新書局 (Northern New Press), and contained a preface by Zhao Jingshen 趙景深, who at the time was also the editor-in-chief of that publishing house.³⁴⁴ Other paratexts included a general introduction and an extensive postface, both of which had originally been separate texts Jiang had written as lecture notes for a course he taught at Zhejiang University in the fall of 1948. Arranged more according to literary genre than to chronological considerations, the main focus of the *People's history* was to make a definitive break with past literary criticism and historiography as it had been practiced in China.

³⁴⁴ Zhao had worked in that position from the 1930s until 1951, when he left his position to become a full-time professor at Fudan University in Shanghai. Cf. a short overview of his professional life written in 2010 online at the "Beijing Daxue zhongwen luntan 北京大學中文論壇" (Peking University Chinese forum): <http://www.pkucn.com/chenyc/archiver/?tid-13303.html> (last accessed: February 12, 2012). Also, Zhao Jingshen's work *Song Yuan xiwen benshi* 宋元戲文本事 (Sources of Song and Yuan Drama) of 1934 was one of the reasons Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun wrote their *Nanxi shiyi* 南戲拾遺 (Filling in the Blanks in Southern Drama) in 1936. For the earlier reference, cf. the section *Nanxi shiyi* in chapter 1.

3. Li Changzhi (1954/55)

A further literary history, written by Beijing Normal University professor and literary historian Li Changzhi 李長之 (1910-1978), was published between June, 1954 and February, 1955 with Fifties Publishers (Wushi niandai chubanshe 五十年代出版社) in Beijing, so roughly around the same time that Lu and Feng were serializing their *Draft history* in Shandong University's *Wenshizhe*. Entitled *Zhongguo wenxueshi lüegao* 中國文學史略稿 (A brief sketch of Chinese literary history; hereafter: *Brief sketch*), Li's literary history consisted of three thin volumes treating the literary heritage from its origins to the Song dynasty, thus falling short of the scope of Lu and Feng's work. Although also based on lectures he gave, Li insisted in his preface that his *Brief sketch* was not to be used as formal teaching material, but that he rather merely compiled his own informal notes into a book as a kind of "rough guide for experts" (zhuanjia de zhijiao 專家的指教). As the publication of Li's work, like Lu and Feng's *Short course*, coincided with the campaign against Hu Shi and Yu Pingbo, it would present an interesting case for comparison, however it does not contain a section on *Honglou meng*.

4. Tan Pimo (1952/58, 1954/57)

First published in 1952 in Shanghai, Beijing Normal University professor Tan Pimo's 譚丕模 (1899-1958) *Zhongguo wenxueshi gang* 中國文學史綱 (Outline of China's literary history, hereafter: *Outline*) was originally also a compilation of lecture notes (*jiangyi* 講義). Originally, the book was intended as a two-volume work, but for undisclosed reasons, only the first of these covering the period from the origins of Chinese literature to the literature of the Five Dynasties was ever published.³⁴⁵

There exist at least two different versions of this text, which were published by two different publishers, namely by Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe 高等教育出版社 (Higher Education Press), and Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社 (People's Literature Publishers), respectively. The earliest version of the *Outline* was printed in 1952 in Beijing (with People's Literature Publishers), and was later re-edited in 1958, containing a new postface that dated from 1956. Another version appeared in 1954 in Shanghai

³⁴⁵ The fact that Tan Pimo died in a plane crash along with Zheng Zhenduo in 1958 may be responsible for the lack of a second volume.

(according to the back cover, Beijing's Higher Education Press was working with a printing press in Shanghai), which was reprinted without any changes in 1957 (also in Shanghai), even still containing the old postface of 1954. The 1958 Renmin wenxue-edition was also altered somewhat in its policy chapter and main text when compared to the 1954/57 Gaodeng jiaoyu-edition, but I cannot say how both of these had changed since 1952, as I was unable to find an extant copy of the original first Renmin wenxue-edition.

5. Ministry of Education (1957)

The first official course syllabus in Chinese literary history for university students was published by the Ministry of Education with Higher Education Press in Beijing in August, 1957. Entitled *Zhongguo wenxueshi jiaoxue dagang* 中國文學史教學大綱 (Chinese literary history teaching syllabus, hereafter: *Syllabus*), it was intended for students in their fourth and fifth year of studies at the Chinese departments of the so-called comprehensive universities (*zonghe daxue* 綜合大學). The five principal authors of the *Syllabus* were all renowned literary historians, namely You Guo'en 游國恩 and Wang Yao 王瑤 (both Peking University), Liu Dajie 劉大傑 (Fudan University), Feng Yuanjun, and Liu Shousong 劉綬松 (Wuhan University).³⁴⁶ According to the compilers' note at the start of the book, an initial draft of the *Syllabus* had been circling various universities before a revised version was submitted to the Ministry of Higher Education for a final verdict. In July, 1956, the Ministry convened a meeting to discuss the draft, after which it was revised a third time by the group of authors. Finally, this third version was approved for publication and distribution at the first enlarged conference of the Chinese Literary History Textbook Editorial Committee (*Zhongguo wenxueshi jiaokeshu bianji weiyuanhui* 中國文學史教科書編輯委員會), which took place in November, 1956.³⁴⁷

The *Syllabus* treats Chinese literary history from its origins to the First Congress of Writers and Artists (*Quanguo wendai dahui* 全國文代大會) in July, 1949, and therefore provides the chronologically most complete overview of pre-1949 literature.

³⁴⁶ The note at the start of the text that lists the authors has an "etc." (*deng* 等) after Liu Shousong's name, so there were apparently more people involved in the writing and compiling of the *Syllabus*. For lack of information about them, however, they have so far remained *et cetera*.

³⁴⁷ A report of the conference was printed in *Wenyibao* 1956.24. This Committee, along with many others for different subjects, was instituted at the start of the 1950s with the point of standardizing all national textbooks for every subject taught at state institutions. Cf. (Dai Yan 2000, 12-13).

Unlike other literary histories, however, the *Syllabus* was not written as a fluent text, but rather as a compilation for reference purposes of themes, topics and policies that were to be taught in the classroom.³⁴⁸ It is mainly this quality of the text, the fact that it was authored by more than one individual (all of whom were of the same generation as Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun), as well as its role as an officially sanctioned text for nationwide academic use that is of interest in this chapter.

6. Zheng Zhenduo (1932, 1957)

Writer, literary scholar and Vice-Minister of Culture Zheng Zhenduo's 鄭振鐸 (1898-1958) *Chatuben Zhongguo wenxueshi* 插圖本中國文學史 (Illustrated history of Chinese literature, hereafter: *Illustrated history*), like Lu and Feng's *Short course*, was a text that had first been published in four volumes in 1932 (Beiping: Pushe chubanshe 樸社出版部). Unlike Lu and Feng's work, however, Zheng's *Illustrated history* was hardly changed or adapted at all from its earlier version by the time it was republished by Zuoja chubanshe in December, 1957. In fact, Zheng did not so much as include even a revised preface or introduction, and so it is only through an editor's note at the beginning of the text that the reader learns about its status as a reprint with minor alterations. Covering the literary tradition from the start of the written language until the end of the Ming dynasty, Zheng Zhenduo's book was also unique in that it contained reproductions of several original illustrations from the printed works discussed.

When compared with other literary histories of its time, the *Illustrated history* appears uniquely un-ideological: it does not contain a regular "policy chapter" (though there are both a preface and some introductory remarks) and there is no mention of Marxism-Leninism, let alone Mao Zedong thought, in any of the remarks on literary historiography and its challenges and difficulties. Its main point of interest is therefore the fact that it was, unlike any other text based on an earlier original, reprinted without any obvious adaptations to the new political situation. In this, the *Illustrated history* stands in stark contrast to Lu and Feng's *Short history*, as well as to any other literary history I am aware of for that period.

³⁴⁸ According to a preface by You Guo'en in a later literary history by Wang Yao, he noted that there had existed a plan to turn the *Syllabus* into a "proper" literary history, but that historical circumstances in the late 1950s (Anti-Rightist Campaign, Great Leap Forward) had curtailed any further efforts to that end. Cf. (Dai Yan 2000, 14 fn. 1).

7. Liu Dajie (1941/49, 1957/58)

According to the preface of the 1957-edition, Fudan University professor Liu Dajie 劉大傑 (1904-1977) first wrote an original two-volume version of *Zhongguo wenxue fazhanshi* 中國文學發展史 (Developmental history of Chinese literature, hereafter: *Developmental history*) between 1939 and 1943. This was published successively with Zhonghua shuju 中華書局 (China Press), the first volume in 1941, the second – for, as he put it, “various reasons” (zhongzhong yuanyin 種種原因) – only in 1949. Although initially intending an elaborately reworked four-volume edition after 1949, Liu never fulfilled his plan, and instead published an only slightly altered version, this time in three volumes, between 1957 and 1958 with Shanghai’s Gudian wenxue chubanshe 古典文學出版社 (Classical Literature Publishers).

The *Developmental history* covers Chinese literary history from the Shang dynasty oracle bone inscriptions to late Qing dynasty fiction, thereby representing the most conservative view of the term “classical literature” (gudian wenxue), i.e., not extending beyond 1911. Unlike Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun’s *Short course*, which was also based on an earlier, pre-1949 version of their text, Liu Dajie’s *Developmental history* had only been superficially revised, with Liu even going so far as to include the original preface of September, 1940, together with a new one written in August, 1957. For this reason, the work was strongly criticized at the start of the Great Leap Forward in a coordinated “internal campaign” at Fudan University organized by the students and younger teachers of the classical literature *jiaoyanzu*.³⁴⁹ Therefore, in this chapter, when talking about Liu Dajie, the focus will be on the different approaches of the *Developmental history* and the *Short course*, considering their origins prior to 1949, to the changes that occurred in literary historiography and especially *hongxue* pre- and post-1949, and, of course, pre- and post-1954/55.

8. Peking University (1958, 1959)

This text was the first literary history authored by a group of P.R.C. university undergraduate students at the start of the Great Leap Forward, namely the literature

³⁴⁹ A collection of these criticisms also containing Liu Dajie’s self-criticism was published in the wake of the campaign, entitled *Zhongguo wenxue fazhanshi pipan* 中國文學發展史批判 (Criticisms of the Developmental history of Chinese literature). Cf. (Gao Jiyi 2001, 100-101).

specialization class of 1955 at Peking University's Chinese department (Beijing Daxue zhongwenxi wenxue zhuanmenhua 1955 ji 北京大學中文系文學專門化 1955 級). Again, there exist two versions of the text that differ substantially both in length and content, which was mainly due to some changes in its authorship: whereas the initial publication had been mainly written by the students without much outside aid, the second, revised edition had been closely monitored by several of Beida's most prominent literary historians.

Entitled *Zhongguo wenxueshi* 中國文學史 (History of Chinese literature, hereafter: *PKU History*), the work was first published in two volumes in September, 1958, by People's Literature Publishers (Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社). Covering everything from pre-Qin literature to the literature of the "period of the old democratic revolution" (jiu minzhuzhuyi geming shiqi 舊民主主義革命時期), meaning the period between the Opium Wars and the May Fourth Movement, the *PKU History* was certainly the most outspokenly ideological literary history to its date.

A mere year after its initial publication, following a period of internal discussion and revision, it was republished by the same editor in September, 1959. This second edition consisted of four volumes whose rhetoric appeared somewhat ideologically downtuned compared to their predecessors. The later edition covered literature from the pre-Qin period to what was termed the "literature of the bourgeois democratic revolution period" (zichanjieji minzhuzhuyi geming shiqi de wenxue 資產階級民主主義革命時期的文學), i.e. the time around the Xinhai revolution of 1911.

In terms of its relevance for the following chapter, the *PKU History* represents a kind of crossroads occasioned by the Great Leap Forward in academic work. On the one side, there was literary historiography as practiced by the greater part of the "older" generation of scholars, people like Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun and their contemporaries. On the other, there were the university students who were to become the new generation called upon to mark their authority on previously untested grounds. Therefore, this chapter will mainly examine these student productions from the point of view of the ever widening "generational gap" in the early P.R.C., which had a systemic predecessor in Li Xifan and Lan Ling's criticisms of Yu Pingbo (and would later become

manifest in the institution of the Red Guards (hongweibing 紅衛兵) during the Cultural Revolution).

9. Fudan University (1958/59)

The second most prominent student effort in literary historiography was by 2nd, 3rd and 4th-year students of the classical literature group of the Chinese department at Fudan University in Shanghai (Fudan daxue zhongwenxi gudian wenxuezu xuesheng 復旦大學中文系古典文學組學生). Between December, 1958, and December, 1959, their *Zhongguo wenxueshi* 中國文學史 (History of Chinese Literature, hereafter: *Fudan History*) was published in three volumes by Zhonghua shuju.

Like the earlier *PKU History*, the *Fudan History* covered Chinese literature from pre-Qin literature to what was termed “modern literature” (jindai wenxue 近代文學), which basically focused on the period between the Opium Wars and the Xinhai revolution (though some mention was made of individuals working until the May Fourth Movement, e.g. Yan Fu 嚴復 and Lin Shu 林紓).

The student authored literary histories drew much attention from scholars of all generations, as they represented the first real attempts to replace the older, “bourgeois” caste of academics with the so-called *xinsheng lilian* 新生力量 (fresh forces). As the *Fudan History* was modeled on the *PKU History* (though it did not quite match the “revolutionary” zeal of the latter’s first version), the following chapter will focus on similar points in both cases.

10. Shanghai branch of the Chinese Writers’ Union (1959)

In October, 1959, the Literary Research Department of the Shanghai branch of the Chinese Writers’ Union (Zhongguo zuojia xiehui Shanghai fenhui wenxue yanjiushi 中國作家協會上海分會文學研究室) published a collection of articles with Zhonghua shuju. All of these texts had originally been contributions to debates held between March and June, 1959, mainly in response to the publications of the first version of the *PKU History* (September, 1958) and the first volume of the *Fudan History* (December, 1958). Containing a total of 44 articles, the collection included a section of book criticisms (i.e., of the two aforementioned literary histories) and three sections on debate topics in

literary historiography, both in general terms as well as focused on individual works and authors.

Entitled *Zhongguo wenxueshi taolunji* 中國文學史討論集 (Collection of debates in literary history, hereafter: *Debates*) this text is not a classical literary history, but rather a collection of texts about literary historiography written at the end of the first decade of the P.R.C. and in the middle of the Great Leap Forward. For reasons of conciseness, this chapter will focus less on the themes of these debates, but will only mention this collection in the context of the official reactions to the phenomenon of the student publications.

3. Setting the Stage

At the very start of the P.R.C., the main point of reference for anyone working in the field of literature (this included literary history) would have been the First All-China Congress of Literary and Art Workers (*Zhonghua quanguo wenxue yishu gongzuozhe daibiao dahui* 中華全國文學藝術工作者代表大會) which took place in Beijing in July, 1949. At that occasion, the two most powerful organs of CCP cultural policy propagation and implementation were formally established, namely the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles (*Quanguo wenxue yishujie lianhehui* 全國文學藝術界聯合會, abbr. *Wenlian*) and, as one of its subordinate organs, the All-China Association of Literature Workers (*Zhonghua quanguo wenxue gongzuozhe xiehui* 中華全國文學工作者協會), a forerunner of the later CWU.³⁵⁰

In terms of political guidelines, Guo Moruo held a central speech at that Congress, namely “Fight for the construction of New China’s popular art”, in which he established “Mao Zedong thought” and the necessity of a “New Democratic cultural revolution” as the guiding principles of contemporary culture.³⁵¹ Zhou Yang’s address at the same event, “The people’s new literature and art”, stressed “education” as the main purpose of

³⁵⁰ Cf. Zhao Cong 趙聰, *Zhong-gong de wenyi gongzuo* 中共的文藝工作 (The literary and art policy work of the CCP) (Hong Kong: Youlian chubanshe, 1955), 32-36, and Wang Yafu 王亞夫 et al. (eds.), *Zhongguo xueshujie dashiji* 中國學朮界大事記 (Chronicle of events in Chinese academic circles) (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 1988), 123.

³⁵¹ Guo Moruo. “Wei jianshe Xin Zhongguo de renmin wenyi er fendou 為建設新中國的人民文藝而奮鬥” (Fight for the construction of New China’s popular literature) (1949). Available online at: http://big5.xinhuanet.com/gate/big5/www.cflac.org.cn/wdh/cflac_wdh-1th_Article-07_01.html (last accessed: February 26, 2012).

literature (though it has been noted that what he rather meant in this context was “political remolding”).³⁵² From these two speeches derived three main tenets of later P.R.C. literary and cultural policy: (1) *Mao Zedong sixiang*, (2) the “New Democratic” cultural revolution (which would last until the start of the first Five-Year Plan in 1953), and (3) the concept of literature as a tool for education or “thought reform”.

In a further, academically crucial step on October 12, 1949, the Xinhua News Agency released a document laying out the “Preliminary Regulations for the Curricula of Every Department in the Colleges of Literature and Law of Every University and Professional School” (*Ge daxue zhuanke xuexiao wenfa xueyuan ge xi kecheng zanxing guiding* 各大學專科學校文法學院各系課程暫行規定). According to this regulation, there were three required courses that all students of the Literature and Law Colleges had to take:³⁵³

1. Dialectical materialism and historical materialism (including a short history of social development) (first semester, 3 hours per week)
2. On New Democracy (including the history of modern Chinese revolutionary movements) (second semester, 3 hours per week)
3. Politics and economics (starting from the second year of studies for one total year of studies, 3 hours per week)³⁵⁴

Thus, already before the later reform of the universities and colleges in 1952, three core contents of higher education that affected writing and teaching literary history had been decided upon: (1) the method of dialectical materialism and historical materialism (*bianzheng weiwulun yu lishi weiwulun* 辯證唯物論與歷史唯物論), (2) Mao Zedong’s “On New Democracy”, and (3) the binding relationship between literature and its political and economic circumstances. By December, 1949, Peking University, still the leading university in the humanities, was praised by *Renmin ribao*, *Xin Jianshe*, and

³⁵² Cf. (Fokkema 1965, 35) and Zhou Yang 周揚. *Xin de renmin de wenyi* 新的人民的文藝 (The people's new literature and art) (Shanghai: Xinhua shudian, 1949).

³⁵³ These colleges in the “old” university system before the *yuanyuan tiao Zheng*, aside from the departments of literature and law, included the following departments: history, philosophy, education (*jiaoyu xi* 教育系), economics (*jingji xi* 經濟系), and political science (*zhengzhixue xi* 政治學系).

³⁵⁴ Xinhua News Agency. “Ge daxue zhuanke xuexiao wenfa xueyuan ge xi kecheng zanxing guiding 各大學專科學校文法學院各系課程暫行規定” (Preliminary Regulations for the Curricula of Every Department in the Colleges of Literature and Law of Every University and Professional School) (October 12, 1949). Available online at: <http://www.cssn.cn/news/167287.htm> (last accessed: February 27, 2012).

others, for successfully taking the lead in implementing historical materialism in reforming its liberal arts curricula.³⁵⁵

Against this backdrop, the first literary history written according to the new method of “dialectical materialism” was Zhejiang University professor Jiang Zuyi’s 蔣祖怡 (1913-1992) *Zhongguo renmin wenxueshi* 中國人民文學史 (History of the literature of the Chinese people, hereafter: *People’s history*).³⁵⁶ A rather thin book comprising 244 pages, it was first published in 1950 with Beixin shuju 北新書局 (Northern New Press), and contained a preface by Zhao Jingshen 趙景深, who at the time was also the editor-in-chief of that publishing house.

According to its author, the *People’s history* was an attempt to write a different kind of literary history, namely one that focused on the input of the simple and uneducated “people” (renmin) in the creation of literature, a pastime generally reserved for the privileged members of feudalist imperial China.³⁵⁷ Most literary histories of the “past thirty years”, the text claimed, had been written from a capitalist world view which favored a cyclical understanding of history, and held “people’s literature” (renmin wenxue) in low regard, namely as an inferior first stage of a literary process that eventually led up to the more accomplished works of the literati (wenren wenxue 文人文學). To correct the previous bias, the text called for a broadening of the scope of literary history: instead of focusing on what it termed “orthodox history” (meaning literati history, or the history of an elite minority), it suggested a return to *renmin wenxue* as a genre in its own right, with a developmental logic that had nothing to do with the “soulless skeleton” (meiyou linghun de haigu 沒有靈魂的骸骨) that was the feudalist, formalist literature of the literati.³⁵⁸

To support his new focus on traditional literature as inspired by “the people”, Jiang referred to Friedrich Engels’ claim that all literature (as a part of the development

³⁵⁵ Dai Yan 戴燕. “Wenke jiaoxue yu ‘Zhongguo wenxueshi’” 文科教學與“中國文學史” (Liberal arts education and “Chinese literary history”). In: *Wenxue yichan* 2 (2000), 6-19: 8.

³⁵⁶ Cf. Chen Meilin 陳美林 and Xu Yong 許永. “Guanyu wenxueshi zhuliu wenti taolun de huigu 關於文學史主流問題討論的回顧” (Review of the debates on the problem of the mainstream in literary history). In: (Lu Xingji 1987), 477-489: 477.

³⁵⁷ Jiang Zuyi 蔣祖怡. *Zhongguo renmin wenxueshi* 中國人民文學史 (History of the literature of the Chinese people) (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, repr. 1991), 1.

