

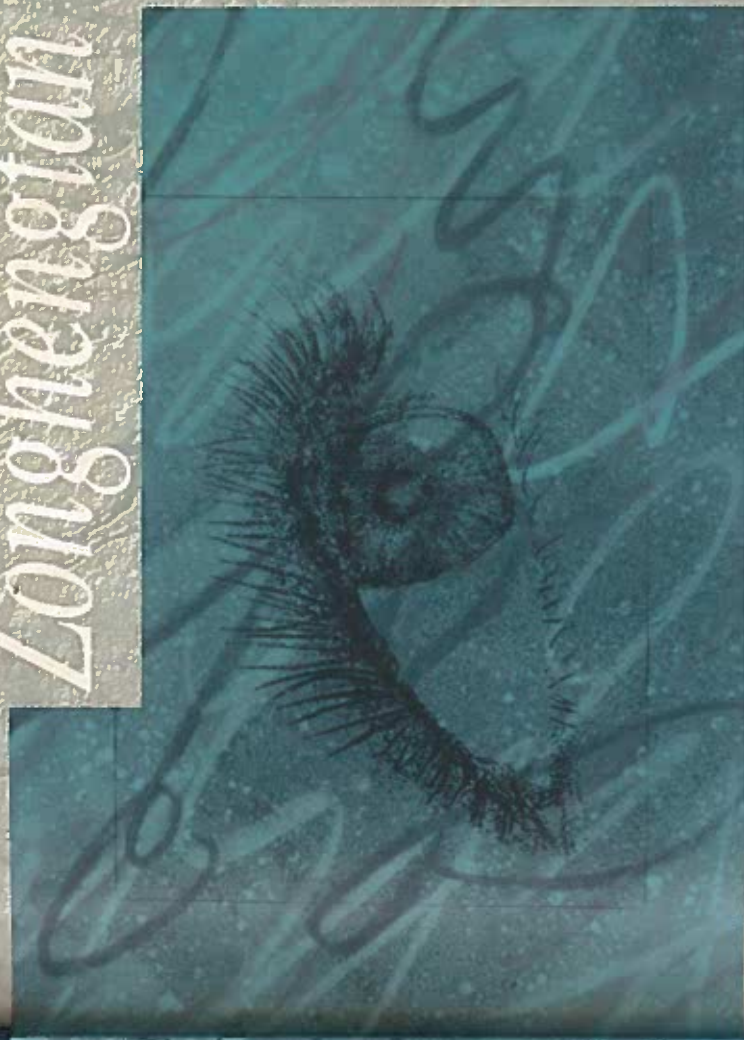
当代欧洲文学

Dangdai Zonghengtan

——北京大学“欧洲文学与文学史”国际研讨会论文及发言

● 主编 刘意青 罗 荒

Wenxue
Zonghengtan



民族出版社
The Ethnic Publishing House

当代欧洲文学纵横谈

● 主编 刘意青 罗 荒 民族出版社



责任编辑：安平平
封面设计：金 一

此集包括欧洲文学教学和编写的一些基本问题，文学史和文学理论探讨和经典诠释、评介，还有中国文学和欧洲文学，以及欧洲国别文学之间的比较研究话题，内容丰富，色彩纷呈。

ISBN 7-105-05435-2



9 787105 054350 >

ISBN 7-105-05435-2/I·1201
(汉 378) 定价：56.00元

Cultures of Change: Challenges in Mapping Revolutionary Literary Eras

Anton R. Krueger

Midrand University, South Africa

Creativity is revolutionary. The act of creation is disruptive, as it requires the breaking of a pattern, the deviation from a stable state, the disturbance of a state of rest. In contrast, scholarship tries to maintain the continued existence of forms of knowledge. It attempts to preserve what remains of the past. The former forges a new road ahead, producing new forms of reality, whilst the latter surveys ground already covered, and must try to describe the various forces leading to, and the consequences leading from, the singular and uniquely human act of creation. This act of cataloguing is made all the easier if what one studies has been objectified, and is, so to say, lifeless, inert, still. In other words, once it has stopped moving, when it is no longer a "movement". By virtue of this distinction, scholarship could be described as counter-revolutionary.

For myself, I often find myself caught between the tension created by these two opposing definitions. As an artist — a playwright and poet — I am perpetually involved in the search for new ideas which challenge existing forms