³⁵⁸ (Jiang 1991, repr., 6 f.).

of language and crafts in general) originated in human labor.³⁵⁹ Accordingly, the literary historian, when tracing the origins and developments of literature, was to put a special emphasis on oral traditions, as these included “work songs”, for example, that would shed light on early historical labor conditions. This emphasis allowed for the inclusion of certain literary works into the canon which related to the “origins” of Chinese literature in “labor”. Central among these was the *Book of Poems (Shijing)*, the first part of which, the *Guofeng* 國風 (a collection of 160 folk songs), it was argued, had originally been oral works before being committed to text.³⁶⁰

The brief summary of the logic guiding one of the book’s central arguments above shows that the *People’s history* did not attempt a complete re-writing of literary history as it had been known previously. Rather, it sought to find new perspectives that went beyond the literary text as the product of an educated elite. In terms of its structure, however, several components were a complete break with the way literary histories had previously been written. The new introductory section of almost thirty pages, entitled “general introduction” (*zonglun* 總論), was a classic element of early P.R.C. literary histories: the policy chapter. In it, the author explained at length the overall scheme of his work which focused in part on how to attain a dialectical materialist outlook on literary history, in part on how it understood itself to be different from previous literary

³⁵⁹ This claim was famously stated by Engels in an article for *Die Neue Zeit* in June, 1895, entitled “The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man” (later incorporated in *The Dialectics of Nature*). In a passage in which he expounded on the development of human dexterity, Engels wrote: “Thus the hand is not only the organ of labour, *it is also the product of labor*. Only by labour, by adaptation to ever new operations, through the inheritance of muscles, ligaments, and, over longer periods of time, bones that had undergone special development and the ever-renewed employment of this inherited finesse in new, more and more complicated operations, have given the human hand the high degree of perfection required to conjure into being the pictures of a Raphael, the statues of a Thorwaldsen, the music of a Paganini.” The main point of Engels’ article was, however, not to trace the development of man’s use of his hands in the creation of the arts and sciences, but to set right what he perceived to be a gross imbalance in pre-Marxian intellectual historiography: the focus on the mind over the body in the narrating of the achievements of human civilizations. “All merit for the swift advance of civilization was ascribed to the mind, to the development and activity of the brain. Men became accustomed to explain their actions as arising out of thought instead of their needs (which in any case are reflected and perceived in the mind); and so in the course of time there emerged that idealistic outlook which, especially since the fall of the world of antiquity, has dominated men’s minds. It still rules them to such a degree that even the most materialistic natural scientists of the Darwinian school are still unable to form any clear idea of the origin of man, because under this ideological influence they do not recognize the part that has been played therein by labour.” (“The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man”, 1895) Available online at: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1876/part-played-labour/index.htm#art> (last accessed: November 17, 2012). It is in this context and with the backdrop of his motivation to emphasize the role of human physical labor over mental labor in the development of civilization, that one must read Engels’ focus on the origins of “language in labor”, and, accordingly, the Chinese Marxists’ focus on the “origins of literature in labor.” The reference can be found in many other literary histories written at the time, especially in those passages arguing for the oral origins of written literature.

³⁶⁰ (Jiang 1991, repr., 12).

historiography, and in part on giving an overview of Chinese literary history as seen through the new lense of “the people”. Accordingly, the *zonglun* was subdivided into five parts: (1) The dialectical materialist literary history perspective (*bianzheng weiwu de wenzueshi guan* 辯證唯物的文學史觀), (2) The erroneous tendencies of old literary history (*jiu wenzueshi de pianxiang* 舊文學史的偏向), (3) Labor creates literature (*laodong chuangzao wenxue* 勞動創造文學), (4) The essence of the Chinese people’s literature (*Zhongguo renmin wenxue de benzhi* 中國人民文學的本質), and (5) The developmental process of the Chinese people’s literature (*Zhongguo renmin wenxue de fazhan guocheng* 中國人民文學的發展過程).

But despite the emphasis on the new methods and themes of literary criticism in the policy chapter, the main body of the *People’s history* reveals a strong indebtedness to pre-1949 literary historiography. One example was the stark contrast between the kinds of quotes used in the *zonglun* and in the main text of the *People’s history*. Thus, in his introduction, Jiang leaned heavily on Mao Zedong’s *Yan’an Talks*, as well as the ideologically accepted Chinese literary authorities Lu Xun and Wen Yiduo 聞一多 (1899-1946) and the Soviet literary authorities Maxim Gorky and Georgi Plekhanov. By contrast, Jiang’s first chapter, “Mythology and legends” (*Shenhua yu chuanshuo* 神話與傳說) made extensive references to several Western texts and authorities, such as the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (James Hastings ed., 1907-1928), as well as works by Emile Durkheim or James Frazer.³⁶¹ Only a year later, at the height of the first large-scale thought reform campaign in November 1951, Vice-Minister of Education Qian Junrui 錢俊瑞 (1908-1985) would condemn the use of Anglo-American scholarship by Chinese professors as a “mechanical copying of foreign dogmas” and proof of the academics’ lack of progress in their thought reform.³⁶² By the second half of the 1950s, to quote from these kinds of sources in a liberal arts context had become completely unthinkable, and even some of the Soviet authorities were slowly falling out of systemic favor.

Also in the later sections that dealt less with universal literary phenomena, but with intrinsically Chinese genres, the style of argument in the *People’s history* was reminiscent of May Fourth *kaozheng*. Very reliant on close readings of texts and on textual traditions and commentary, Jiang’s renderings of traditional literature may in

³⁶¹ (Jiang 1991, repr., 27-50).

³⁶² (Pepper 1996, 170 f.)

theory well have followed the themes of Marxist-Leninist literary criticism. In practice, however, they were more indebted to Hu Shi's *History of Vernacular Literature*, in that the *People's history* eloquently cited anyone from the Zhu Xi to Lu Xun to explain the development of a genre, but made comparatively little effort to embed these genres within their respective socio-historical contexts, let alone a grander scheme of socio-political development, such as the Stalinist five stages of social development.³⁶³

In terms of scope, the *People's history's* concentration on popular genres and their origins precluded an extensive treatment of several works that would later become central to the field, among which, for example, was *Honglou meng*. Though the final section of the chapter "Legends and storytelling" (Chuanhuo yu shuohua 傳說與說話) was dedicated to the development of fiction novels (lit. "serial fiction", *zhanghui xiaoshuo* 章回小說), the focus was mainly on *Shuihu zhuan* and *Sanguo yanyi*. At the end of the section, there is the following short paragraph on *Honglou meng* and *Rulin waishi*:

This [i.e., *The Golden Lotus*, *Jinping mei* 金瓶梅] is a work that exposes the inside story of the so-called "gentry" within feudal society; in the Qing dynasty, there was Cao Xueqin's *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Many people have analyzed it philologically, so there exists the term "redology". Also, there is Wu Jingzi's *The Scholars*, which incisively and vividly satirizes the buffoonery of the intellectuals; these can be called works of critical realism.³⁶⁴

Though the general notion of analyzing *Honglou meng* as a work of "realism" was already present in this passage, the novel was not given the kind of attention that followed the campaign of 1954/55. Also, the fact that the *People's history* did not make a clear cut with the philological schools of past *hongxue* (be it the autobiographical approach of a Hu Shi or the political conspiracies of Cai Yuanpei's *suoyinpai*) are indicative of a lack of a new Marxist-Leninist standard opinion on *Honglou meng*.

³⁶³ In addition, another feature of Jiang's book was undeniably inherited from past conventions, namely that someone other than the author – i.e., Zhao Jingshen – had included a prefatory text lauding the author's achievements. The practice of asking other literati to write prefaces for one's own works was deeply entrenched in traditional Chinese book culture. Declining somewhat in literary histories of the 1930s and 40s, it was very rare in the 1950s for anyone but the author of a work to contribute to a book's paratextual sections. Although the reasons for this are not clear, it remains a fact that in the early P.R.C., the role of lauding or criticizing any book had been largely relegated to the print media, which in turn published only officially endorsed opinions. One may therefore speculate that demonstrating individual support of a work whose official reception was unclear (because the writer of a preface had to commit to an opinion before it was actually published) was a personal risk not many people were prepared to take.

³⁶⁴ (Jiang 1991, repr., 176).

Clearly, at the start of the P.R.C., despite burgeoning efforts to standardize the curricula of the humanities, the teaching plans in literary history were far from concrete. In as late as 1952, Lu Kanru remarked in an article for *Renmin jiaoyu* 人民教育 (People's Education) that not any two schools had the same curricular standards when it came to teaching literary history. He himself, a specialist for pre-Qin and Qin dynasty literature, admitted to frequently leaving out the Ming and Qing dynasties in his courses, despite having twenty years of experience in teaching classical literature at a university level.³⁶⁵

One result of this was that at the start of the fifties, academics were still able to write literary histories of all kinds of scopes and with all kinds of emphases and main points, as long as they claimed an affinity with Marxism-Leninism and its method, dialectical and historical materialism. Unlike just few years later, they were not yet bound by new standards claimed through campaigns, which eventually turned from rhetorical conventions into the more or less fixed standards of literary history writing. In short, literary historiography was only in the beginning stage of its Marxist-Leninist reform towards standardization, and this meant that some of the basic questions – i.e., the scope, emphasis and main points a classical literary history should have – had yet to be answered.

4. The Experts On Periodization

Until around 1956, standards of periodization in literary history had not really been an issue. Literary historians in the early P.R.C. experimented with all kinds of periodization schemes, and categorized literature chronologically according to dynasties, the developments of certain genres, Marxist stages of social development or the more general notions of “antiquity” (gudai 古代), “the middle ages” (zhong shiji 中世紀), and “the modern age” (jindai 近代).³⁶⁶ As it happens, Lu Kanru was one of the people mainly involved in standardizing the periodization of literary histories in the early P.R.C.

³⁶⁵ (Lu 1952b, 19).

³⁶⁶ To cite some examples: Beijing Normal University professor Li Changzhi's *Zhongguo wenxueshi lüegao* 中國文學史略稿 (A brief sketch of Chinese literary history, hereafter: *Brief sketch*) of 1954/55 stuck to a classic dynastic periodization scheme. His colleague at BNU however, Tan Pimo, opted for a Marxist scheme, in which he identified different stages of social development (adding the according dynasties in brackets) in his *Zhongguo wenxueshi gang* 中國文學史綱 (Outline of China's literary history, hereafter: *Outline*) of 1954/57. Thus, the *Outline's* chapters in the 1954/57-version were headed “The literature of the period of decentralized feudalism (Western Zhou, Eastern Zhou, Spring and Autumn, and the Warring States)” (Difang fenquan de fengjianzhi shidai (Xi-Zhou, Dong-Zhou, Chunqiu, Zhanguo) de wenxue 地方分

Together with his wife, Lu had been a participant of a meeting held by the Ministry of Higher Education between April 8 and April 12, 1956, to prepare the “Conference of the Colleges and Schools of Higher Normal Education on the Teaching Syllabus for Classical Chinese Literature” (Gaodeng shifan yuanxiao Zhongguo gudian wenxue jiaoxue dagang zuotanhui 高等師範院校中國古典文學教學大綱座談會) to be held in July of the same year. At this meeting, a consensus was reached that in literary historiography, the larger historical periods should follow the dynastic system, which could be sectioned according to authors, works, or genres.³⁶⁷ This meant that experiments such as Jiang Zuyi’s chapter headings “Mythology and legends”, “Legends and storytelling”, etc. were again to be replaced by an orderly dynastic chronology that was readily understood by anyone with a normal school education.³⁶⁸

This decision was reflected in Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun’s own experiments with periodization between 1954 and 1957, the years in which they composed two comprehensive literary histories. The first, entitled *Zhongguo wenxue shi gao* 中國文學史稿 (A draft history of Chinese literature; hereafter: *Draft history*) was initially serialized in eighteen installments in *Wenshizhe* between July, 1954 and December, 1955. After a public review process at Shandong University, a revised edition was subsequently published in 1957 under the new title *Zhongguo wenxueshi jianbian: xiudingben* 中國文學史簡編：修訂本 (Short course in the history of Chinese literature: revised edition; hereafter: *Short course*). Thus, the meeting by the Ministry had fallen

權的封建制時代（西周，東周，春秋，戰國）的文學), or “The literature of the period of weakened central feudalism (Three Kingdoms, Northern and Southern Dynasties)” (*Zhongyang jiquan de fengjianzhi shuairuo shidai* (Sanguo, Nanbeichao) de wenxue 中央集權的封建制衰弱時代（三國南北朝）的文學). Fudan University professor Liu Dajie’s *Zhongguo wenxue fazhanshi* 中國文學發展史 (Developmental history of Chinese literature, hereafter: *Developmental history*) of 1957/58, a work originating from before 1949, was a chronologically strict mixture between dynastic periods and corresponding genres and authors in thirty chapters. His scheme was thus incidentally quite in accordance with what had finally been officially decided in the spring of 1956 at the conference convened by the Ministry of Higher Education (see main text).

³⁶⁷ Cf. Chen Meilin 陳美林 and Wan Jianqing 萬建清. “Lüeshu Zhongguo wenxueshi fenqi wenti de jizhong yijian 略述中國文學史分期問題的幾種意見” (Brief outline of a few opinions on the problem of the periodization of Chinese literary history). In: (Lu Xingji 1987), 458-476: 458. See also Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun. “Guanyu bianxie Zhongguo wenxueshi de yixie wenti 關於編寫中國文學史的一些問題 (On a few problems in writing China’s literary history; 1956)”. In: Ibid. *Zhongguo wenxueshi jianbian: xiudingben* 中國文學史簡編：修訂本 (Short course in the history of Chinese literature: revised edition) (Beijing: Zuoja chubanshe, 1957), 293-308: 297.

³⁶⁸ Jiang Zuyi’s *People’s history* had been split into an introduction five chapters of main text as follows: 1. Introduction, 2. Myths and legends (Shenhua yu chuanshuo 神話與傳說), 3. Folk songs and poetry (Yaoyan yu shige 謠諺與詩歌), 4. Shamanic dances and variety shows (Wuwu yu zaju 巫舞與雜劇), 5. Legends and storytelling (Chuanshuo yu shuohua 傳說與說話), and 6. Musical narration and acting (Jiangchang yu biaoyan 講唱與表演).

into their revision process, which allowed them to adapt their periodization scheme from the draft to the final version. Accordingly, the *Draft history* of 1954/55 had basically followed six stages of Marxist periodization (with the respective dynasties included in brackets), entitled: (1) the origins of literature (pre-Zhou period), (2) the beginning stages of feudalism (Zhou dynasty), (3) the middle stages of feudalism (Qin to Northern and Southern dynasties), (4) the later stages of feudalism (Sui to Yuan dynasties), (5) the final stages of feudalism (Ming and Qing dynasties), and (6) the stage of the New Democratic revolution (from the Opium Wars to May Fourth). The later *Short course* again resorted to a strictly dynastic periodization, making no mention of Marxist periodization. This did not mean, however, that the controversies had ceased, or that Lu and Feng no longer held on to their well-defined six basic periods.

In fact, the debates on periodization in the field of literature began with Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun's written reaction to the main conference convened by the Ministry of Higher Education in July to discuss the first official course syllabus in Chinese literary history for university students, i.e., the *Zhongguo wenxueshi jiaoxue dagang* 中國文學史教學大綱 (Chinese literary history teaching syllabus, hereafter: *Syllabus*), which appeared in 1957.³⁶⁹ Lasting half a month, it had been attended by Lu and Feng personally, along with many other professors from Chinese departments at both comprehensive and normal universities all across the country, as well as members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.³⁷⁰ A few months later, on November 25, Lu and Feng published an article in *Wenxue yichan*, entitled "On a few problems in writing China's literary history" (Guanyu bianxie Zhongguo wenxueshi de yixie wenti 關於編寫中國文學史的一些問題), in which they summed up their take on periodization.

As becomes clear from their explanation, the main issue in literary periodization was only superficially whether one should make the switch from dynasties to the Marxist stages of historical development. The actual problem was rather in the tensions between the potentially divergent historical and literary stages of periodization. In deciding on the correct scheme for their *Draft history*, Lu and Feng stated, they had

³⁶⁹ (Chen and Wan 1987, 458). Chen and Wan note that despite the fact that there was a public debate on this, it is difficult to find the relevant material, because most literary historians either gave their opinions in the paratextual sections of their respective literary histories or simply put directly into practice what they believed to be the best periodization scheme without offering commentary or an explanation. Cf. (Ibid., 460). My own research can only confirm this observation.

³⁷⁰ (Lu and Feng 1956, 293).

followed a comment in *Xin Jianshe* by Marxist historian Fan Wenlan 範文瀾 (1893-1969) on his major *Short comprehensive history of China* (*Zhongguo tongshi jianbian* 中國通史簡編), a book originally written between 1940 and 1942 in Yan'an:³⁷¹

He [i.e., Fan Wenlan] divided the long history of China's feudal society into four stages, using the "three great empires of the Han, Tang, and Ming" as his points of division, and this matched what we had seen in the history of the development of classical literature.³⁷²

Consequently, in the earlier *Draft history*, Lu and Feng had split their own take on the "feudalist period" into four stages: early, middle, later and final. However, when they asked the friends for their comments and opinions on this particular scheme, the reactions had been largely unfavorable:

But this method provoked two different non-supportive opinions among our friends. Several historian friends thought that Mr Fan's periodization was still problematic, and that it wasn't appropriate for us to support his periodization coming from a literary angle; because whether or not a historical periodization works, should depend on how the social base evolves, and not on some circumstance of the superstructure. A few other literature studies friends thought that this way we were forcing a historical framework upon literature, thereby ignoring the development of literature itself.³⁷³

Although Marxism-Leninism was deemed a universally applicable ideology to explain the world, the old "experts" of the pre-1949 era were reluctant to let go of their respective specialities for the sake of a more all-encompassing model of social and cultural development. Also, despite this being the early days of the Hundred Flowers, the risk of being labeled guilty of "vulgar sociology" (*yongsu shehuixue* 庸俗社會學) (i.e., by directly applying Marxist social periodization onto literature) was too great, as the memories of the Anti-Hu Feng-Campaign were still fresh. Thus, Lu and Feng responded to their critics with the following:

Now in our opinion, we absolutely did not intend to pass judgment on the different [meaning: different from literary periodization] historical periodization based on the evolution of literature, and neither did we force a framework of social development onto

³⁷¹ At the time that he wrote it, Fan was the director of the history department at the Marxism-Leninism Institute (Malie xueyuan 馬列學院) and the vice-director of the Central Research Institute (Zhongyang yanjiuyuan 中央研究院) in Yan'an.

³⁷² (Lu and Feng 1956, 294).

³⁷³ (Ibid., 295).

literature. Of course we know that there are many problems in historical periodization, and that at the moment there is absolutely no one-size-fits-all framework to use. We just thought that Mr Fan's periodization coincidentally fit in with our own knowledge about the stages of literary development, so we were happy to use it. In the *Draft history* we also said that "we avoided the mistakes of economic materialism when looking at the development of literary history". In order to avoid the above mentioned misunderstandings of our motives, we edited out terms like the beginning, middle, later, and final stages of feudalism etc., before turning this revised *Short course* over to the printer. However, we think that our original division of six stages still adequately describes the situation of the literary development, so we did not change that.³⁷⁴

The reactions to Lu and Feng's article, all of them published in *Wenxue yichan*, were only mildly critical and mainly took place between December, 1956, and January, 1957. While most agreed with the main gist of Lu and Feng's periodization into six stages, the issue most people had with it still revolved around whether literary developments always coincided with historical developments to the extent that it was safe to define a common periodization scheme in both fields.³⁷⁵

³⁷⁴ (Lu and Feng 1956, 295).

³⁷⁵ The following arguments are largely taken from a summary in (Chen and Wan 1987, 462-463): Beijing Normal University professor Li Changzhi 李長之 (1910-1978) in an article on December 16, for example, stated that he agreed with many of the smaller subsections in Lu and Feng's *Draft history*. To him, the strict dynastic periodization scheme was too restrictive – although he had recently stuck to it in his own literary history, entitled *Zhongguo wenxueshi lüegao* 中國文學史略稿 (A brief sketch of Chinese literary history, 1954/55; hereafter: *Brief sketch*). Now, however, Li preferred his periodization according to more general socio-historical developments, which he devised as "antiquity" (until the Western Han), "middle ages" (Eastern Han until the height of the Tang), the "near ancient period" (*jingu* 近古, from the mid-Tang to the Opium Wars), and "modern times" (from the Opium Wars to May Fourth) [Cf. "Guanyu Zhongguo wenxueshi de fenqi he bianxie tili 關於中國文學史的分期和編寫體例" (On the principles of writing and periodizing a Chinese literary history), *Wenxue yichan* 135 (December 16, 1956)]. Interestingly, this type of scheme had also been advocated by Zhen Zhengduo in his 1932 *Chatuben Zhongguo wenxueshi* 插圖本中國文學史 (Illustrated history of Chinese literature, hereafter: *Illustrated history*), which he had split into three large chapters: (1) Ancient literature, (2) Medieval literature, and (3) Modern literature. Zheng virtually left it that way despite all ongoing measures to standardize periodization even in his reprint of 1957. Cf. Zheng Zhenduo. *Chatuben Zhongguo wenxueshi* (Beijing: Zuoja chubanshe, 1957). Peking University professor Lin Geng 林庚 (1910-2006), by contrast, maintained that literary history had its very own development, which was also highly contingent on the development of language [Cf. "Zhongguo gudian wenxueshi yanjiushang de yixie wenti 中國古典文學史研究上的一些問題" (A few problems in the research of classical Chinese literary history), *Wenxue yichan* 137 (December 30, 1956)]. Though this to Lin did not mean that the development of literature had taken place as a separate event from the development of social history, he saw a difficulty in overcoming the at times uneven development between the two in a common periodization scheme. Therefore, he argued, a scheme that followed dynastic development was – with some exceptions – probably the safest way to go about it, simply because most dynasties could be considered periods of relative stability and cultural union. Another Beida professor, You Guo'en, rather cryptically stated in his article of January 6, 1957, that the history of literature and art could not be severed from the history of social development, but that this did not mean one should see them as equal [Cf. "Guanyu bianxie Zhongguo wenxueshi de jidian yijian 關於編寫中國文學

The problem remained largely unresolved until Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun wrote a second influential article on the subject, which was published almost at the height of the Hundred Flowers on March 12, 1957, in *Wenshizhe*. Entitled “Deliberation on the issue of periodization in Chinese literary history” (Guanyu Zhongguo wenxueshi fenqi wenti de shangque 關於中國文學史分期問題的商榷), this was the first article in the debate that openly called for a common standard in literary periodization.³⁷⁶ Lu and Feng believed that only a commonly agreed on periodization scheme among literary historians would explain the “correct” development of the literary tradition, which in turn would eventually reveal its underlying laws, or “rules of development” (fazhan de guilü 發展的規律).³⁷⁷ In addition, they also guardedly attempted to once again argue for a closer look at literary developments as not always coinciding with those of general social history.

In an argument that ingeniously paralleled the theme of the “two standards” from the *Yan’an Talks* (i.e., the “political” and the “artistic” standard), Lu and Feng maintained that literary historiographers had two standards to consider in their work: the literary standard (wenxue de biao zhun 文學的標準) and the historical standard (lishi de biao zhun 歷史的標準). In questions of periodization, they clarified, the main standard was the literary one, whereas the historical one came second. This meant that in considering literary versus general historical periodization schemes, literary criteria had to be given a special emphasis. These criteria included the birth and development of genres (including their appropriation by different social classes), according changes in styles and writing methods, and the influences of individual writers and schools on the literature of their time.³⁷⁸ Their so-called “historical standard”, by contrast, referred to the historical – meaning the social, economic, political and cultural – contexts of literature.³⁷⁹

史的幾點意見” (A few opinions on the composing of Chinese literary histories), *Wenxue yichan* (January 6, 1957)]. Accordingly, he stood for a literary periodization scheme that generally followed historical periodization. In his mind, this amounted to a division into six periods: 1. Antiquity to the end of the Spring and Autumn Period, 2. Warring States to Eastern Han, 3. Three Kingdoms to mid-Tang, 4. Mid-Tang to the end of the Northern Song, 5. Southern Song to the Opium Wars, 6. Opium Wars to May Fourth.

³⁷⁶ (Chen and Wan 1987, 463).

³⁷⁷ Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun. “Guanyu Zhongguo wenxueshi fenqi wenti de shangque 關於中國文學史分期問題的商榷 (Deliberation on the issue of periodization in Chinese literary history)”. In: *Wenxue yanjiu* 1 (1957), 21-29: 21. Hereafter: (Lu and Feng 1957c).

³⁷⁸ (Lu and Feng 1957c, 21-23); (Chen and Wan 1987, 464).

³⁷⁹ (Lu and Feng 1957c, 23-26).

Lu and Feng, in brief, carefully argued for an emphasis on the *textually immanent* (rather than the *contextual*) model in considering a literary periodization.³⁸⁰ Summing it up as “the literary as the main standard, the historical as the subsidiary standard” (wenzue biao zhun wei zhu, lishi biao zhun wei fu 文學標準為主，歷史標準為副), they again suggested a periodization scheme for literary history in six sections (duan 段) and fourteen periods (qi 期). Contrary to before, however, they did not “mark” these periods as following a Marxist scheme (as in “early/middle/late feudal period”, etc.), but instead provided both the centuries and the dynastic periods these periods and sections coincided with (which resulted in something like “section 8: mid-tenth century to beginning twelfth century [Northern Song], lasted around 167 years”).³⁸¹

In response to Lu and Feng’s second article, the focus of the academic community briefly became fixed on the question of the “two standards” (i.e., the “literary” and “historical”) and the question of their mutual interdependence. Without getting into the details of the debates that lasted until the mid-1960s and the start of the Cultural Revolution (with some breaks between mid-1958 and 1960 due to the early Great Leap Forward and its somewhat special category of academic output), it is important to say that the opposing sides differed in their approach not so much in substance, but rather in emphasis.³⁸² Roughly speaking, on the one side there was a group of people who tended towards Lu and Feng’s careful insistence on the primacy of *textual immanence*,

³⁸⁰ However, because this could very well have been a risky position to claim, they maintained at the same time that general social and historical periodization should and could not be neglected, and provided examples for when both standards would most likely coincide: “Furthermore, we believe that in the process of using the historical standard as a supplement to the literary standard to differentiate between the various periods of literary history, we can not only refer to all kinds of opinions that modern scholars had on the periodization of the history of social development, but at times we should also not completely neglect the dynastic changes of the past. Of course literature did not necessarily change its appearance every time there was a new emperor; mechanically marking periods strictly according to dynasty is certainly not appropriate. But there are some dynasties, especially those with fairly lengthy periods of [unbroken] rule, like the Zhou, Han, Tang, Song, etc., that one cannot categorically ignore. The reason is very simple. When exploitation and enslavement became too much for the people to bear, they rallied together to raise high the flag of protest and the old monarchy was overthrown, and though its replacement may still have been a member of the ruling class, in order to adapt to the new circumstances, some slight changes to certain measures must have been made, so as to appease the contradictions between the classes. So often following a dynastic change, there was a new economic, political and social atmosphere, which had an influence, be it obvious or hidden, profound or superficial, direct or indirect, on culture, science, and art. Therefore, when thinking about the periodization of literary history, one cannot completely ignore these dynastic periods, though one should not completely yield to them. Rather, one should treat [everything] separately according to the concrete circumstances, only then can periodization fully accord with the true process of literary development.” [my insertions] (Lu and Feng 1957c, 25).

³⁸¹ Cf. (Ibid., 26-29).

³⁸² The details of the ensuing debate, its themes, participants and concrete alternative periodization schemes are comprehensively given in (Chen and Wan 1987, 464-476).

while on the other side the main argument was that the development of literature should always be treated first and foremost according to its *socio-historical context*. It is important to stress, however, that none of the prominent positions advocated a complete separation of these criteria in considering literary periodization.³⁸³

By 1960, in the aftermath of the Anti-Rightist-Campaigns and the unsuccessful start of the Great Leap, a publication by Cao Daoheng 曹道衡 (1928-2005), a Beida graduate of 1952, in the prestigious *Wenxue pinglun* 文學評論 (*Literary criticism*)³⁸⁴ set a preliminary end to the debate.³⁸⁵ Reiterating previous criticism of Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun's views on periodization, Cao essentially maintained that the differentiation between a "literary" and a "historical standard" was a futile exercise, as there was no such thing as a separate development of literature and its social circumstances.

To explain the occasional occurrence of a developmental time lag between the two, Cao stated that the cultural "superstructure" followed the developments of the economic "base", which accounted for their inherent "contradictions" (maodun 矛盾) in the course of history. But all in all, he concluded that "on the whole, the periodization of literary history and the periodization of social history, except for some ten odd years of irregularity within a few sections, are generally consistent."³⁸⁶

After Cao Daoheng's article, the various positions on the periodization issue rarely resurfaced as debates independent of the literary histories that were written according to one or the other scheme. It is telling, however, that the two publications which were to remain the definitive textbooks for use in higher education well into the 1980s, namely the Literary Research Institute's *Chinese literary history* (*Zhongguo wenxueshi* 中國文學史) of 1962 and a further book of 1963 carrying the same title, but edited by Beida professor You Guo'en 游國恩 (1899-1978), once again resorted to a more or less dynastic periodization. Though both texts – which had been collectively

³⁸³ The exception was an article by a certain Yan Xuejiong 嚴學窘 in GMRB on May 26, 1961, which basically argued that a dynastic periodization was inappropriate because all Chinese literature originated in folk literature (minjian wenxue 民間文學) and had also been subject to strong foreign influences (such as India). According to Chen and Wan, however, this article never received much attention in the debate (Chen and Wan 1987, 469).

³⁸⁴ This journal was still called *Wenxue yanjiu* 文學研究 (Literature research) from its establishment in 1957 until February, 1959.

³⁸⁵ "Shilun Zhongguo wenxueshi de fenqi wenti 試論中國文學史的分期問題" (On the issue of periodization in Chinese literary history), *Wenxue pinglun* 1960.1. Cf. (Chen and Wan 1987, 467-469).

³⁸⁶ (Chen and Wan 1987, 469).

written – acknowledged a possible lack of “scientific rigor” (bu shifen kexue 不十分科學) as a result of this periodization, they also noted that no other approach had hitherto proven convincing enough to use.³⁸⁷

It is telling that the debates revolving around the standard of periodization in the early P.R.C. were almost exclusively held between members of the older generation of establishment intellectuals, and thus the “experts” of literature, rather than the “reds”, i.e. the peer group of the *xinsheng liliang*. Though a definitive conclusion to the problem was never decided upon, it can be said that Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun’s call for a standard model was largely responsible for the return to a classic, dynastic periodization scheme in literary historiography after 1957. Of course, literary histories before the start of the Great Leap Forward were generally written by that older peer group, as collective authorship – and more importantly: student authorship – only became a standard after 1958. By then, the issues of format, scope and periodization were collectively decided upon and individual opinions on these matters became increasingly insignificant. Thus, when in 1960 Cao Daoheng, himself a member of the younger generation, voiced his opinion on periodization, the matter had already been more or less settled by a shift in literary historiographical practices.

In the student-authored literary histories of 1958 and 1959, for example, periodization duly followed the dynastic scheme.³⁸⁸ Thus, it appears conclusive that a common standard in literary historiography in the early P.R.C. was eventually achieved due to two main factors: a general consensus among academics that dynastic periodization was politically the least sensitive (and least likely to clash with the potentially divergent approaches by the general historians), and the institution of collective textbook writing as a means to level out differences of academic opinion.

³⁸⁷ (Ibid., 474).

³⁸⁸ The exception the exception in both publications was the final chapter (from the Opium Wars to May Fourth), which was called the “Period of the Old Democratic Revolution” (Jiu minzhuzhuyi geming shiqi de wenxue 舊民主主義革命時期的文學) in the earlier Beida-publication, and simply “Modern Literature” (Jindai wenxue 近代文學) in the later Fudan-publication. Cf. Peking University Chinese Department, Literature Class of 1955 (Beijing Daxue zhongwenxi wenxue zhuanmenhua 1955 ji 北京大學中文系文學專門化 1955 級). *Zhongguo wenxue shi* 中國文學史 (A History of Chinese Literature; hereafter: *PKU History*) (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1958/59); Bibliographical reference: (Peking University 1958) and (Peking University 1959). Cf. also Fudan University Chinese Department, Students of the Classical Literature Group (Fudan daxue zhongwenxi gudian wenxuezu xuesheng 復旦大學中文系古典文學組學生). *Zhongguo wenxueshi* 中國文學史 (History of Chinese Literature; hereafter: *Fudan History*) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1958/59). Bibliographical reference: (Fudan University 1958/59).

5. The Experts on *Honglou meng*

In terms of content, the achievement of a common evaluative standard was a more complex affair. Though the ground rules had been laid out in Mao's *Yan'an Talks* and his *On New Democracy*, as well as in several published speeches by cultural politicians like Zhou Yang, Guo Moruo or Mao Dun, their application to the concrete cases of individual genres, works and authors was still a delicate balance between maintaining scholarly standards and adapting the fickle terminology of Marxism-Leninism, while at the same time constructing a linear narrative of literary development that was necessary to maintain both academic and political credibility.

At the same time, unlike the issue of literary periodization which had been strictly treated by a rather small group of experts, the reevaluation of literary content inspired the participation of a wider circle of people. As had been shown in the campaign criticizing Yu Pingbo, input on what a novel like *Honglou meng* really stood for could come from anyone outside the circle of old-school professionals. Incited by two young graduates from Shandong University, the *Honglou meng*- (and subsequent Anti-Hu Shi-Campaigns) represented a first, officially sanctioned step in recasting *Honglou meng* as a part of this Marxist-Leninist canon of approved literature. In the course of these campaigns, academics of both generations were called upon to develop the "correct" opinion on the novel, and to convincingly argue why the new perspective was more substantial than the older, May Fourth-inspired one. Thus, the study of *Honglou meng* under new, Marxist-Leninist terms and conditions, became a kind of key to unlock the literary heritage as a whole.³⁸⁹

When Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun published their *Short course* in 1957, the greater part of redefining the standards of conducting *hongxue* had been extensively dealt with. The *Honglou meng*- and Anti-Hu Shi-Campaigns of 1954/55 had effectively wiped out any residual sympathy the older literary critics might still have felt for Hu Shi and his *kaozheng* method and autobiographical approach, and thus the road had been

³⁸⁹ This point was also recognized within the universities of the time. At Shandong University, for example, a group of "qualified comrades" (you tiaojian de tongzhi 有條件的同志) was formed in as early as November, 1954, to investigate more in depth the "social meanings" and "artistic value" of *Honglou meng* as a precondition for the gradual correct reevaluation of the entire literary tradition. Cf. Shandong University. "Women duiyu *Honglou meng* de chubu renshi 我們對於紅樓夢的初步認識" (Our preliminary knowledge of *Dream of the Red Chamber*). In: *Honglou meng wenti taolunji 紅樓夢問題討論集* (Collection of debates on the problem of *Dream of the Red Chamber*) (Beijing: Zuoja chubanshe, 1955), 196-218: 196.

paved to read Cao Xueqin's novel in and apply it to the very different contexts that pervaded the early P.R.C. academic scene. But although campaign literature and participation had theoretically reformulated these new standards of interpretation, their practical application entailed a close revisiting of earlier standard practices within the genre of literary historiography. Here, the cases were often not so clearly cut and academic standard approaches had yet to be defined. A prominent example of such a "clash of interests" in the case of *Honglou meng* was the treatment of Cao Xueqin's biography in the interpretive transition from "autobiography" to "masterpiece of realism".

In the later Republican era (i.e., the 1930s or 40s), the chapters or sections on *Honglou meng* in general literary histories would start out with a brief biographical introduction to Cao Xueqin and the male line of his family, which was considered important because his grandfather, Cao Yin, had been a personal acquaintance to the young Kangxi emperor, and later followed his father into the ranks of the imperial bureaucracy. As the Superintendent of Imperial Silk Manufacturing (zhizao 織造) in southern China, he was able to provide the Cao family with an influential place in the upper echelons of the empire.³⁹⁰ This was further underlined by the often cited fact that the family played host to the emperor on his southern tours on a total of four occasions during Cao Yin's time in office. Cao Xueqin's ties to the imperial household, the fact that his grandfather had held an important, hereditary title under Kangxi, but also that Cao Xueqin in his lifetime witnessed his own family's steep economic downfall were all seen as factors that had enabled or at least strongly influenced the composition of *Honglou meng*. Ever since the campaigns criticizing Hu Shi and Yu Pingbo's "autobiographical" interpretation of the novel, however, integrating biographical information on Cao Xueqin into a literary history had to be treated cautiously, as that practice could be seen as a somehow "reactionary", "naturalistic" (*ziranzhuyi*, as opposed to *xianshizhuyi*) approach.

To put this into context, it should be emphasized that the earlier, pre-1949 treatments of *Honglou meng* in literary histories had often *only* consisted of biographical information on the Cao family and, if at all, a philological introduction to the various manuscript editions of the novel. Questions of content, social context or philosophical meanings were completely left out of the discussion. To illustrate this, the 1947-edition

³⁹⁰ The translation of the official title *zhizao* is taken from Charles Hucker. *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 164.

of Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun's *Short course*, the section on *Honglou meng* ran as follows:

Cao Zhan (1719? – 1763), courtesy name Xueqin, blue-rimmed Han bannerman. His grandfather Yin and his father Fu were both Superintendents of Imperial Silk Manufacturing in Jiangning. During the Southern Tours of Qing Shizu [sic!] ³⁹¹, the emperor would often take residency with the Superintendent, and Cao Yin received him four times. Moreover, Yin loved literary pursuits, and was a gifted composer of songs, verse and romances. Cao Zhan was born into these kinds of circumstances, [but] later the family fortunes declined, and Zhan lived impoverished in a Western district of Beijing, forced to spend his days eating [nothing but] porridge. In the twenty-seventh year of the Qianlong reign, his young son died, and he became ill with grief and passed away. With this kind of experience from riches to rags, he wrote a book, *The Story of the Stone*. *The Story of the Stone* is **the author's autobiography**, this is very clear from the manuscript, and can also be proven by the remarks of Red Inkstone, who was a contemporary of the author. However, a portion of its readers felt the need to dig deeper, and forced an analogy with Nalan Xingde or the Consort Donggo, or even thought it was a work about mourning the Ming and rejecting the Qing, which was in fact very distant from the truth. ³⁹² The original manuscript of this book only contained eighty chapters, [as] the author died before it was completed; the 120-chapter version current today was supplemented by Gao E. There are very many supplements, and the Gao-version is the most popular, but in terms of artistry it is far inferior to the first eighty chapters. The high appraisal of the first eighty chapters within serial fiction is, in fact, unprecedented and unparalleled. ³⁹³

Clearly, in this earlier version of the *Short course*, Lu and Feng had inserted biographical information on Cao Xueqin and his family because they had adopted the standard interpretation since Hu Shi's "Honglou meng kaozheng" of 1921, namely that the novel represented an autobiography.

By the time they published their revised draft of that chapter as a part of a series published in *Wenshizhe* (i.e., the version entitled *Draft history*) in October, 1955, both its scope and its contents had changed substantially to reflect the recent criticisms of Yu

³⁹¹ It is not clear to me why Lu and Feng both in the 1932-version and the 1947-version refer to the Shunzhi 順治 emperor here, whose temple name was Qing Shizu 清世祖. The emperor received by Cao Yin four times was, of course, Kangxi 康熙, whose temple name was Qing Shengzu 清聖祖.

³⁹² The allusion in this passage to the "portion of its readers that felt the need to dig deeper and forced an analogy" with actual historical personae is a thinly veiled criticism of Cai Yuanpei's "Hidden Meaning School" (suoyinpai), i.e., the school of thought Hu Shi had originally written against in his "Honglou meng kaozheng". Cf. Chapter 2 for details on this.

³⁹³ Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun. *Zhongguo wenxueshi jianbian* 中國文學史簡編 (Short course in Chinese literary history) (Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1947), 173.

Pingbo and Hu Shi. However, this did not impede Lu and Feng from including biographical information on both of the authors, Cao Xueqin and Gao E, in their section on *Honglou meng*. The beginning passage of that section was still a rather technical biographical introduction, which mainly differed from the earlier version in that Cao's family was now classified as pertaining to the "high official-landowner class" (da guanliao dizhu jieji 大官僚地主階級). However, in the *Draft history* of 1954/55 Lu and Feng no longer argued that *Honglou meng* was an autobiography. Instead, they changed course and embarked on an argument about how the lives and social circumstances of the author had enabled him to write *Honglou meng* as a *criticism of feudalism*. To make their point, they adopted the then still current idea that the late Ming and early Qing already saw some early sprouts of capitalism, which had resulted in the development of a kind of "proto-bourgeoisie":³⁹⁴

³⁹⁴ Albert Feuerwerker gives a good overview of the debates on the origins of "capitalism" in China and why they were politically significant. According to his rendition, the idea of "proto-capitalist sprouts" occurring in the Ming-Qing transition phase had been introduced by Mao Zedong when he claimed that China's natural development from feudalism to capitalism had been curtailed by foreign intrusion (meaning first the Manchu invasion and the establishment of the Qing, and second the Western aggression during the Opium Wars): "As China's feudal society developed its commodity economy and so carried within itself the embryo of capitalism, China would of herself have developed slowly into a capitalist society even if there had been no influence of foreign imperialism." (Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, III, 77). Quoted in: Albert Feuerwerker. "China's History in Marxian Dress". In: *The American Historical Review* 66.2 (1961), 323-353: 327. This statement led the academic Hou Wailu 侯外廬 to identify the beginnings of "bourgeois" thought in China to the Ming and Qing dynasties. Then, in 1954, a textbook appeared which claimed that the first buds of capitalism had sprouted during the Ming dynasty (Shang Yue 尚鉞, ed. *Zhongguo lishi gangyao* 中國歷史綱要, Outline history of China, Beijing: 1954). Though Shang Yue was later criticized and his efforts rebuked during the Anti-Rightist-Campaign, the debates in the wake of the *Honglou meng*-campaign must be seen in the context of 1954, when Hou Wailu's and Shang Yue's claims seemingly mirrored the official line on the origins of capitalism in China. As Feuerwerker relates, the later criticisms against Shang Yue followed a different political agenda: "Behind their charge is the fear that too great an emphasis on internal protocapitalist developments prior to the full impact of Western imperialism in the nineteenth century might divert attention from the villain's role assigned to foreign capitalism in transforming China into a "semicolonial, semifeudal" status. This clearly would not fit in with the need, at this stage of the Chinese revolution, to project a large share of the blame for a century and more of humiliation and weakness onto the "imperialist aggressors", a matter that I shall discuss further." (Feuerwerker 1961, 329). Also, Shang's critics argued that "if 300 years ago capitalism already held such a secure position, then the anti-feudal land reform led by the Communist Party could not have occurred...And how could there have been any necessity for the proletariat to seize the leadership of the democratic revolution?" Quoted in (Ibid., 330). In short, by the time of the Anti-Rightist-Campaign, the view of an early sprouting of capitalist buds in Late Imperial China potentially endangered the legitimacy of the CCP.

The urbanite social force³⁹⁵ which represented the state of budding capitalist relations grew larger every day, and so it was inevitable that urbanite thought, which stood in contrast to feudalist ideology, also gained some ground. This new type of thought had already begun to permeate the feudalist literati as early as the Ming dynasty, so by the time of the Qing dynasty it had naturally already brought forth a few intellectuals among the bureaucrat-landowner class who ideologically and politically tended towards freedom and liberation. Cao Xueqin was a typical example [of this], and Gao E was also quite like this. Through the changes in his own family, Cao Xueqin proceeded to realize the changes in all of feudalist society; not only did he profoundly reveal the ruthlessness and corruption of the contemporary bureaucrat-landowner classes in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, but he also outstandingly reflected the ardent search of the newly restored urbanite social forces for a life of democracy and individual freedom. In his supplement, Gao E basically fulfilled the intentions of the original author. Although the two authors each had their respective limitations, they both carried out an anti-feudalist struggle under the influence of urbanite thought.³⁹⁶

Though the “autobiographical reading” of Hu Shi had been rejected, the authors’ biographies still clearly played a part in the new interpretation of how *Honglou meng* was created. Rather than being a literal representation of Cao Xueqin’s life, however, the fact that his family had fallen from imperial favor and Cao had spent the greater part of his life in poverty was now embedded in a grander socio-historical context which legitimized a certain focus on his biography – Cao was, after all, a member of a new caste of early “urbanite” intellectuals who were able to critically reflect on feudalist power

³⁹⁵ My translation of the term *shimin shehui lilian* 市民社會力量 as “urbanite social force” is perhaps not entirely unproblematic and requires some explanation. “Bourgeois” in the general context of the time was generally translated as *zichanjieji* 資產階級 in Chinese, and it is on this term that my (re-)translations of “bourgeois” are based in the present thesis. A more literal translation of *zichanjieji* as “capital class” implies a somewhat well-established stratum of society where incomes (in Marxist terms) were based on an equally established capitalist mode of production and trade. However, in the above argument by Lu and Feng, the existence of such firmly established modes of production had not yet developed to merit a full separate definition of a bourgeois “class” in late Ming/early Qing society. The term *shimin* was not a politically neutral term, though. As I see it, it was used to convey the meaning of an incipient stage of the later bourgeoisie, the *zichanjieji*, without all the heavy-duty political bulk of connotation the latter term would entail. Interestingly, *shimin* in this respect mirrors the original meaning of the term “bourgeois”, namely “town dweller” (i.e., the inhabitant of a “bourg”, a small town): the transition from rural to urban economic modes, of course, also signified a transition from feudalist to capitalist practices. For these reasons, I have translated *shimin* as “urbanite” in the quote above, although it is an earlier stage of the bourgeoisie – indeed, a kind of proto-bourgeoisie – one should have in mind when reading it.

³⁹⁶ Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun. *Zhongguo wenxue shi gao* (1-17) 中國文學史稿(1-17) (Draft History of Chinese Literature). In: *Wenshizhe* 10 (1955), 33. In the 1957-version of the *Short course*, this passage reads almost exactly the same, and the only changes that were made pertained to some details and individual words that, to my knowledge, had no explicit ideological significance. One detail that was corrected, for example, was that Cao Xueqin’s family were all-white bannermen (*zhengbai qiren* 正白旗人), not blue-rimmed ones.

structures as one measure of bringing these down.³⁹⁷ Thus, a general preoccupation with the author's life remained a part of *Honglou meng's* historiography, albeit in a newly contextualized guise.

The importance of a *recontextualized* biographical treatment cannot be emphasized enough, as the notion of paying any attention at all to Cao Xueqin's biography in writings prior to 1949 had invariably evoked the pioneering shift in *hongxue* caused by Hu Shi. Even in a literary history dating from as late as 1949, it was not unusual to find remarks such as these by Liu Dajie:

From the New Literature Movement onwards, with the definite affixing of value to fiction in literature, philological research on the authors of these fiction works consequently became an important topic for literary historians. And the greatest accomplishments in this area must of course be attributed to Hu Shi. We rely on his treatises in order to attain very detailed knowledge on the life history of the authors of *Dream of the Red Chamber*.³⁹⁸

Liu's 1949-version of the *Developmental history of Chinese literature* (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju) still followed the autobiographical theme proposed by Hu Shi, and like Lu and Feng before him, it did so while openly rejecting the people Hu Shi had written against, namely Cai Yuanpei and the *suoyinpai*. Ridiculing their idea of *Honglou meng* being a "political novel satirizing the world and cursing its times" (yibu fengshimashi de zhengzhishu 一部諷世罵時的政治書), Liu doubted that it was, in fact, intended as anything more than a "book describing the complicated boy-girl relationships of a few families" (yixie jiating nannü de geteng...shu 一些家庭男女的葛藤……書).³⁹⁹ Similarly to Yu Pingbo, Liu read *Honglou meng* as an autobiography with an undertone of "regret" – while Yu had expressed this in terms of *yuan'er bunu* 怨而不怒, Liu described it as *chanhui de huiyi* 懺悔的回憶 (repenting recollections) – which was focused on the

³⁹⁷ Lu and Feng did not dwell on the details of Cao's life any more elaborately than in the earlier version, though. It is perhaps not significant, but to some extent certainly entertaining, to note that in the description of his impoverished circumstances Cao Xueqin was doing even worse in the 1955- and 1957-versions of the *Draft history/ Short course* than in the earlier version: rather than spending his days "eating nothing but porridge" (as he had in 1947), he now "could not longer eat his fill with porridge, and often had to borrow money to buy wine" (lian zhou dou chi bu bao, mai jiu hai chang sheqian 連粥都吃不飽, 買酒還長賒欠) (Lu and Feng 1955, *Wenshizhe* 10, 33). This was, however, probably not due to an exaggeration on Lu and Feng's part, but rather because they were channeling some of the obituary poetry by Cao Xueqin's friends, the Guo brothers: Liu Dajie's *Developmental history* of 1949 contains similar imagery, but he references these obituaries as the source. Cf. Liu Dajie. *Zhongguo wenxue fazhanshi* 中國文學發展史 (Developmental history of Chinese literature) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1949), 424.

³⁹⁸ (Liu 1949, 482).

³⁹⁹ (Ibid., 484 f.).

experiences of an individual, as opposed to that of an entire social class (the latter he saw, by contrast, in *Rulin waishi*).

Despite this rather close connection with Hu Shi's interpretation and Liu's rejection of any "political reading", however, the 1949 *Developmental history* included observations about *Honglou meng's* social setting that would later be further developed within an openly Marxist-Leninist framework, and which in terms of argument already hinted at a possible bridge between the autobiographical and the all-out socially contextual approach:

Understanding this tragedy as [merely] the love story between Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu is wrong. The most important thing is that through the thread of Baoyu and Daiyu, the complete destruction of a feudalist family of aristocrats and the fates of emperors and slaves are portrayed as collapsing together in this great tragedy. Only if this is clear can we genuinely understand the meaning and value of the tragedy of *Dream of the Red Chamber*. The most successful part of *Dream of the Red Chamber* lies in the revelation of the luxurious and wasteful life of an aristocratic family related to the royal household in imperial times, as well as in the description of the lives of the boys and girls growing up in this household. All the various features of this household and these protagonists can absolutely not have sprung from the imagination; rather, these features could only have been carved out on the basis of rich experience, detailed observation, and in addition, mature literary artistry. Cao Xueqin had exactly these kinds of materials and gifts, and that is why the Jia family so splendidly unfolds before the reader's eye. (...) On the surface, the author does his best to describe in much detail the dissipated lifestyle of the aristocratic household, while covertly reflecting the manor and the poverty-stricken serfs that support this household economically. The origins of their economic means are misappropriated funds on the one hand, and the exploitation of the peasantry on the other.⁴⁰⁰

To further highlight the economic disparities portrayed in the novel, Liu Dajie also commented on such themes as indentured servitude inside the Jia household. Baoyu's maid Aroma (Hua Xiren 花襲人), for example, was the case of a girl who "had no way of resistance, and [could] only begrudge her fate as a slave." When Baoyu in the novel proposes to take in her little sister as a maidservant, Liu quotes Aroma's reply as evidence that the character was meant to be conscious of her situation: "It is enough that

⁴⁰⁰ (Liu 1949, 487 f.).

I alone am fated to be a slave. Must my relatives share my fate and become slaves too?"⁴⁰¹

Compared to the *Honglou meng* chapter in Lu and Feng's 1947 *Short course*, Liu's 1949 *Developmental history* appeared already very much in accordance with some of the later, post-1954 examples of *hongxue*. But despite his strong emphasis on the exploitative characteristics of the Jia family and Cao Xueqin's intimate knowledge of such structures, he still missed the main point that Li Xifan and Lan Ling had first spelled out in their criticism of Yu Pingbo: that *Honglou meng* was a representative of a kind of "realism" with decidedly "national characteristics" (minzuxing).

In the re-edited version of the *Developmental history* (1957/1958) Liu Dajie's biographical section on Cao Xueqin was still elaborate, but Liu had completely cancelled out his former elogy of Hu Shi's pioneering efforts in this department. Also, as in Lu and Feng's 1957 *Short course*, the description of Cao Xueqin's family background in the 1958 *Developmental history* was much more focused on "class". Thus, Cao Xueqin had suddenly been born into a "high official-landlord household" (da guanliao dizhu jiating 大官僚地主家庭), whereas in 1949 he had still been raised in a family of "wealth and honor with an artistic environment" (fugui er you you yishu huanjing de jiating 富貴而又有藝術環境的家庭).⁴⁰²

Comparing the 1958-passage on the "most successful aspects" of *Honglou meng* – which effectively bridged biographical and socio-historical considerations – with the same passage from 1949 quoted above, the rhetorical streamlining and political adaptations in the later *Developmental history* become even more clear:

The great accomplishments of *Dream of the Red Chamber* are that in this genealogy-like novel, the licentious and decadent lifestyles of an aristocratic family related to the royal household during imperial times are boldly revealed, and all of their hypocrisies, cheating, greed, corruption, repressions and exploitations, as well as the degeneration of their hearts and morals are shown. It [i.e., the novel] not only shows this family's inevitable collapse and death, but at the same time also hints at the inevitable collapse and death of the society of the class this family belongs to. But in order to do this, it could absolutely not

⁴⁰¹ (Ibid., 488).

⁴⁰² Compare the respective passages in Liu Dajie. *Zhongguo wenxue fazhanshi* 中國文學發展史 (Developmental history of Chinese literature) (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe 1957/58), 337 and (Liu 1949, 483).

have come out of descriptions based on hollow imagination or on conceptualized explanations, but there must rather have been rich life experiences, and detailed and profound enquiries, which only through a high level of linguistic expressive power and exquisite artistic technique managed to portray in a lively and truthful manner the substance of this family and the true characteristics of every protagonist. One must really be able to know the life of that class, and have true experiences of the lives and sentiments of that class, only then can one write truthfully about that class. Cao Xueqin had exactly these kinds of gifts, and he not only possessed a high level of literary training, but also a profound basis of life in an aristocratic household; this is why the Jia household that emerges from his pen unfolds so truthfully, concretely and colorfully before the reader's eye. (...) [But] if the readers just pay attention to this kind of superficially magnificent lifestyle and neglect the poverty-stricken lives of the peasantry that economically supported this family, that is wrong. We must know that because of the avarice and exploitation of the Jia family, many people lost their family fortunes, many people sold their sons and daughters, and many young boys and girls became the house slaves and maidservants of the Jia household. The origins of the Jia family's economic means are the disbursement of funds on the one hand, the exploitation of the peasantry on the other, and furthermore blackmail and usury.⁴⁰³

In this version of the passage, though the general idea had not changed much since 1949, Liu lent even more emphasis to Cao Xueqin's alleged solidarity with the peasantry, as well as to the widening of the gap between the Jia family and the lower strata of society who were allegedly portrayed as victims of exploitation in *Honglou meng*. Again, Cao's biography was taken as the precondition that had enabled his "truthful depiction" of the social circumstances of all those involved, be it the "dissipated" and "corrupt" Jia family or the maidservants and peasants associated with their economic upkeep. The biography, however, had to be supplemented with Cao's other gifts, namely his "detailed and profound enquiries", "high level of linguistic expressive power" and "exquisite artistic technique" – mere autobiographical recording, by contrast, would clearly not have been enough.

Thus, Liu had removed all mention of Hu Shi from his discussion of *Honglou meng*. Additionally, unlike in the 1949-version of the *Developmental history*, he even took pains to manifestly distance himself from Hu's autobiographical reading:

⁴⁰³ (Liu 1957/58, 339 f.).

Although *Dream of the Red Chamber* is a novel with autobiographical character, it absolutely does not record every single detail of the author's family background and history.⁴⁰⁴ Cao Xueqin took his family background and life experience as a foundation, and added every kind of protagonist and fact that he had witnessed in society, underwent careful inspection and experience, and finally through editing and creation composed this masterpiece. In the creative process of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, the Cao family was the foundation, but after the creation was finished, the Jia family became a model of an aristocratic family during the feudalist period, subsuming the specific characteristics, the substance and fate of countless aristocratic families. This forms the profundity of the foundation of *Dream of the Red Chamber* and the breadth of its representativeness, as well as the greatness of its literary value. We can absolutely not view the *Dream of the Red Chamber* as we do Rousseau's *Confessions*, we can absolutely not view *Dream of the Red Chamber* as Cao Xueqin's veritable autobiography.⁴⁰⁵

Despite his rejection of the autobiographical reading and his new emphasis on class struggle (i.e., between the “feudalist aristocracy” and the “exploited peasantry”), it is difficult to maintain that Liu Dajie's treatment of *Honglou meng* in the 1950s was an all-out ideological cliché. The main points of the *Honglou meng*-Campaign had certainly been taken into account, and thus one finds the novel defined as a “realist masterpiece”, and no longer as an autobiography.⁴⁰⁶ However, in both Lu and Feng's *Short course* and Liu's *Developmental history*, Cao Xueqin's biography retained a central place within the interpretations of the novel. Under the new guise of “life experience”, the author's background served as a precondition to his mastery of realism and the according description of “typical protagonists under typical circumstances”.⁴⁰⁷ Thus, in a way, this recontextualization of Cao's biography was a step towards a politically accepted standard interpretation of the novel, while at the same time maintaining certain aspects of previous scholarship. This combination was also taken into account in teaching *Honglou meng* at a university level from 1957, when the Ministry of Education published the first official syllabus for the subject of literary history in the early P.R.C.

⁴⁰⁴ It is noteworthy that Liu Dajie here chose the term *yidian yidi* 一點一滴 for “every single detail”. *Yidian yidi* had been a term definitely connoted with Hu Shi's *kaozheng* method during the campaign against him, and was often used to mock unnecessary and philological attention to detail. By using this term it was clear who Liu was writing against, even though he did not mention Hu Shi's name.

⁴⁰⁵ (Liu 1957/58, 344).

⁴⁰⁶ (Liu 1957/58, 344).

⁴⁰⁷ As Engels had defined it in the case of Balzac.

Entitled *Zhongguo wenxueshi jiaoxue dagang* 中國文學史教學大綱 (Chinese literary history teaching syllabus; hereafter: *Syllabus*), the syllabus first appeared in August, 1957 (thus: right after the publication of Lu and Feng's revised *Short course* and seven months prior to Liu's revised third part of the *Developmental history*). A different kind of text from the previous literary histories, this was the first truly instructional reference work authored by a collective of university professors in keeping with Maoist thought reform. In addition to prescribing the contents of the classes, it also defined the amount of time each topic was to be given in the classroom. Thus, within a block of lessons focusing mainly on "Ming and Qing fiction", the lesson on "Cao Xueqin" was allotted a little over a week (yue yi zhou qiang 約一周強) of course time. The first part of the lesson, dedicated to Cao Xueqin's biography, carried the following topical instructions:

Cao Xueqin's behavior. The rise and fall of his family. His haughty and unconventional character. The form of this kind of character and its "rebellious" nature. A multi-faceted literary and artistic talent. His literary views. The poverty and frustration of his later years: settling down in the Beijing suburbs. Drinking to excess and singing loudly, selling paintings and writing books. From his life to his creation.⁴⁰⁸

In terms of the socio-historical backdrop of *Honglou meng*, the *Syllabus* followed Lu and Feng's "urbanite"/ proto-bourgeois theme:

Social foundations of the production of *Dream of the Red Chamber*: the capitalist elements which at the beginning of the Qing had suffered destruction [i.e., by the Manchu invasion and takeover] are recovered and developed. Urbanite thought begins to gain some ground following the expansion of urbanite power. From among the bureaucrat-landowner class people are produced that show a tendency towards freedom and liberation. The content of the work and the author's life experience – profound life experience is an advantageous condition for the creation of general and focused works. *Dream of the Red Chamber* is an unfinished work. The problem of the supplements. The achievement of Gao E. The accomplishments of Gao E's last forty chapters: it generally reflects the spirit of Cao's work. The first eighty chapters and the last forty chapters have become an

⁴⁰⁸ Gaodeng jiaoyubu 高等教育部 (Ministry of Higher Education). *Zhongguo wenxueshi jiaoxue dagang* 中國文學史教學大綱 (Chinese literary history teaching syllabus) (Beijing: Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 1957), 195. The style of the *Syllabus*, as is noticeable from the translation, was also different in that it was largely not composed as coherent running text, but rather as an instructional list of topics to be discussed in lessons.

integral whole in the eyes and hearts of the readers. The shortcomings of the last forty chapters.⁴⁰⁹

Further sections provided instructions on how to read the ideological content of *Honglou meng* (i.e., revealing the corrupt, hypocritical, brutal etc. “high official-landlord class”, as well as the “contradictions” in contemporary society, be it between the classes or within them), how to analyze the main characters of *Honglou meng* (i.e., Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu as anti-feudalist rebels, Xue Baochai as the female embodiment of the feudalist high official-landlord class, and Wang Xifeng as the epitome of feudalist aristocratic evil), and how to rate the artistic accomplishments of *Honglou meng* (i.e., the variety of portrayed individuals and their respective ideologies, the use of a “love story” as a reflection of a social class on the verge of collapse, as well as the succinct, and yet detailed description of people, places and events in general).⁴¹⁰

The final section gave pointers as to the “status of *Dream of the Red Chamber* in literary history” (*Honglou meng zai wenxueshi shang de diwei* 紅樓夢在文學史上的地位), and basically summed up the main line on the novel as follows:

Dream of the Red Chamber represents a peak of realism in Chinese classical literature: a high-level of the typical in all kinds of protagonists. It has an incomparably ingenious, incomparably precise subplot structure. Through perfect artistic form, and the winding and complicated reflection of the people’s hopes and desires, it foretells the dissolution of feudalist society and the waning of the feudalist aristocracy. The broad and profound cultural education of the author has caused the work to become an encyclopedia of eighteenth century Chinese feudalist society. Criticism of bourgeois idealism in the research of *Dream of the Red Chamber*.⁴¹¹

As one can see in this passage, the university course syllabus on *Honglou meng* ends with a return to the premise of its revaluation, i.e., the criticism of “bourgeois idealism” also known as Hu Shi’s approach – which in the simplified terms of the early P.R.C. mainly meant the “autobiographical” reading, as well as *kaozheng*.

In sum, it should be noted that the three post-1949 texts explored above in terms of their *Honglou meng* chapters had certain features in common when it came to the treatment of Cao Xueqin’s biography: (1) instead of not considering it at all, they sought

⁴⁰⁹ (Ministry of Higher Education 1957, 195).

⁴¹⁰ (Ibid., 195-198).

⁴¹¹ (Ministry of Higher Education 1957, 198).

to integrate it into the novel interpretive scheme of *Honglou meng*, (2) instead of focusing on historical accuracy, they used biographical information on Cao Xueqin as a means to explain his mastery of “realism”, and (3) Cao’s background as a “fallen aristocrat” was seen as corroborating evidence that the various classes described (in much colorful detail) in *Honglou meng* were accurately portrayed.

Furthermore, the peer group involved in merging the biographical with the socio-historically contextual reading was essentially composed of the older generation of “experts” (i.e., Lu Kanru, Feng Yuanjun, Liu Dajie, and the others involved in compiling the *Syllabus*). The two main modes of argument to back their integrative efforts have been identified as follows: (a) the “urbanite literature theory” (shimin wenxue shuo 市民文學說; as seen in Lu and Feng’s *Draft history* and *Short course*, as well as the Ministry of Higher Education’s *Syllabus*) and (b) the “peasant theory” (nongmin shuo 農民說; as seen in Liu Dajie’s *Developmental history*).⁴¹²

Around the same time, however, a third approach to the reading of *Honglou meng* emerged within the scholarly community, which was somewhat less narrowly defined, and had little interest in integrating Cao Xueqin’s biography. Commonly referred to as the “tradition theory” (chuantong shuo 傳統說), adherents rather generously stated that

the progressive thought in *Dream of the Red Chamber* was the continuation of excellent traditions of thought and literature that had existed in China “since ancient times” (...). They believed that the love, equality, individual liberation and other concepts in the book “cannot be placed within the category of ‘urbanite thought’ or modern democratic thought, and are completely unrelated to the budding of capitalism.” (Liu Shide, Deng Shaoji, “Criticism of the theory that ‘Dream of the Red Chamber’ is urbanite literature”) [no dates or publication given]⁴¹³

⁴¹² Cf. Hu Xiaowei 胡小偉. “Hongxue sanshi nian taolun shuyao 紅學三十年討論述要” (Essential summary of thirty years of debate in Dream of the Red Chamber studies). In: (Lu Xingji 1987), 425-457: 431-433. While the former positioned itself among the adherents of a kind of “proto-capitalism” that allegedly brought forth urban thinkers of Cao Xueqin’s type, the latter rather one-sidedly emphasized Cao’s identification and empathy with the “peasantry” (i.e., the family backgrounds of the maids and manservants of the Jia household) in the reading of *Honglou meng*. In the end, it should be clear that both of these approaches were two justification schemes for a reading that simply meant to turn *Honglou meng* from an “autobiography” (and thus a politically insignificant work of “naturalism”) into a critique of its contemporary feudalist social backdrop (thus rendering it a politically significant work of “realism”). Cf. also Chen Weizhao 陳維昭. *Hongxue tongshi* 紅學通史 (Comprehensive History of Redology) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2005), vol. I, 267 f.

⁴¹³ (Hu Xiaowei 1987, 432).

At the same time, they paradoxically argued that before blindly elevating the novel's "thought" and calling it "excellent", a thorough research of its socio-economic, ideological, cultural and historical backdrop was necessary. As Yan'an veteran and *Dream*-specialist He Qifang 何其芳, who was a supporter of this theory maintained:

The people in feudalist society, while of course mainly consisting of peasants and urbanites, cannot be reduced to just either peasants or urbanites, and they especially cannot be reduced to just peasants on the brink of plotting a rebellion or just urbanites representing the budding of capitalism. The existence of an artificial term like 'popular nature' in literary criticism is exactly necessary because there are many works that absolutely cannot be explained by narrow [concepts] such as the peasant theory or the urbanite theory.⁴¹⁴

The call for more profound research on the backdrop and socio-political circumstances of the novel and the related rejection of such "narrowly defined" concepts as the urbanite and the peasant theories were supported both by "experts" of the older generation, like He Qifang, which at a first glance hardly seems surprising. However, it found even greater support among by the younger generation of "red" scholars just out of university, like Liu Shide 劉世德 (*1932, graduated in 1955 from Beida), Deng Shaoji 鄧紹基 (*1933, graduated in 1955 from Fudan University), and Cao Daoheng 曹道衡 (1928-2005, graduated in 1952 from Beida).

While among this diverse scholarly "interest group" there may well have been those that genuinely longed for a return to a new kind of philological reading of *Honglou meng* (and other works of the literary tradition) which transcended disciplinary boundaries and limits of inquiry. Yet, it is also notable that of the three approaches to recontextualize *Honglou meng*, the last one – the *chuantong shuo* – appeared to be the least binding. Far from presenting a concrete alternative to either the idea of viewing Cao Xueqin as a member of a new intellectual class or as a sympathizer with the peasant cause, the *chuantong shuo* simply proposed a vague "tradition" of "progressivity" (jinbu sixiang 進步思想) that *Honglou meng* allegedly stood in.⁴¹⁵ The characteristic vagueness of this theory – contrary to what might have been its intentions – enabled a final break with the traditional methodology of literary historiography and criticism and paved the way for an all-out "red discipline".

⁴¹⁴ Quoted in (Ibid., 435).

⁴¹⁵ (Hu Xiaowei 1987, 432 ff.).

Therefore, it was perhaps also not surprising that at the start of the Great Leap Forward, when many of the older academics had been silenced by the Anti-Rightist-Campaign, and the students at Beida, Fudan and other universities began to put out their own takes on the literary heritage, both the *shimin shuo* and the *nongmin shuo* were dropped in favor of the *chuantong shuo*. The question then was suddenly no longer how best to argue in favor of *Honglou meng* as a “masterpiece of realism”, but rather more generally what the “progressive” versus the “reactionary” elements of the novel were.

6. Reds and Experts: The Transition Phase

For academic professionals, the period between 1955 and 1958 was to some extent already characterized by extremes. In 1956, Mao Zedong’s call to “let one hundred flowers bloom and one hundred schools contend” provoked tepid reactions among the intellectuals. It was not until his speech at the eleventh (enlarged) Supreme State Conference, entitled “Guanyu zhengque chuli renmin neibu maodun de wenti” 關於正確處理人民內部矛盾的問題 (On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People) on February 27, 1957, that the voiced of criticism began to gain some momentum. On April 27, the CCP Central Committee launched a “rectification campaign” (zhengfeng yundong 整風運動) initially targeting Party members suspected of dissenting against Mao’s Hundred Flowers Campaign.⁴¹⁶ Both members and non-members of the CCP were invited to participate in the accusations. In the following two months, said participation developed into what was perceived as an unprecedented lack of restraint, until an editorial in *Renmin ribao* on June 8, entitled “Why is it?” (Zhe shi wei shenme? 這是為什麼?) cut short the period of relative outspokenness. Warning against the dangers of criticism weakening the socialist cause, the *Renmin ribao* text called for a period of

⁴¹⁶ The speech was made public in three stages from February to June, 1957, the most ample version being that published in RMRB on June 19. While the emphasis of the speech was on “unity” among the people, as well as between the people and the government, the June-version of the text emphasized that the “contradictions” between the leaders and the people could turn antagonistic if the national bourgeoisie did not accept this “policy of unity”. In this sense, Fokkema argues that “...the June 19 text appears to be more exacting than the April extract since it calls ‘revisionism, or rightist opportunism’ (*hsiu-cheng-chu-i, huo-che yu-ch’ing chi-hui-chu-i*) a bourgeois trend of thought even more dangerous than dogmatism.” (Fokkema 1965, 120). It is important to emphasize the fact that although the June 19-version of the speech was the most detailed, it did not contain the original wording heard by the audience on February 27, but had been augmented and altered – to which degree, however, remains unknown. A well accessible English translation with commentary of the June-version of the speech is included in Robert R. Bowie and John K. Fairbank. *Communist China 1955-1959: Policy Documents with Analysis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 273-294. This text also refers to several other extant English translations, namely in the *New York Times* of June 19, 1957, *Current Background* 458 (June 20, 1957), and the *Supplement to People’s China* (July 1, 1957) (Ibid., 273).

countercriticism, prompting the start of what would soon be known as the “Anti-Rightist Campaign”.⁴¹⁷

As a delegate to the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), which held its annual meeting in Beijing around the same time that year, Lu Kanru personally attended the Supreme State Conference at which Mao had held his “Handling of Contradictions” speech. In an article printed in *Renmin ribao* just a couple of weeks later, he noted:

Because we [i.e., the “older” academics] have only studied Marxism-Leninism to a shallow and limited degree, we often cannot freely debate academic matters, we are “scared of our own shadows” and worry and fret endlessly. If we read an academic paper in *Renmin ribao* or an essay in literary criticism in *Wenyibao*, we immediately wrongly assume that this is the final verdict of the Party central, and even if we have a different opinion, we do not dare to voice it. If the author of that article is an academic leader or a comrade in charge of some government office, then it is even more daunting, and we just copy everything mechanically, not daring to modify even slightly. Of course, this is a “prison we drew for ourselves”. Obviously, the Party central does not intend to provide a conclusion to every academic problem, and the authors of these essays do not think [of their work] as a “golden rule” that is not open to discussion. The result of “drawing our own prison” has merely been an obstruction to the flourishing of scholarship. And that is exactly the reason why the “Let one hundred flowers bloom, let one hundred schools contend” policy has met with such enthusiastic support from intellectuals in all of China.⁴¹⁸

As it turned out, Lu Kanru’s intuitions as a member of the intellectual class reluctant to provide criticisms proved correct: on June 30, with the appearance of a *Wenyibao* editorial entitled “Oppose rightist thought among the literary and art ranks” (Fandui wenyi duiwu zhong de youqing sixiang 反對文藝隊伍中的右傾思想), the Anti-Rightist-Campaign of 1957 was officially launched, and any further criticism by intellectuals and academics came to a sudden halt.

⁴¹⁷ Also on June 8, the CCP Central Committee issued a “Directive on the mobilization of forces to prepare a counterattack against the rightist elements” (Guanyu zuzhi lilian, zhunbei fanji youpai fenzi de zhishi 關於組織力量，準備反擊右派分子的指示) (Yan Rongxian 2008, 285). On the origins of and contributors to the start of the campaign, cf. also (Fokkema 1965, 122-125).

⁴¹⁸ Lu Kanru. “Xiwang xueshujie he minzhudangpai nenggou benzhe zhe zhong jingshen guanche “Baihua qifang, baijia zhengming” “Changqi gongcun, huxiang jiandu” de fangzhen 希望學術界和民主黨派能夠本著這種精神貫徹“百花齊放，百家爭鳴”“長期共存，互相監督”的方針“ (I hope that the academic world and the democratic parties will be able to implement in this kind of spirit the policies of “Letting one hundred flowers bloom, letting one hundred schools of thought contend” and “Long-term co-existence, mutual supervision”). In: *Renmin ribao*, March 16, 1957.

It was against this backdrop that Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun published the final version of their *Short course in Chinese literary history* in July, 1957, a text they had spent years painstakingly revising and adapting to the new curricular requirements of their field. For Lu it would be the last significant campaign in his career as an academic: a target of severe criticisms already by July that year, his status as a “rightist” effectively marked the end of his public life.⁴¹⁹

Seen in the context of both the constellations of the *Honglou meng*-Campaign and the start of the Great Leap just a year later, the Anti-Rightist-Campaign in fact marked the start of what was to be a tipping point in the relations between the older generation of scholars and their young, student generation successors. In a first step marking a generational gap, the youngsters Li Xifan and Lan Ling had criticized an established intellectual in 1954, an action which was met with approval by the higher authorities of the CCP. Therefore, the appearance of the first student-authored literary histories at Peking University, Fudan University, and Peking Normal University at the start of the Great Leap was but a logical consequence of the rift between the new “reds” and the old “experts”.

In terms of working as a literary historian, two new slogans were introduced in early 1958 that would govern academic work into the Great Leap Forward and beyond. These were (1) *hougu bojin* 厚古薄今 (“emphasizing the past and belittling the present”), and (2) *geming xianshizhuyi yu geming/jiji langmanzhuyi xiang jiehe* 革命現實主義與革命 / 積極浪漫主義相結合 (“the combination of revolutionary realism and revolutionary/active romanticism”).

⁴¹⁹ On June 17, the Shandong Provincial Party Committee published a call to criticize nineteen individuals in *Dazhong ribao* 大眾日報 (Masses' Daily), and Lu Kanru was one of the names on the list. After the final exams and the start of the summer holidays at Shandong University, none of the teaching staff left the premises, as they were required to take part in a lengthy period of “study” in the wake of the ARC (Yan Rongxian 2008, 285). That summer, Lu Kanru was harshly criticized first in *Renmin ribao* (July 21: “Lu Kanru wants to turn the September Third Society branch into an anti-Communist headquarter”, *Lu Kanru xiang ba Jiu San fenshe biancheng fan-Gong silingbu* 陸侃如想把九三分社變成反共司令部), and then in *Dazhong bao* (August 5: “Lu Kanru – a rightist element in the guise of a scholar”, *Lu Kanru – pizhe xuezhe waiyi de youpai fenzi* 陸侃如—披著學者外衣的右派分子), where he also published an initial self-criticism (August 24: “I hang my head and plead guilty before the people of the entire province”, *Xiang quansheng renmin ditou renzui* 向全省人民低頭認罪) only four days prior to Feng Yuanjun’s criticism of him in the same paper (August 28: “Criticism of Lu Kanru’s anti-Party fallacies”, *Pipan Lu Kanru de fan-Dang miulun* 批判陸侃如的反黨謬論). The latter two, as well as the first *Renmin ribao* criticism of July 21 are reprinted in (Xu Zhijie 2006, 146-159).

Hougu bojin, in the simplest of explanations, targeted a “blind belief” in the merits of the past as professed by a certain kind of academic:⁴²⁰

“I worship knowledge, I worship a famous expert who possesses rich knowledge, I don’t care what kind of knowledge he has, and so emotionally there is no clear drawing of the line with the rightist faction.” “Old history is dense tea, modern history is clear water, old history is scholarship, modern history is politics, archaeology is paradise”, etc. etc.⁴²¹

These kinds of attitudes, it was argued, fostered uncritical thinking among the people who “buried their heads in old books, weren’t interested in politics, and were usable to both the CCP and the GMD.”⁴²² It was time, the reasoning went, that the intellectuals were again reminded who they were actually supposed to serve in a socialist society, namely the workers, peasants and soldiers:⁴²³

That is why we must with the greatest determination and resolution realize complete liberation in politics and ideology, must further solve the issues of the fundamental position and direction of whom to serve and how to serve, we must eradicate the old roots of “emphasizing the past and belittling the present”, and decidedly implement the policy of “emphasizing the present and belittling the past, working while studying”, only then can we realize the Great Leap Forward in the enterprise of higher education and the scientific work of the philosophical society.⁴²⁴

The campaign against *hougu bojin* intended to foster ideal citizens, meaning “full rounded human beings with access to all their latent talents”. These models of socialist society were supposed to be sufficiently both “red” and “expert” to man a backyard

⁴²⁰ The origin of criticizing *hougu bojin* was at the time generally traced back to Mao’s observations on past culture in his *Xin minzhuzhuyi lun* (1942), where he had emphasized that in inheriting China’s old culture, one should not make the mistake of “eulogizing the past and negating the present” (songgu feijin 頌古非今), so as not to mindlessly “commend every poisonous element of feudalism” (zanyang renhe fengjian de dusu 讚揚任何封建的毒素). Cf. Guo Shengwu 郭繩武, “Lun ‘hougu bojin’ de sixiang genyuan lun 《厚古薄今》的思想根源” (On the ideological roots of “emphasizing the past and belittling the present”). In: *Renwen zazhi* 人文雜誌 3 (1958), 7-13: 7.

⁴²¹ (Guo Shengwu 1958, 7).

⁴²² (Guo Shengwu 1958, 7).

⁴²³ One has to keep in mind that the idea of artists and intellectuals serving the “masses of workers, peasants and soldiers” had been especially emphasized during the Yan’an period, when, as Gao Jiyi analyzes it, the slogan was understood in the context of aligning different kinds of people in the “defence of the motherland”. Therefore, he states, the idea of “serving” these people was not only an abstract guideline for literary creation, but always also causally linked to “greater issues such as the life or death of the nation, the prosperity and strength of the country, and the stability of state power (minzu cunwang, guojia fuqiang, zhengquan wengu de da wenti 民族存亡，國家富強，政權穩固的大問題).” (Gao Jiyi 2001, 105).

⁴²⁴ (Guo Shengwu 1958, 7).

furnace while composing revolutionary poetry as a part of the greater ideal of forging “a true synthesis of their socialist commitment and their technical skills.”⁴²⁵ Aside from creating the model peasant and worker, *you hong you zhuan* 又红又专 (“both red and expert”) specifically targeted the older generation of intellectuals and academic professionals in charge of educating the next generation. This latter group, it was argued, demonstrated a characteristic resistance to integrating “redness” with “expertise”:⁴²⁶

Bourgeois individualists always defend themselves by every possible means, look for all kinds of reasons to stay away from the real political war, and maintain the mistaken path of their so-called “academic independence”. They are big on writing essays on the issue of the “red” and “expert”, like for example on “first expert then red”, “on the division of labor between red and expert”, “on the segmentation of red and expert”, “on the easiness of red and the difficulty of expert”, “on how red is inferior to expert”, “on more expert and less red”, “on how you cannot have red and expert at the same time”, “on how red is the means and expert is the goal”, “on a break-even policy”, “on a natural red”, etc. etc. But to sum it up, this is all just expert and not red, or “the pink path”, and in reality, “the pink path” is just a disguised all-expert-no-red path. This is all basically due to the worship of bourgeois individualist ideology.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁵ Jonathan D. Spence. *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton, 1990), 577-581.

⁴²⁶ In a speech to a mass rally commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Russian October Revolution on November 6, 1957, Liu Shaoqi had clearly defined the place of the older generation of intellectuals in what was to become the Great Leap Forward in education: “To build socialism, the working class must have its own force of scientific and technical personnel, its own professors, teachers, scientists, journalists, writers, artists, jurists and Marxist-Leninist theorists. **This force also includes all those intellectuals who, though coming from the old society, have been really remoulded and firmly take the working class stand.** China is a big country and to build socialism is an arduous and complicated task; therefore the working class must have a vast force of intellectuals, a small number will not do. It is the common historic task of our Party and all our people to cultivate and expand this force. Our Party members, League members and revolutionary intellectuals must make serious and tenacious efforts in their vocational studies so as to master various special techniques and scientific knowledge. **All those who are in a position to do so should work hard to turn themselves into experts who are both “red” and expert. The work cannot be done well if we are “red” but not “expert”.** Our government functionaries and experts in various fields should make up their minds to remould themselves so as to serve the workers and peasants and work for socialism whole-heartedly; they should incorporate their individual interests in the collective interests of the masses, but not place the former above the latter. Such should be the red experts.” [my emphasis] Excerpted from: Liu Shaoqi, *The Significance of the October Revolution*, November 6, 1957, in: (Bowie and Fairbank 1971, 399 f.)

⁴²⁷ (Guo Shengwu 1958, 9.) This quote was in fact a mere reflection of a paragraph in Liu Shaoqi’s aforementioned earlier speech, in which he had also stated that “The slogan of ‘first expert then red’ is a call for alienation from politics designed to induce the intellectuals to refuse to remould themselves and reject the working class stand. This is in reality as slogan to lead people to the old way of the bourgeois intellectuals. Our intellectuals must understand that it is impossible to keep away from politics. Alienation from revolutionary politics might lead to reactionary politics. Lack of a correct political stand might lead to a reactionary one. Such people can never work for our socialist cause sincerely and reliably, nor serve the workers and peasants wholeheartedly, even if they succeed in attaining some knowledge and technique.” (Bowie and Fairbank 1971, 400)

In short, the search for academic individuals that were primarily “red” but nonetheless “expert” led to two developments in the academic field. On the one hand, the criticisms of “rightist elements” continued. On the other, the practice of studying the past was once again reevaluated, as in the minds of the proponents of both *you hong you zhuan* and *hougu bojin*, the *raison d'être* of history as a means of justifying the present was not yet sufficiently clear to the participants of the field.

A campaign originating at the start of the Great Leap Forward, the *hougu bojin* criticisms were characterized by a strong emphasis on the themes of the generational gap, collectivity and overall accessibility. Thus, the formats of activities (publicational as well as organizational) also underwent some changes: for the first time, public criticisms not only included systematic attacks by students of their teachers, but also “big character posters” (dazibao 大字報) as a means of communicating more easily and openly.⁴²⁸ In addition to individuals, the criticisms also targeted entire academic publication organs. Thus, for example, both *Wenshizhe* and *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 (*Historical research*) were criticized in the course of 1958 for publishing too many articles that “emphasized the past and belittled the present.”⁴²⁹ In the case of *Wenshizhe*, a group of young teachers at Shandong University raised the following points:

⁴²⁸ An early collective volume of *hougu bojin*-criticisms published in July, 1958, for example, described its contents as follows: “The present collection of criticisms is mainly a selection of big-character posters, of which the majority are by students criticizing teachers, and the minority are teachers criticizing each other and engaging in self-criticisms. Furthermore, there are a few related news roundups and minutes from meetings. The object of the criticisms is the extremely strong tendency in the teaching and research at institutions of higher education to emphasize the past and belittle the present. This tendency is actually the capitalist path within the field of classical literary research.” Writers' publishers (Zuojia chubanshe 作家出版社). *Hougu bojin pipanji* 厚古薄今批判集 (Collection of criticisms of emphasizing the past and belittling the present) (2 vols., Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1958), vol. I, 1. The contributors to this collection were largely university students or groups of university students, which reflected the general move away from individual towards collective publishing, as well as the greater participation of the younger generation all across the academic field at that time. Thus, the authors of some of these essays would be listed as, for example, the “classical literature small group of the fourth-year (second) literature class at PKU” (Beida wen si(2) ban gudian wenxue xiaozu 北大文四(2)班古典文學小組), the “General Party branch of the Tianjin Normal University Chinese Department (Tianjin shida zhongwenxi dangzongzhi 天津師大中文系黨總支)”, or simply “Qu Lingqi and four other people (Qu Lingqi deng si ren 曲令啟等四人)”.

⁴²⁹ Cf. for example Zhao Huaifu 趙華富 et al. “Tantan Wenshizhe 'hougu bojin' de qingxiang 談談文史哲《厚古薄今》的傾向” (On the tendency of “emphasizing the past and belittling the present” in *Wenshizhe*). In: *Wenshizhe* 6 (1958), 63-64. This text was the result of a group discussion held at Shandong University among “a part of the young teaching staff” (bufen qingnian jiaoshi 部份青年教師) at the Chinese Department. Points of criticism included that (a) since its start, *Wenshizhe* had published a disproportionate amount of topics in ancient history, ancient philosophy and classical literature, leaving very little room for studies on modern history, philosophy and literature; (b) *Wenshizhe* had never been very politically active, publishing on themes like the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution only after

These essays have very little significance for real society, some even have no real significance at all. These essays can roughly be divided in two types: (1) philological essays that study the same thing over and over again. The authors of these kinds of essays frequently write pages upon pages of text on a not very important “character”, or a fairly irrelevant “personal name”, “geographical location” or “date”; (2) essays that provide a lot of material and little analysis. These kinds of essays, often consisting of several tens of thousands of characters, don’t or hardly contain the author’s own voice, [and] though one calls them “theses”, it would be a little more scientific to just refer to them as “collections of material”. Without a shred of doubt, these two kinds of essay pertain to the “scholarly research” of bourgeois trivial detailism, with respect to socialism they are completely useless. We believe that this kind of substitution of scientific research of ancient society with bourgeois trivial detailist philology and material collections is also one of the expressions of “emphasizing the past and belittling the present” of *Wenshizhe* in recent years. What socialism needs is: essays that use Marxism-Leninism to research the rules of development of human history, to research the changes and developments of literature and philosophy, these are the essays that serve real society.⁴³⁰

In terms of more “socialist” publication venues, the year 1958 saw the establishment of the CCP Central Committee’s organ *Hongqi* 紅旗 (*Red Flag*), which quickly became the leading policy journal in the P.R.C.⁴³¹ Academics now not only looked to the editorials of *Renmin ribao* for political guidance, but also to the publications by cultural politicians in *Hongqi*.

With respect to the relationship between policy and literary criticism, the very first edition of *Hongqi* (in June, 1958), featured an article by Zhou Yang entitled “The new folk songs cleared the way for new poetry” (Xin mingge kaituo le shige de xin daolu 新民歌開拓了詩歌的新道路), which was to become a major reference text supporting the gradual substitution of the term “socialist realism” (shehuizhuyi xianshizhuyi) with “the combination of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism” (geming

a “letter to the editor” suggested they do so, or – even worse – publishing essays by “rightist” scholars after they had already been labeled “rightists”; (c) *Wenshizhe* hardly ever published anything on international or national politics, such as for example, the “democratic developments” in the world after WWII, or the manifold “socialist revolutions” going on in China since the “Liberation”; and (d) the observation that the studies on ancient philosophy, history and classical literature published in *Wenshizhe* did not adhere to the principle of “emphasizing the present and belittling the past” (houjin bogu 厚今薄古). For the case of *Lishi yanjiu*, see Shen Yiqing 沈亦清. “Lishi yanjiu” de hougu bojin qingxiang 《歷史研究》的厚古薄今傾向 (The tendency to emphasize the past and belittle the present in *Lishi yanjiu*). In: *Dushu* 11 (1958), 34.

⁴³⁰ (Zhao Huafu 1958, 63 f.).

⁴³¹ After its founding in June, Chen Boda 陳伯達, 1904-1989, acted as its first editor-in-chief.

xianshizhuyi yu geming langmanzhuyi xiang jiehe) in literary creation and criticism.⁴³² Though hardly more than a terminological expansion of an otherwise unchanged theme, the official re-emphasis of a category of “romanticism” within the jargon of literary criticism enabled a less strict view of the realist tradition in Chinese literature: anything previously read to be on shaky “realist” ground could now safely be judged as “romanticist”.⁴³³

The literary histories written between 1957 and 1958 already reflected the new emphatic shift and the growing official endorsement of “romanticism”. A good example of this are two versions of Beijing Normal University professor Tan Pimo’s *Zhongguo wenxueshi gang* 中國文學史綱 (Outline of China’s literary history, hereafter: *Outline*), printed in 1957 and 1958, respectively. Two corresponding passages in their introductory chapters clearly illustrated what the suddenly revived interest in “romanticism” – liberally defined though it was – could do for the research of the classical heritage. Thus, the main point of literary historiography and criticism in the earlier edition was summarized as follows:

⁴³² This idea had first been publicly endorsed by Mao Zedong in a speech to the CCP Politburo on March 22, 1958. Cf. (Wang Yafu 1988, 187). Though the contents of these two slogans (i.e., “socialist realism” and the “combination”) hardly differed, the main point of the terminological substitution was arguably Mao’s overall emphasis at the time on the idea of a “permanent revolution” that was to culminate in the initial period of the Great Leap Forward. For details on the origins and relationships of these two terms in China since the 1930s, see the excellent overview by Yang Lan in Hilary Chung et al., *In the Party Spirit: Socialist Realism and Literary Practice in the Soviet Union, East Germany and China* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996).

⁴³³ Such as, for example, some aspects of Qu Yuan’s *Chu Ci*. In fact, the “romanticist” reading of Qu Yuan had already taken place years before Zhou Yang’s publication in *Hongqi*. In as early as 1952, Feng Xuefeng written a serialized article in *Wenyibao* on the concept of “realism” in which he had argued – drawing on Maxim Gorky’s idea of “romanticism” as a complement to “realism” in European literature – that “active romanticism” (jiji langmanzhuyi) was part of the realist tradition: “All the immortal great poets and great authors since around Qu Yuan have been endowed with this kind of active romanticist spirit. Basically equal to the developmental trends in world literary history, this kind of active romanticist tendency is interlinked with the realist spirit, and they mutually permeate. Moreover, we can view it [i.e., active romanticism] as a special characteristic of the realist spirit, and thus summarize it as an intrinsic part of realism.” [my insertion] Feng Xuefeng. “Zhongguo wenxue zhong cong gudian xianshizhuyi dao wuchanjieji xianshizhuyi de fazhan de yi ge lunkuo 中國文學中從古典現實主義到無產階級現實主義的發展的一個輪廓” (An Outline of the development in Chinese literature from classical realism to proletarian realism). In: *Wenyibao* 14 (1952), 24. After the *Honglou meng*-Campaign of 1954/55, the debate on realism was reopened by the publication of writer and *Renmin wenxue* editor Qin Zhaoyang’s 秦兆陽 (aka He Zhi 何值, 1916-1994) rather bold article “Realism, the broad way”, in which Qin had tried to somewhat liberalize the concept, freeing it from what he saw as a “dogmatist misreading”, and giving more room to the author as an individual in depicting “real truth”. Cf. He Zhi. “Xianshuzhuyi, guangkuo de daolu 現實主義，廣闊的道路” (Realism, the broad way). In: *Renmin wenxue* 9 (1956), 1-13. For details on Qin’s article and the impact it had, cf. (Fokkema 1965, 116-118 and passim). More focused on the angle of the writer than that of the literary critic, however, it should be noted that Qin’s emphasis on the author had more to do with the direction in which he wished to see socialist realism develop as a method of contemporary creation, rather than realism as a category in literary historiography. As Feng and Qin were later labeled “rightists”, theirs were, however, not to be the final words on the issue of realism.

A Chinese literary history is the history of the struggle between realism and anti-realism. The people of the past or intellectuals sympathizing with the people took the spiritual weapon of realism to expose the crimes of the ruling class, to the effect of promoting on a high level the organization against the ruling class. On the opposite side, the rulers or their henchmen took anti-realism to distort the image of the people, to anesthetize the people, so as to spiritually effect the promotion of consolidated ruling power. One can always use these two threads to relate historical works of literature to each other. When studying Chinese literary history, we must put some effort into linking these two threads.⁴³⁴

In 1957, Tan still promoted the concept of literary history as a pure “history of a struggle between realism and anti-realism”. “Romanticism” was not mentioned once in this earlier policy chapter. In the 1958 version of the *Outline’s* policy chapter, however, Tan’s understanding of the concept had changed, though he clearly struggled to come to terms with the new definition:

Realism is very complicated. It is sometimes indistinguishably entangled with romanticism. Certainly, these two types of artistic method are not isolated from each other and unrelated. Realist art has romanticist elements, and romanticist art also has realist elements. That is why in written works it is difficult to discern between realism and romanticism. Gorky, talking about the relationship between romanticism and realism in Russia, said: “In excellent artists, realism and romanticism are often fused together. Balzac was a realist, but he also wrote works that were very far away from realism, like *La Peau de chagrin* and other novels. (...)” (*My literary education, Collection of literary essays*). Among China’s classical authors, there is the same phenomenon. Qu Yuan, for example, was basically a great realist poet, who empathized with the people, faithfully reflected reality and exposed the crimes of the ruling clique in the State of Chu; but sometimes there are also random elements of romanticism, where he searched for metonyms from this in heaven and that on earth to express his frustrated political ideals and his depressed frame of mind when he suffered political persecution. Li Bai was also basically a realist poet, who empathized with the people and revolted against bigwigs. In his *Gufeng* [古風] and in other poems, he openly exposed the licentiousness of Tang Xuanzong and Yang Guifei, as well as the crimes of their henchmen. But in his *Gufeng No. 19* [古風十九里], there are also random elements of romanticism, where he styled himself as extremely aloof from worldly affairs and elegant, which served as a foil against the crimes of the killings of An Lushan. We must not in identifying a romanticist atmosphere in their work

⁴³⁴ Tan Pimo. *Zhongguo wenxueshi gang* 中國文學史綱 (Outline of China’s literary history) (Shanghai: Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 1954/57), 8.

downplay their realist character, or even deny that they are realist poets. In the spirit of seeking truth from facts, we must further explore these realist works that contain a certain amount of romanticism.⁴³⁵

As can be seen from this, neither “realism” nor “romanticism” were well-defined literary concepts in early P.R.C. criticism. The fact that the more strict “realism” was expanded to imply a category potentially less bound to a mere portrayal of factual reality merely enabled a more easily defensible inclusion of “ambiguous” characters, authors, and literary genres into the canon of the ideologically acceptable. On the other hand, it was now also easier for the emergent student generation of literary historians to attack the previous focus of the academic establishment on “realism” as the only category worthy of attention in literary historiography. Thus, the expansion from the rather rigid concept of realism as the mainstream in literary history did not pave the way for a revisiting of other literary categories. Instead, it served as a backdrop and an excuse for a further “reddening” of the field to the detriment of literary professionalism.

On February 3, 1958, the young Zhou Laixiang 周來祥 (1929-2011), a Shandong University graduate of 1953, harshly attacked Lu Kanru’s work on Chinese literature in an article published in *Wenshizhe*. Beginning with the – by that time somewhat standard – accusation that Lu Kanru was a spiritual disciple of Hu Shi’s “reactionary bourgeois ideology”, Zhou started out by colorfully depicting Lu’s political shortcomings:

“Good things don’t last long”, and in 1949 Lu Kanru’s fortune began to fail. The artillery fire of the people destroyed Hu Shi’s home, dropped down upon his man-eating monsters and with a bang dispelled their feast of human flesh. The five-starred red flag represents the joy of five hundred million people fluttering in the skies of the motherland. But Lu Kanru truly has the shapeshifting ability of a Sun Wukong, and so he hurriedly removed the couplet given to him by Hu Shi from the living room wall, which read “philology for its own sake”, “don’t question the political guise”, and appeared before the people with the attitude of a progressive professor and scholar, wormed his way into the positions of Shandong University’s vice-president, a head committee member of the Qingdao branch of the September Third Society, and a qualified member of the CPPCC, all the while secretly

⁴³⁵ Tan Pimo. *Zhongguo wenxueshi gang* 中國文學史綱 (Outline of China’s literary history) (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1952/58), 9 f.

engaging in shady anti-Party, anti-people and anti-socialist activities.⁴³⁶

In terms of his academic work, Zhou Laixiang specifically attacked Lu Kanru's treatment of literature as mere "historical materials documenting economic development", his periodization system and his two standards (historical and literary) in literary historiography as "vulgar sociology", and his conflation of the "typical" (dianxing xing 典型性) with "class characteristics" (jiejixing 階級性).⁴³⁷ Given the context of the recent public endorsement of "romanticism", Zhou also criticized Lu Kanru's view that the history of literature was the history of the "struggle between realism and anti-realism":⁴³⁸

Lu Kanru's fifth central vulgar sociologist viewpoint is that he takes the struggle in philosophy between materialism and idealism and mechanically applies it to literature, summarizing the development of literature as the struggle between realism and anti-realism. He first defined realism as having two basic characteristics, namely "meaningful", and "intimately joined with real life". In "The mainstream of the development of Chinese literature" he says: "At any time in any country, meaningful works are always realist works, and meaningful authors are always realist authors. The so-called great craftsman of romanticism, like England's Byron, France's Hugo and Germany's Goethe... who of these was not intimately conjoined with real life?" In fact, this distorts the basic characteristic of realism, because every progressive creative method is characterized by the reflection of truth in real life and by containing progressive meaning. On the one side, Lu Kanru uses this general trait of the progressive creative method to distort and substitute the concept of realism, while on the other side he stuffs every progressive creative method, especially the method of active romanticism, into his small cotton bag of realism. That way, Byron, Hugo, and Goethe become great authors of realism just like Shakespeare, Balzac and Tolstoy. The "romanticist substance" of "Li Bai's poetry and Tang Xianzu's dramas" are also "interlinked with realism" (*Draft history*), [and] like this, Li Bai and Du Fu, Bai Juyi all become great masters of realism. Only in this way, the precious experience and legacy of active romanticism in Chinese literary history and in the history of world literature is negated. The rich and colorful developmental history of world literature and

⁴³⁶ Zhou Laixiang. "Pipan Lu Kanru fandong de xueshu sixiang 批判陸侃如反動的學術思想 (Criticism of Lu Kanru's reactionary academic thought)" In: *Wenshizhe* 2 (1958), 1-15: 7.

⁴³⁷ (Zhou Laixiang 1958, 8-10).

⁴³⁸ This was, in fact, a view Lu Kanru had put forth in one single report published in 1954 following his attendance of the Second Congress of Literary and Art Workers. To my knowledge, he did not develop this view any further in his later literary historiography and criticism. Cf. Lu Kanru. "Shenme shi Zhongguo wenxueshi de zhuliu? 什麼是中國文學史的主流?" (What is the dominant trend in Chinese literary history?) In: *Wenshizhe* 1 (1954b), 27-29.

Chinese literature has been coerced to mean the simple, poor and mechanical history of the struggle between realism and anti-realism. This is the true goal of Lu Kanru!⁴³⁹

This point of attack already clearly reflected the tendency of the later student literary histories to prefer a portrayal of literary history as a struggle between the more obfuscated “progressive” (jinbu 進步) and “reactionary” (fandong 反動) forces, which could or could not be interpreted to mean “realism” and “anti-realism”. In a way, it also reflected a tendency among the younger generation of scholars to align themselves with the Maoist notion of the permanent struggle between opposing factions as characterizing a “progress” towards Communism, and to simultaneously move away from an academic terminology that was considered too strictly “literary”. Because it did not seem to be in anyone’s interest to define what terms like “realism” or “anti-realism” meant on a literary level, their association with “progressive” and “reactionary” appeared to be the next best thing to a definition on a more generally ideological level – at least until no other sanctioned literary term entered the sphere of debate. In short, the question of whether one could reduce the dualistic “struggle of forces” within literary history to “realism” versus “anti-realism” depended to a great part whether “active romanticism” would be defined as a *complementary concept to* or an *intrinsic aspect of* realism. In a way, this impasse showed that, ironically, the reductionism of one literary concept had consequences for the reductionism of another.

7. A Great Leap in Literary History

The summer of 1958 saw the first coordinated attempt by the generation of P.R.C. students to supersede their teachers and assert their authority by demonstrating “redness” in a field formerly reserved for the “expertise” of the older generation: at the start of the Great Leap Forward, the first collective student-authored literary histories appeared on the scene. The vanguard of these efforts came from Peking University, where a two-volume *Zhongguo wenxueshi* 中國文學史 (History of Chinese Literature, hereafter: *PKU History*) totaling 1300 pages authored by third-year students of literature was published in September, 1958 – after a mere 24 days of incessant writing time over

⁴³⁹ (Zhou Laixiang 1958, 11).

the summer holidays.⁴⁴⁰ It was soon followed by a similar publication by students at Shanghai's Fudan University and by other institutions all across the country.⁴⁴¹

In these publications, the tone of voice had become decidedly more militant as well as defiant towards the teachers they sought to topple, while at the same time making no mistake as to who had enabled the students' move towards academic "independence":

When the proposal to write a literary history was made, not only did the bourgeois scholars shake their heads, but even among us there

⁴⁴⁰ The postscript, dating from September 15, described the origins of the project as follows: "This book's coming into being went through a process that was both ordinary and out of the ordinary. On July 31, the university Party committee gave out the call to a Great Leap Forward in science. This was just before the summer break, and many students had already made plans for the summer holidays, quite a few had even bought their train rides home. But in order to respond to the call of the Party, our fellow students did not hesitate to give up their individual plans, return their bought train tickets and immerse themselves in this great struggle of academic revolution." Peking University Chinese Department Literature Specialization Class of 1955, collective eds. (Beijing Daxue Zhongwenxi wenxue zhuanmenhua 1955 ji jitibianzhu 北京大學中文系文學專門化 1955 級集體編著). *Zhongguo wenxue shi* 中國文學史 (A History of Chinese Literature) (2 vols., Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1958), vol. II, 698. As the postscript further related, the actual process of writing and compiling their literary history began with study sessions of Marxism-Leninism and further criticisms of "bourgeois false science" (zichanjieji de weikexue 資產階級的偽科學) to determine exactly how much of their academic research of classical literature had been "contaminated". Only through these criticisms and self-criticisms did they manage to slowly form an opinion and "gain confidence and strength" to write their own literary history. Despite these "progressions", however, the work load was formidable, and time was limited due to other demands at the start of the GLF: not only did the student-authors forfeit their summer holidays that year, but they also had to engage in manual labor in the newly established people's communes (renmin gongshe 人民公社) while at times allegedly working in 48-hour shifts on the common literary history project. According to the postscript, the writing process ended on September 5, 1958, and thus the entire two volumes (around 1300 pages of text) only took a total of 24 days to complete. Despite the self-confident tone in which this information is given, the authors did admit to having limited knowledge, as in their third year of studies they had not progressed past the Ming dynasty in their literary training. Therefore, they do mention being given professional aid by at least one scholar of the older generation, namely writer, dramatist and literary critic A Ying 阿英 (1900-1977), specifically for the problematic chapter from the Opium Wars to May Fourth (Ibid., 699).

⁴⁴¹ Fudan University Chinese Department Classical Literature Group, collective student publication (Fudan Daxue Zhongwenxi gudian wenxuezu xuesheng jiti bianzhu 復旦大學中文系古典文學組學生集體編著). *Zhongguo wenxueshi* 中國文學史 (History of Chinese Literature; hereafter: *Fudan History*) (3 vols., Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1958/59). Two further students publications from around that time are accessible through the Chinamaxx database: (1) Jilin University. *Zhongguo wenxueshi gao* 中國文學史稿 (Draft history of Chinese literature) (1959-1961); (2) Huazhong shifan xueyuan 華中師範學院 (Central China Normal Academy). *Zhongguo wenxueshi* 中國文學史 (Chinese literary history) (1960). In a personal interview conducted with Zhang Keli (*1935) on July 12, 2011 at Shandong University in Jinan, professor Zhang related to me that the movement endorsing student-authored literary histories was conducted on a pan-national scale. At Shandong University, the call to follow in the footsteps of the *PKU history* was apparently already put out in 1958. Unfortunately, the published version seems not to have survived, and no one I talked to at Shandong University in the summer of 2011 appeared to know how to access the manuscript version which undoubtedly is still in existence somewhere in the university archives. Zhang Keli is a retired professor for classical Chinese literature and a former student of Feng Yuanjun's at Shandong University, where he studied between 1958 and 1965. Together with Yuan Shishuo, he is the editor of *Lu Kanru Feng Yuanjun heji* 陸侃如馮沅君合集 (Collected works of Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun), a collection of 15 volumes published by Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe in September, 2011.

were several people raising their doubts. Yes, sure, according to the old “imperial almanac” only professors and experts could write scholarly works, but what about us youngsters – third-year university students?

The Party determinedly supported our bold proposal, the Party gave us faith and strength. Not so long ago, the Party-led movements to criticize bourgeois academic thought helped us, and after the Party had guided our initial inspection tour through the labyrinth of bourgeois science, the formerly blindly adored idols of bourgeois science were duly destroyed. As a result, the students remaining at the school immediately took action under the guidance of the Party branch.⁴⁴²

Also, the focus on literary historiography as a contribution to the common cause of building a socialist nation was more emphasized in these student publications than ever before. The *PKU History*, for example, began its prefatory section with the following statement:

On China’s vast, majestic and fertile soil, six hundred million hardworking, brave, and wise people are presently and by use of their overwhelming powers engaging in building socialism on a glorious scale. To build socialism is our common great ideal; to contribute all our forces to socialism is our greatest happiness and pride. Like the rising sun in the early spring which paints everything in a bright and dazzling hue, socialism endows all battlefronts that serve it with incomparable glory, while at the same time defining their direction and tasks. At this great turning point in history, every battlefront must examine whether it has already begun without any regret to shoulder the responsibilities it should. The research of literary history, which is a constituent part of the cultural battlefront, is of course no exception.⁴⁴³

Regarding the general tone of voice, it is perhaps no surprise that when it came to making literary assertions, the student authors were not anymore clear about the implications of professional terminology than their teachers. However, they masked their insecurities by resorting to more determined value judgements about literary categories. Thus, for example, the text of the *PKU History* did not entirely do away with

⁴⁴² (Peking University 1958, vol. II, 698). Also the appearance of the *PKU History* paid tribute to its origins, as its cover was a deep shade of red. Upon opening it, the title page was followed by a dedication page, which read in bold red letters: “For the beloved Party and the great nation – the students of the 1955 literature specialization class of the Chinese Department at Peking University, Beijing, National Day 1958”. (It should be noted that unlike in the Anglo-American tradition, Chinese university classes are referred to not by their year of graduation, but their year of initial enrolment. Thus, the Beida class of 1955 did not graduate that year, but had enrolled in 1955, which made them complete their third year of studies in the summer 1958 at the time the *PKU History* was written.)

⁴⁴³ (Peking University 1958, vol. I, 1).

the construct of “realism struggling against anti-realism” in literary history. Still, the concept of “active romanticism” as fitting in with realism was introduced. But rather than explaining these concepts in literary terms or solving the eternal puzzle as to whether realism and “active” romanticism were complementary or integral notions, they reduced the dialectics of the struggle to “progressive” versus “reactionary” literature:

In the literary development of class society, the struggle between progressive and reactionary literature is a reflection of the complicated and intense class struggle. The progressive literature of the people is made up of folk literature and outstanding authorial literature. And reactionary literature is often the literature of the ruling class the literati raised under them. In China, the struggle between progressive literature and reactionary literature is mainly expressed in the struggle between realism and anti-realism. Active romanticism is a combat ally of realism, they have inseparable ties, because in their substance they both reflect the truth of real life and moreover, they both encourage the reader with advanced ideas and a spirit of optimism. The works of excellent authors in history often are an intermingling of realism with active romanticism. And passive romanticism is then a tributary of anti-realism, their common characteristic being a distortion of historical truth, or an embellishment of truth, songs of praise for and coquettish fawning over the ruling class; or they evade reality, propagating decadent feelings and the world-weary misanthropy of Laozi and Zhuangzi's thought; or they wallow in debauchery, advertising prompt amusement, and becoming the sounds of extravagance.⁴⁴⁴

In general, the main themes of the *PKU History* were defined by reductionism, i.e., judging the literary based on whether something was “progressive” or “reactionary” in history, as well as the ever greater emphasis on “struggle” and “revolution”, and the somewhat dogged insistence that literary historiography had to adhere to the spirit of “emphasizing the present and belittling the past” (houjin bogu 厚今薄古). This was not only clear in the policy sections of the introduction, but also in the way that individual works and fictional characters were described in the main text.

8. The Reds On *Honglou meng*

The *PKU History's* chapter on *Honglou meng* did not contain many literary considerations. In terms of length and scope, the student authors gave much room to

⁴⁴⁴ (Peking University 1958, vol. II, 692).

their discussion of the novel: on fifteen pages, they addressed everything starting from a brief sketch of the Cao Xueqin's biography, and then largely focusing on the ideological content, the images of the protagonists and the artistic merit of the *Honglou meng*. Though the character discussions were generously substantiated with quotes from the novel, and the authors even included a few observations on the use of language in *Honglou meng*, all other philological attempts were completely eschewed.

This is made clear in the discussion of one of the main protagonists, Jia Baoyu. Instead of a gradually introducing the main protagonist within the context of the story, the section began by delineating what made the character accord with Communist ideals:

Jia Baoyu is the most important character in *Dream of the Red Chamber*. The story of *Dream of the Red Chamber* revolves and develops around the love events between him, Lin Daiyu and Xue Baochai. In the work, he emerges as the character of the traitor of the feudalist system. On a certain level, he denies the Confucian relationships, rank perspectives, and the Confucian ethical code of feudalism. He is opposed to the examination system, scorns fame and fortune, is disgusted with the extravagant life of the aristocratic family, hates worldly men, and ardently pursues his own ideals of life, empathizes with those beautiful and oppressed girls.... These many characteristics of his nature evidently also attract much misinterpretation and mockery [i.e., on behalf of the other protagonists in *Honglou meng*].⁴⁴⁵

In this rendition, all traces of ambiguity about the character of Jia Baoyu (who was, after all, the offspring of a "feudalist landlord-bureaucrat" and not exactly prone to join the peasant forces in revolutionary activity) were erased. Instead, the *PKU History* for the first time since the *Honglou meng*-Campaign of 1954/55, reintroduced direct criticisms of Yu Pingbo and Hu Shi's previous scholarship into the main part of what was supposed to be an "academic text". In this way, the distinctions between "academic" and "campaign" literature were largely rendered obsolete.:

The character of Jia Baoyu has period characteristics, he is a product of the eighteenth century. In the society of that time, budding of capitalism had brought with it incipient democratic thought; at the same time, under the cover of the superficial extravagance of feudalist society, the ruling class cliques were jockeying for positions, degenerating in luxury while intensifying their persecution of the people, which fostered the rebellious spirits of the greater populace. This society endowed Baoyu with a character wanting to be free,

⁴⁴⁵ (Peking University 1958, vol. II, 378).

desperately dissatisfied with reality and rising to revolt. To think of Baoyu as the incarnation of his author, to think of his character as “both wise and idiotic, both wanton and sensible” (Yu Pingbo), this argument actually negates the phenomenon of Baoyu’s periodic character and social meaning, negates the phenomenon of Baoyu’s social strength and negates the active influence of the classical author.

Of course, one can explain from the above analysis: in the image of Baoyu, we can see the author’s image; the thought that Baoyu possesses is to some extent the author’s thought; analyzing Baoyu’s image can help us understand the world view and creation of the author. While creating, it would have been very difficult for the author not to write his own thoughts and feelings into the work, but one cannot draw an equals sign between the two, we cannot deny the process of typifying in literary creation.⁴⁴⁶

A point of interest in this section is, of course, that despite their explicit criticism of Yu Pingbo, not even the student literary historians entirely dismissed the possibility that Cao Xueqin’s biography in some way influenced the creation of his protagonists. Nevertheless, their rejection of both the Cao Yuanpei- and the Hu Shi-school of *hongxue* was absolute. Thus, a section at the end of the chapter was dedicated to “Erroneous trends in the research of *Dream of the Red Chamber*” (Honglou meng yanjiu zhong de cuowu qingxiang 紅樓夢研究中的錯誤傾向):

Dream of the Red Chamber is a work that has been distorted for a long time, as “redologists” of the past have subjected it to every kind of bizarre interpretation and uselessly detailed close reading. They forced analogies, throwing together the novel’s protagonists and some actual historical persons, like Jia Baoyu is so-and-so, Prospect Garden is in this-and-that place, etc. That way, they vulgarized the social significance of the novel.

Hu Shi started from a perspective of bourgeois subjective idealism – pragmatism, and subjected *Dream of the Red Chamber* and other works of classical literature to flagrant distortions. In order to achieve his anti-revolutionary goals, he exerted all his strength to play down the popular nature, ideological content and other social meanings of *Dream of the Red Chamber*. In his view, the reason why the Jia family “scattered like monkeys after the tree fell” was that “they couldn’t handle money matters and were unable to economize”. He thought that *Dream of the Red Chamber* was an “unremarkable naturalist” work. These are completely preposterous arguments, and yet he was considered a “redologist” authority for a long time.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁶ (Peking University 1958, vol. II, 381).

⁴⁴⁷ (Peking University 1958, vol. II, 390). The passages following this quote were dedicated to Yu Pingbo as Hu Shi’s “redologist” successor, and basically reiterated all the main points already brought up against him during the *Honglou meng*-Campaign of 1954/55. The authors also referred to that campaign as having targeted Yu Pingbo as a “representative” of the “bourgeois idealist perspective and method in the research

An almost immediate successor of the *PKU History*, which also cited it as its role model, was the publication by the students of Fudan University in 1958/59. In terms of argument strongly resembling its predecessor, the *Fudan History's* take on *Honglou meng* was also started out with the biography of Cao Xueqin. Its main argument quite stringently following the idea of the novel's underlying "criticism of feudalism", the text also saw a connection between the creation of Jia Baoyu's character and Cao's own biography. It nevertheless emphasized that Baoyu was not a mere autobiographical rendition:

Jia Baoyu is the character that Cao Xueqin used the most energy and placed the greatest depth in creating. In the figure of Jia Baoyu, the author, on the basis of his personal life and his profound observations and practical experiences in real society, summarized the complicated contents of life in eighteenth century China. He [i.e., Baoyu] negates the old system and the stale traditional concepts, and moves to completely escape from the surroundings constrained by feudalist morality; he thirsts for a free life, and seeks a new path of life.⁴⁴⁸

At the end of their chapter on *Honglou meng*, the *Fudan History* also lauded the campaigns against Yu Pingbo and Hu Shi's "autobiographical" reading of the novel:

In 1954 under the leadership of the Party, criticisms of the bourgeois perspective in research of *Dream of the Red Chamber* as represented by Yu Pingbo were launched on a national scale. They proceeded to eliminate Hu Shi's residual poison and to clear his reactionary influence from the academic field. This struggle has demonstrated the following truth to the researchers of *Dream of the Red Chamber* and all the classical literary workers: only by applying the Marxist-Leninist perspective and method to the research process is it possible to come to a scientific evaluation of *Dream of the Red Chamber* and the classical literary heritage.⁴⁴⁹

The start of the Great Leap Forward marked the period of the greatest amalgamation of campaign literature and academic output, and rendered the older professionals of the field without much of a voice. The Anti-Rightist-Campaign of 1957 had, of course, silenced a large part of that very peer group and it was therefore much easier for the

of *Dream of the Red Chamber*." It was only from the time of the campaign onwards, they stated, that people began to implement Marxism-Leninism as the standard of analysis, research and evaluation in *hongxue*. Despite these new standards however, the authors maintained, recent years had again demonstrated that bourgeois idealism had not been completely eradicated from *hongxue* scholarship (Ibid., 391).

⁴⁴⁸ (Fudan University 1958/59, vol. III, 285 f.).

⁴⁴⁹ (Fudan University 1958/59, vol. III, 299).

students to assume authority and shape academic content according to their own learning and educational/campaign experience.

9. Red Experts: Revisions

The initial severing of ties between the generations in the early period of the Great Leap was however soon partially revised. Thus, while the first edition of the *PKU History* had still criticized as “bourgeois” almost all of the Chinese Department’s professors – Lin Geng, You Guo’en, Wu Zuxiang, etc. – a revised and expanded, four-volume edition of that book appeared in mid-1959. This time, the text was the result of a renewed cooperation between students and the exact same teachers at Peking University.⁴⁵⁰ In the *Honglou meng*-chapter of this edition, the campaign against Yu Pingbo was no longer mentioned. Instead, the authors had included a rather general passage reiterating Hu Shi’s baneful influence on *hongxue* pre-1949, and stated that despite great efforts post-1949, a more in-depth, “scientific” reading of the novel was still lacking.⁴⁵¹

While the new preface composed by the students attributed their cooperation with the older generation to “new developments in the field” as well as a lack of knowledge and experience on their part, it would be wrong to assume that the rekindling of relations signified a return of a second, academic “Hundred Flowers” after the initial excitement over the Great Leap had subsided.⁴⁵² Rather, the process of

⁴⁵⁰ (Peking University 1959, vol. IV, 447).

⁴⁵¹ (Peking University 1959, vol. IV, 188).

⁴⁵² In the wording of the preface, the explanations ran as follows: “Since the Great Leap Forward, alongside the rapid development of industrial and agricultural production, a great tidal wave of cultural revolution also pushed China’s scientific culture onto the great path of leaping development. In the research of classical literature, the achievements of the last year have been really significant. Many collectively written literary histories were successively published, and there have also been more specialized essays conducting profound research on classical authors and works than in the past. In the last half a year, the Chinese Writers’ Union, Literature Research Institute, Peking University and Beijing Normal University held many common conferences and invited many important scholars and representatives of all aspects to give their opinions on some fundamental questions in literary history. Newspapers and periodicals have also opened an extremely heated free debate on the research of classical literature. Thus, many issues that in the last year were still unknown, or only superficially or falsely known, have gradually become clear. This is the gratifying harvest within the field of classical literary research, and our literary history ought to reflect these kinds of latest achievements in academic development.” (Peking University 1959, vol. I, 1 f.). Of course, the students continued, they had started out doing everything the right way: they had applied Marxism-Leninism, adhered to the class perspective, historical materialism and *renminxing*, so as to provide their research into classical literature with a solid, “scientific” foundation. However, they meekly conceded, “when all is said and done we are still new soldiers at the literary battlefield, and be it in terms of Marxism-Leninism or in terms of China’s vast classical literature, we are all still in the process of learning and groping about, and so while applying the basic perspective of Marxism-Leninism, we produced a few errors of simplification, and in our grasp and analysis of literary historical materials we also had shortcomings due to a lack of thoroughness. As many comrades have pointed out, the weakness of our argument was mainly expressed by our use of the struggle between realism and anti-realism to

rewriting and republishing the *PKU History* coincided with the perhaps most sensitive and devastating political moment of the early P.R.C. The gradual realization that the Great Leap Forward had largely failed in the first half of 1959 and the breaking down of the people's communes system led to Peng Dehuai's open criticism of Mao's economic policies at the Lushan conference in the summer of that year. By the end of 1959, Mao was forced to resign as the Chairman of the P.R.C., and though he retained his post as Chairman of the CCP, he was basically ousted from the daily management of both the Party and the state and remained on the sidelines until 1965. Until then, the idea of a "permanent revolution" receded into the background, and the Party bureaucrats once again gained the upper hand in the running of the P.R.C.⁴⁵³

The most immediate result of these developments in the academic field was that the students were called back to order, and those professors who had not been removed from their offices during the Anti-Rightist-Campaign were let back into the picture. Thus, by late 1959 and early 1960, what had begun as a movement exclusive of the teaching faction had turned into a more collaborative and inclusive effort, and the authors of the new collective literary histories would be credited as, for example, "[insert university name] Zhongwen xi bufen shisheng bianzhu [.....]中文系部份師生編著" (written and compiled by a part of the students and teachers at [...] Chinese department).

Nevertheless, the process of rewriting the *PKU History*, which began in March, 1959, was carefully supervised by members and organs of the Party, as the new preface further related, granting a rare insight into the hierarchies at work in late 1950s academic publication practices:

The Party and the state created beneficial working conditions for us, and gave us much concrete support. The CCPCC propaganda department, the Party group of the CWU, and the Literature Research Institute of the CAS all showed their loving concern throughout our entire working process, organized many meetings for us where we sought their opinions on the revision; Guo Moruo, Zhou Yang, Shao Quanlin, He Qifang, and other responsible comrades all provided us with many valuable guiding opinions; the university Party committee and administration also arranged the time that we needed for scientific research. Our work was developed all the way under the

summarize the rule of literary development. We were also not very correct with respect to the role of folk literature and the evaluation of some authors and works." (Ibid., vol. I, 2).

⁴⁵³ Rebecca Karl. *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World: A Concise History*. (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2010), 101-109.

direct supervision of the general [Chinese] department Party branch. The broad readership also cared for and supported our work, many readers wrote us letters glowing with enthusiasm. Among them were young workers, old teachers, and cadres from governmental organs or people's organizations; ...⁴⁵⁴

Then, in the final section of the revised preface the student authors also included a eulogy of the older generation of scholars they had previously rejected and who, it turned out, had offered substantial help in revising their revolutionary tomes of 1958. Meekly conceding their own academic deficiencies in the face of such professional expertise, they wrote:

The teachers also went deep into every compilation small group, and provided us with unforgettable help in compiling materials, discussing the outline, finalizing and polishing the edited draft – especially the older generation of professors all [did so drawing from] their own rich knowledge and precise understanding, and their several decades of exploratory experience on the battlefield of literary history. In the heat of the summer, they also sacrificed their summer holidays to work together with us, some of the older professors even persisted despite being ill. This spirit of selflessness truly moved every one of us fellow students; the teachers' impeccably dignified conduct and their meticulous attitude towards scholarship even further established a model of conducting scientific work for us. (...) Because we are still studying, our scholarship is far from qualified for this sort of important work; this is why this book still inevitably contains mistakes and weaknesses, and we sincerely hope that the older generation of scholars and the broad readership will provide us with corrections and strict criticism.⁴⁵⁵

Indeed, commentary by the “older generation” soon followed. In an essay of 1959 criticizing both the 1958 *PKU History* and the first volume of the *Fudan History* (also dating from 1958), Shanghai-based intellectual Ye Yiqun 葉以群 (1911-1966) re-emphasized the importance of Mao Zedong thought for the research into the “rules of development” of classical Chinese literature. Citing well-known passages from the *Yan'an Talks* and *Xin minzhuzhuyi lun*, he concluded:

These treasured opinions [i.e., of Mao Zedong] contain very great significance for our search of the rules of ideological struggle in classical Chinese literature. They put forth reality (including the attitude towards the people and progressive meaning and revolution in history), national characteristics, democratic characteristics

⁴⁵⁴ (Peking University 1959, vol. I, 3).

⁴⁵⁵ (Peking University 1959, vol. I, 3 f.).

(including anti-feudalism, and an emphasis on science and mass character), etc. as standards of measurement for the progressive and the reactionary, and to differentiate between the quintessence and waste matter. These are mainly issues pertaining to the aspects of ideological content. Comrade Mao Zedong's so-called "artistic" standards include issues pertaining to the aspects of creative method, technique, style, etc. If in debates after today we can conduct some analysis according to the concrete circumstances and materials of a certain time period (for example, the Sui, Tang, Five Dynasties, or Song and Yuan), will it be possible to find a few rules that sufficiently explain the complicated phenomena in literature? I think it is possible.⁴⁵⁶

This passage underlines the general tendency at the end of the 1950s to standardize literary histories according to criteria that were largely removed from strict literary categories. Thus, "realist" and "anti-realist" had turned into "progressive" and "reactionary" literature, and there was a renewed emphasis on the "national characteristics" (minzuxing 民族性) of Chinese literature. Furthermore, "democratic characteristics" (minzhuxing 民主性) had superseded any notions of an "incipient urbanite thought" in the literature of the past, as the former were less closely tied to controversies about the periodization of general (Chinese) history, and they could additionally be coupled with the concepts of "massification" (dazhonghua 大眾化) and "revolution", and thus with the main goals of the early GLF. Meanwhile, questions of an "artistic" nature, while still mentioned, had been summarily banned to the sidelines of the discussion.

But most importantly, the passage shows that main goal of literary historiography was no longer a mere collection of works pertaining to "progressive" categories, however closely to "realism" they might end up being defined. Instead, the focus was now expressedly on finding the (literal) "red thread" – the so-called "rules of development" (fazhan de guilü 發展的規律) – to the narrative which would link these progressive works in a way that explained and justified the historical progression towards Communism, both in life and literature. Thus, though some of the militancy of the 1958 student publications had been taken out of the texts in 1959, the goals of

⁴⁵⁶ Ye Yiqun. "Dui "Zhongguo wenxueshi" taolun de jidian yijian 對《中國文學史》討論的幾點意見" (A few opinions on the discussions of the "Chinese literary histories"). In: Shanghai branch of the Chinese Writers' Union (Zhongguo zuojia xiehui Shanghai fenhui wenxue yanjiushi 中國作家協會上海分會文學研究室). *Zhongguo wenxueshi taolunji* 中國文學史討論集 (Collection of debates in literary history) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 50.

achieving a common standard and the underlying ideological principles that were to guide this standard had not changed.

In the case of researching and writing about *Honglou meng*, there was a definite shift that happened between pre- to post-1954 literary historiography. On the one hand, the break with the traditions of Hu Shi's *Xin hongxue* had occasioned not only an ideological overhaul of what the novel was "trying to say" politically, It had, in fact, for the first time since Cai Yuanpei's *suoyinpai* reopened the possibility of *Honglou meng* having an underlying significance beyond a reflection in *baihua* of the author's biography, and insisted that that significance was more essential to its study than any philological inquiry could ever be.

These new considerations, apart from demanding ideological coherence, however still necessitated rather academic inquiries into certain topics without which the new framework of Marxist-Leninist literary criticism could not be put into practice. These topics included, for example, the issue of periodization, which reached beyond the immediate realm of literary historiography. Struggling to find a consensus that was acceptable to both cultural politics and historiography in general, literary historians found themselves tapping both contemporary and earlier historiographical debates without coming to any definite conclusions. Finally, by 1957, a quiet consensus was reached that an all too literal application of Marxist categories of social development was not feasible in a literary context, and literary historians largely returned to a classic, dynastic periodization. Not even the more radical student-authored literary histories of the early Great Leap Forward period broke with that consensus.

An example of a topic which could not be ousted from the Marxist-Leninist debates on *Honglou meng* was the issue of Cao Xueqin's biography. Though Hu Shi's "autobiographical" reading of the novel had been rejected in no uncertain terms during the criticisms of 1954/55, the Marxist literary historians of the early P.R.C. still drew on the pool of biographical information originating with Hu Shi's *kaozheng* method for their own contextualization project. Thus, the fact that Cao Xueqin – much like the Jia family of his invention – had been born into the "feudalist-bureaucratic aristocracy" and experienced a fall from riches to rags in his lifetime was still emphasized by early P.R.C. literary historians. Only now, they maintained that Cao's biography had enabled the composition of a work of "realism", filled with *renminxing* and "typical characters", and

that it was more than a work of unreflective naturalism. Depending on their affiliation, they argued this point drawing on the “urbanite theory” (shimin shuo), the “peasant theory” (nongmin shuo) or simply the “tradition theory” (chuantong shuo).

Incidentally, this also meant that some philological details of Cao Xueqin’s biography that had been in dispute since Hu Shi’s explorations were still of interest to the literary historians. In 1955, for example, Beijing-based literary historian Wang Liqi 王利器 (1911-1998) had discovered a manuscript collection of poetry entitled *Spring Willow Hall Draft Poems* (*Chunliutang shigao* 春柳堂詩稿). Four of the poems in this collection contained information on Cao Xueqin that had previously been unknown or insufficiently evidenced, such as his full name, the fact that he had lived in Beijing’s western suburbs later in life, and that he had died before his fiftieth birthday.⁴⁵⁷ Wang used these poems to write an article published on July 3, 1955, in *Guangming ribao*, entitled: “Rethinking Cao Xueqin’s biography” (Chongxin kaolü Cao Xueqin de shengping 重新考慮曹雪芹的生平), which was a philological recapitulation of several essential details in Cao’s life. Despite general adversity against such philological studies, Wang’s article was received positively by the scholarly world of the early P.R.C., and several of his findings found their way into even the least philologically-minded of literary histories. The 1958 *PKU History*, for example, held that Cao Xueqin’s courtesy name (zi 字) was Mengruan 夢阮 and that Xueqin was his pseudonym (hao 號), which was a piece of information only in circulation after Wang Liqi’s discovery – before that, the assumption had been that Xueqin was, in fact, the courtesy name.

Similarly, Cao’s birth and death dates were being researched throughout the 1950s, and received a surge of scholarly attention in 1962 shortly before the Palace Museum (Gugong bowuguan 故宮博物館) in Beijing organized an exhibition commemorating the 200th anniversary of his death in 1963 (Cao Xueqin shishi erbai zhounian jinian zhanlanhui 曹雪芹逝世二百周年紀念展覽會).⁴⁵⁸ At the same time, the

⁴⁵⁷ (Chen Weizhao 2005, vol. I, 344 f.).

⁴⁵⁸ Publications in the late 1950s included Wu Enyu 吳恩裕. *You Cao Xueqin ba zhong* 有曹雪芹八種 (*Eight things on Cao Xueqin*) (Beijing: Gudian wenxuechubanshe, 1958) and Yu Pingbo’s assistant at the LRI, Wang Peizhang. “Cao Xueqin de shengzu nian ji qita 曹雪芹的生卒年及其他” (Cao Xueqin’s birth and death dates and other things). In: *Wenxue yanjiu jikan* 5 (1957). In 1962, some articles published in *Guangming ribao* were Wu Enyu. “Cao Xueqin de shengzu nian wenti 曹雪芹生卒年問題” (The issue of Cao Xueqin’s birth and death dates) (March 10, 1962) and “Cao Xueqin zu yu renwu shuo zhiwen 曹雪芹卒於壬午說質問” (Expressing doubt about the hypothesis that Cao Xueqin died in the renwu year [i.e., 1762]) (May 6, 1962); Chen Yupi 陳毓巵. “Youguan Cao Xueqin zunian wenti de shangque 有關曹雪芹卒年問題的

less known Gao E also received some notice, as Wang Liqi also published some findings on his biography in an essay for the newly established *Wenxue yanjiu* in March, 1957.⁴⁵⁹

In terms of more general structural standards, the publication of the 1957 *Syllabus* for literary history had a definite impact on the practice of literary historiography in the later 50s. First of all, the *Syllabus* for the first time introduced a standard in scope for teaching literary history, and even went into details as to how many weeks each unit of content should be taught (arriving at a total of 35 weeks for a course on Chinese literature from the beginnings through 1949). The *Syllabus* was also the first “textbook” distributed to students of Chinese literature as reference material to prepare for their courses and study for tests. Therefore, some of its inherent “textbook quality” also resonated within the later student-authored works that were, essentially, also written as textbooks, i.e. by collective authors for practical use in the classroom. Thus, for example, in contrast to earlier literary histories written by professors on the basis of lecture notes, the *Syllabus*, the *PKU History* and the *Fudan History* contained short summaries of each chapter either at the beginning or end (*PKU History*), or both at the beginning and the end (*Syllabus*, *Fudan History*) of each chapter, which provided the reader with a good overview of the subject matter.

The main point of all of this is that in the 1950s, at least three main elements converged into what became the literary historiography of the early P.R.C.: firstly, there was the legacy of past scholarship, which, though to a great extent officially rejected, was carried on into the new, Maoist era. On the one hand, this happened because the transitional generation of scholars that largely maintained their authority until the Great Leap Forward were able to build on what had been accepted knowledge prior to 1949 and did not stand in the way of the new vision of Marxist-Leninist scholarship after 1949. On the other hand, even the younger generation of up-and-coming Marxist scholars, the *xinsheng liliang* like Li Xifan, Lan Ling and their contemporaries, had no choice but to

商權” (On the debates surrounding Cao Xueqin’s death date) (April 8, 1962) and “Cao Xueqin zunian wenti zai shangque 曹雪芹卒年問題再商權” (Further deliberations on Cao Xueqin’s death date) (June 17, 1962); Wu Shichang 吳世昌. “Cao Xueqin de shengzu nian 曹雪芹的生卒年” (Cao Xueqin’s birth and death dates) (April 21, 1962); Deng Yunjian 鄧允建. “Zai tan Cai Xueqin de zunian wenti 再談曹雪芹的卒年問題” (More on the issue of Cao Xueqin’s death date) (June 19, 1962); and Zhou Ruchang 周汝昌. “Zai shang Cao Xueqin zunian 再商曹雪芹卒年” (Discussing again Cao Xueqin’s death date) (July 8, 1962). On these and other contributions to the debate, cf. (Hu Xiaowei 1987, 439-444) and (Chen Weizhao 2005, vol. I, 342-346).

⁴⁵⁹ Wang Liqi. Guanyu Gao E de yixie cailiao 關於高鶚的一些材料 (Some materials on Gao E). In: *Wenxue yanjiu* 1 (1957), 166-171.

inherit the results of some of their predecessors' academic research, which they also built on in their own interpretations. Thus, despite rejecting Hu Shi's *kaozheng* method of reading *Honglou meng* as an autobiography, considerations of Cao Xueqin's biographical details were not ousted from the intellectual mainstream, but rather integrated into the new epistemic culture by members of both generations of intellectuals.

Secondly, there was cultural politics, which demanded, for example, the rejection of individuals and values associated with these (i.e., "Hu Shi and *kaozheng*", or "Hu Shi and pragmatism"), the absorption of newly coined standards into "Marxist-Leninist scholarship" (i.e., "realism", *renminxing*, "progressive", "class background", etc.), and the participation in campaigns and study sessions to help "internalize" these standards. Thus, the campaigns criticizing Yu Pingbo and Hu Shi not only had the effect of people positing their "correct" ideological stance in the process of intellectual restructuring, but also resulted in shaping the standards that would flow back into academic practice.

Participating in a campaign which criticized that Yu Pingbo had neglected to mention "realism" in his study of *Honglou meng* may not have meant much to the individual researcher at first. It is, however, to be assumed that in the wake of these criticisms, the academic mind of the individual was geared to pay attention to "realism" as an essential category for inquiries into the classical heritage. In a second step, this awareness was ideally translated into the general concept of a red thread of "realism" that traversed Chinese literary history from the earliest works to the present. Thus, even if Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun in their 1957 *Short course* did not start their section on *Honglou meng* by saying that it was an "apex of realism" (*xianshizhuyi de gaofeng* 現實主義的高峰) like the later *Syllabus*, *PKU History* or *Fudan History* would, they did emphasize the novel's "realist character" (*xianshixing*), "typical protagonists" (*dianxingxing de renwu* 典型性的人物) and heightened "conciseness" (*jizhongxing* 集中性) as compared to earlier works of the Ming, such as *Shuihu zhuan*.⁴⁶⁰

Thirdly, there was the structural element of standardization that gradually turned the literary histories of the 1950s from academic commentaries devised by individual authors into textbooks written by collectives. Though this began with the

⁴⁶⁰ (Lu and Feng 1957a, 261).

Syllabus commissioned by the Ministry of Higher Education in 1956 and authored by at least five of the most prominent literary historians holding positions in early P.R.C. academic institutions, the real drive towards collectivity came with the Great Leap Forward and the student-authored publications. Despite the somewhat problematic analytical shortcomings in these publications, they did set the standard in terms of writing literary histories as practical reference works authored by a collective.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁶¹ In the case of the revised editions, these collectives even consisted in a collaboration between the generations, which was allegedly met with much enthusiastic endorsement on behalf of the professors: "In the latter period of the fifties, students of the Chinese departments at Peking University, Fudan University, Jilin University, etc., inspired by the force of the Great Leap Forward, all published their own collectively written *Chinese Literary Histories* separately in Beijing, Shanghai, etc. (...) and the teachers of these students all seemed to embrace this with endless warmth. A group of teachers at Peking University composed a text praising the "red *Chinese Literary History's* scientific achievements", and propagated that their students had expressed such a strong level of summary in, for example, such text sections as the summaries of every period's society and literature [i.e., the introductory sections to each chapter in the 1958 *PKU History*], because they had developed their collective intelligence and carried out repeated discussions, etc. With respect to the ideal vision of a collective force and the worship of a collective will, it can presently be said that they attained the ultimate goal." [my insertion] Cf. Dai Yan 戴燕. "Wenke jiaoxue yu "Zhongguo wenxueshi" 文科教學與“中國文學史”" (Liberal arts education and "Chinese literary history"). In: *Wenxue yichan* 2 (2000), 6-19: 14. The text Dai is referring to here was a joint article by Yang Hui 楊晦, Ji Zhenhuai 季鎮淮, Feng Zhongyun 馮鍾雲, Chen Yixin 陳貽焮 and Li Shaoguang 李紹廣. "Hongse 'Zhongguo wenxueshi' de kexue chengjiu - ping Beida Zhongwenxi zhuanmenhua wuwuji jiti bianzhu de 'Zhongguo wenxueshi' 紅色“中國文學史”的科學成就—評北大中文系專門化五五級集體編著的“中國文學史”" (The scientific achievements of a red 'Chinese Literary History' - critique of the collectively written 'Chinese Literary History' by the students of the specialized class of 55 at the PKU Chinese department"), published in *Guangming ribao* on November 30, 1958. (Dai Yan 2000, 14, fn. 2).

Conclusion

What we have seen, even if just roughly, in the three main chapters of the present thesis is the epistemological evolution of the field of literary studies in twentieth-century China, from the beginning of the Republican era until the early 1960s. The perspective that was presented on this evolution was deliberately limited since it was both focused on and anchored by an individual agent – Shandong University’s professor of classical Chinese literature Lu Kanru. Narratively speaking, this individual focus generated a text that bears some resemblance to a *Bildungsroman*, a coming-of-age novel, especially because it describes the epistemological education of a central protagonist from his formative years during the Republican era until his intellectual apogee in the early 1950s of the P.R.C.

While to some extent undeniably there, this resemblance is rather brittle in three important domains. First of all, unlike a typical *Bildungsroman*, the present thesis – mainly due to the lack of substantial sources but also an academic reluctance to speculate too much about the available materials – does not provide readers access to Lu Kanru’s mind so that they cannot really see how his mind grew and matured over the decades, both intellectually and emotionally. What we see instead is his evolution from an outsider’s perspective: we know that his mind is evolving over time, because everybody’s mind does, but we cannot measure how much so, nor describe in what specific ways.

Secondly, the typical *Bildungsroman* is, geometrically speaking, a line that moves upwards with some occasional setbacks in between that are narratively necessary in order to propel the central protagonist into even higher realms. At the end of a standard *Bildungsroman*, its hero has reached the height of his or her intellectual faculties – he or she has made it, also in terms of professional ambition and material wealth. In the case of Lu Kanru and his fellow intellectuals from the same generation at Shanda and other institutions of higher education, what we have is definitely a more hybrid evolution that oscillates between the linearity of a conventional *Bildungsroman*, which becomes visible especially in Chapter 1 where our protagonist is definitely on the rise, and the deviant geometry of a picaresque novel, which is particularly tangible in Chapter 2 as our protagonist is caught by the frenzy of the *Honglou meng*-Campaign and is absorbed

directly into the “eye of the tornado” where he adds fuel to the storm by writing campaign texts in which he denounces his former intellectual life.

Third of all, unlike even the most encyclopedic of *Bildungsromane*, this thesis had a second and more important agenda aside from describing a Shandong professor’s individual itinerary: it took this individual as a point of entry to access the field of literary studies in modern China. Lu Kanru, in his function as protagonist, served as a guide through the maze of agents, institutions, and archival and library materials that make up this vast topic. While guiding us, he also helped us limit and somewhat focus the scope of our endeavors. Through his unique perspective it became possible, for example, to magnify the *Honglou meng*-Campaign and its impact on the writing of literary history in the P.R.C., albeit often more pointillistically than conclusively.

At the same time, it became obvious to the present researcher, and perhaps even more so to the potential reader(s) of these pages, that this limited microperspective, instead of being able to keep the topic at bay, is in itself a complex maze that points to deeper and rarely well-illuminated paths. Some of these that were ignored in the present thesis are for example:

- The relationship between Lu Kanru and the field of classical studies in the Republican era, which is a research avenue that could take Lu’s student relationship with Wang Guowei as its main point of departure.
- The connection between Western sinology, especially the French brand of it, and the transformation of the field of classical studies into modern academic disciplines in Republican China. Here our main point of entry would be Paul Pelliot, Lu Kanru’s advisor during his doctoral years at the Sorbonne.
- The anxiety of influence that May Fourth intellectuals suffered from in their approach to classical studies, which made them vacillate between constant attraction and categorical rejection. Here the point of access would be Lu Kanru’s relationship with Hu Shi.
- The gender dimension in the evolution of the field of literary studies in the P.R.C., which is especially present in Lu Kanru’s itinerary since he was married to one of the first female professors in modern China, who was in fact far more famous than her husband.

- The negotiating relationship between the legacies of classical scholarship and May Fourth intellectualism, on the one hand, and the Soviet and Yan'an approaches to literature, on the other. Here a first point of access could be a microstudy of the relationship between Lu Kanru and his students Li Xifan and Lan Ling.
- The scope and stylistic evolution of academic writing in the field of literary studies from its very beginnings in the Republican era until the 1960s, a vast topic that would be accessed and anchored by taking Lu Kanru and Feng Yuanjun's protean history of Chinese literature as its main point of departure.

Even though not immediately recognizable as such – far from it – all these questions are relevant for our understanding of modernity. At the beginning of the 21st century, the field of literary studies is well-established in all major and minor institutions of higher education in the P.R.C. Due to the increasingly decisive role that “internationalization” has been playing in research funding in China and elsewhere, the content of literary studies in the P.R.C. has been revamped to be compatible with global partners. But what looks like a smooth transition (at least to outsiders such as the global partners who tend to not have much background knowledge on the Chinese situation) is in fact a hybrid product that thrives on eclecticism: it absorbs new ideas and concepts, while adapting them to and always re-interpreting them via already established criteria and knowledge systems. This process, which is open-ended, has been called “indigenization”, in Chinese *bentuhua* 本土化. It is especially at work in sites where knowledge transfer takes place, such as academic disciplines and their institutions. New knowledge systems are appropriated via this disciplinary matrix through a process that refines, rather than abandons, old systems.⁴⁶²

Making this process visible allows us to better understand what people are talking about when they are talking about a specific national context. We are provided with a matrix that shows which topics are relevant and why, as well as what modes of argument are persuasive and on what grounds. As a consequence, we will no longer be all too surprised when we are confronted with opinions according to which, for example,

⁴⁶² The description and explanation of this *bentuhua* process are the main goals of a current project, “The Formation and Development of Academic Disciplines in China”, which is based at the Australian National University and led by John Makeham. See <http://academicdisciplines-china.anu.edu.au/> (last access: November 24, 2012). Incidentally, the project is only focused on four disciplines, specifically philosophy, sociology/anthropology, history and, finally, architecture. It does not include the field of literary studies.

RED DISCIPLINE

Dream of the Red Chamber is an anti-feudalistic and realist novel depicting the relationship between exploiters and exploited, but which also allows us to observe the construction (and de-construction) of subjectivity and gender, the libidinal economy of rhizomatic agents as well as the emergence of civil society in the sense of Jürgen Habermas.

The present thesis, such is my hope, is a first step in this direction.

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CCP East China Normal College Chinese Department General Branch Committee, 1960. "Zhongwenxi jiaoshou Lu Kanru zichanjieji xueshu guandian 中文系教授陸侃如資產階級學術觀點" (Chinese department professor Lu Kanru's bourgeois academic standpoint). A 032-01-0026-006, Jinan: Shandong Provincial Archives.

CCP Party Group of the Shandong Provincial Bureau of Hygiene, 1955. "Guanyu zai zhishifenzi zhong jiandang de chubu yijian 關於在知識份子中建黨的初步意見"

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Deutsche Zusammenfassung

der in englischer Sprache verfassten Promotionsarbeit von

Marie-Theres Strauss

mit dem Titel

**RED DISCIPLINE. A SHANDONG PROFESSOR, HONGLOU MENG, AND
THE REWRITING OF LITERARY HISTORY IN THE EARLY P.R.C.**

**Rote Disziplin: Ein Professor aus Shandong, der *Traum der Roten
Kammer* und die Neuschreibung der Literaturgeschichte in den
Anfangsjahren der Volksrepublik China**

Das Hauptziel der vorliegenden Arbeit ist es, eine bislang wenig beachtete Phase in der Entwicklung der modernen Literaturwissenschaft im China des 20. Jahrhunderts ausführlich zu behandeln, nämlich die Massenkampagne von 1954, die sich ausschließlich um die Interpretation des Qing-zeitlichen Romans *Honglou meng* (Der Traum der Roten Kammer) von Cao Xueqin und Gao E drehte. Es sollen dabei auf der einen Seite die Relevanz dieser Kampagne herausgestellt werden und andererseits deren archivale Dimension in den Vordergrund gerückt werden. Die Relevanz ist vor allem dadurch gegeben, dass diese Kampagne einen maßgeblichen Einfluss auf die Neuschreibung der chinesischen Literaturgeschichte hatte, die ab 1955 systematisch betrieben wurde. Die archivale Dimension, welche auf die massive textliche Produktion zurückzuführen ist, die in dieser Zeit auf Tagungen, in den Medien und in Buchpublikationen stattfand, macht sichtbar die – freilich immer von der politischen Zentrale initiierten und von dieser stets sorgsam überwachten – terminologischen und argumentativen Verhandlungen, die zwischen der in der Republikzeit (1912-1948) ausgebildeten Akademikern und den neuen Generationen an Hochschulabsolventen stattfanden. Verankert wird die Perspektive der Arbeit auf diese komplexe Thematik durch die Fokussierung auf einen in der Kampagne – wohl nicht immer ganz freiwillig – beteiligten klassischen Literaturwissenschaftler, nämlich Lu Kanru (1903-1978), der

1948 Professor für chinesische Literatur an der Shandong Universität (damals in Qingdao) wurde.

Die Arbeit hat eine Einführung und ist in drei Kapitel strukturiert, denen eine kurze Konklusion folgt. Die Einführung beschäftigt sich in erster Linie mit der Frage, ob man von einem literaturwissenschaftlichen Feld in der VR China überhaupt sprechen darf, vor allem wenn man das Werk des Soziologen Pierre Bourdieu darauf applizieren möchte. Darüber hinaus wird auf die Bedeutung des Archivs für die Thematik der vorliegenden Arbeit kurz eingegangen.

Jedes der drei Kapitel behandelt jeweils einen bestimmten Aspekt des literaturwissenschaftlichen Feldes, wie dieser sich in der ersten Dekade der VR China herausbildete. Hauptbezugspunkte der Kapitel sind die Kampagne um den *Traum der Roten Kammer* und die institutionelle Entwicklung des Literaturprofessors Lu Kanru.

Kapitel 1, "A Shandong Professor" (Ein Professor aus Shandong), beschäftigt sich mit der akademischen Karriere von Lu Kanru, und zwar von ihren Anfängen in den ersten Jahren der jungen chinesischen Republik bis 1953, dem Jahr, als die sowjetische Formatierung der chinesischen Hochschullandschaft ihren Höhepunkt erreichte. Ziel dieses Kapitels ist es, stellvertretend am Beispiel von Lu Kanru die edukative Entwicklung jener Generation nachzuvollziehen, die 1954 zur Hauptzielscheibe der *Honglou meng*-Kampagne wurde.

Das Hauptaugenmerk von Kapitel 2, "Honglou meng" (Der Traum der Roten Kammer), ist die *Honglou meng*-Kampagne. Hier wird vor allem die transformative Wirkung, die diese Kampagne auf die binnenchinesische Literaturwissenschaft hatte, insbesondere in der Literaturgeschichtsschreibung ab 1955, veranschaulicht. Im Zuge der Kampagne wurden bestimmte grundlegende Elemente der literaturwissenschaftlichen Tradition aus der Republikzeit und davor in Frage gestellt, um entweder aus dem Mainstream-Diskurs eliminiert oder in stark revidierter Manier in diesen eingeflochten zu werden. Einer der roten Fäden dieses Kapitels ist nach wie vor die intellektuelle Entwicklung von Lu Kanru, insbesondere seine Interaktionen als Individuum mit der institutionell orchestrierten Massenkampagne um den *Traum der Roten Kammer*. Eine zweite Strategie dieses Kapitels besteht darüber hinaus in seinem quantitativen Fokus: zwar wird auf die Chronologie eingegangen und auch auf

bestimmte Grundaspekte dieser Massenkampagne, insbesondere den Generationenkonflikt und die Klassifikation wie auch die Migration von Kampagnentexten, aber das Kapitel zielt vor allem darauf ab, den Leser für die spezifische Textur dieser Kampagne zu sensibilisieren, and dazu gehört die Veranschaulichung der massiven und iterativen Textproduktion, die daraus hervorgegangen ist.

Kapitel 3, "Red Discipline. The Rewriting of Literary History" (Rote Disziplin: Die Neuschreibung der Literaturgeschichte), versucht nachzuvollziehen, wie das Schreiben von Literaturgeschichte vonstatten ging in der ersten Dekade der VR China, vor allem in Bezug auf die landesweiten Debatten, die im Rahmen der *Honglou meng*-Kampagne dazu geführt wurden. Eines der zentralen Themen der Debatten war die Frage, was denn genau unter "Realismus" zu verstehen sei. Das Kapitel basiert auf Ergebnissen einer intensiven Lektüre eines relativ großen Korpus an Literaturgeschichten, die in der Hauptsache nach 1949 verfasst worden sind. Die Ergebnisse werden so dargestellt, dass man Argumente und deren Elaborierung im Laufe der Jahre besser nachvollziehen kann. Zudem konzentriert sich das Kapitel nicht nur auf ein Individuum, sondern auch auf Gruppen, die sich innerhalb eines literaturwissenschaftlichen Feldes bewegen, das zunehmend als Zusammenschluss von Kollektiva auftritt und sich auch als solcher formiert. Das Kapitel bietet somit einen Überblick über eine kurze Periode in der Entwicklung der modernen chinesischen Literaturgeschichtsschreibung und führt die im Laufe der Arbeit entwickelten Fäden zusammen. In erster Linie geht es aber nicht darum, konklusiv und endgültig mit diesen verschiedenen Fäden umzugehen, sondern vor allem einen ersten tentativen Entwurf zu liefern, anhand dessen man sich ein relativ holistisches Bild von den literaturgeschichtlichen Prozessen machen kann, die in dieser Zeit an verschiedenen Institutionen des Landes stattfanden.

In der kurzen Konklusion wird die Arbeit in Beziehung gesetzt zu einem größeren Projekt, das darin besteht, die Entwicklung der Literaturwissenschaft im modernen China zu beschreiben, nicht nur in institutioneller Hinsicht, sondern auch unter Einbezugnahme begriffsgeschichtlicher Aspekte und der Rolle, die die „indigenization“ (*bentuhua*) in diesen komplexen Transfer- und Verhandlungsprozessen gespielt hat.

Curriculum Vitae

For reasons of data protection, the curriculum vitae is not included in the online version.

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Hiermit erkläre ich an Eides statt, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig und nur unter Verwendung der angegebenen Literatur und Hilfsmittel angefertigt habe.

Berlin, den 24. November 2012

Marie-Theres Strauss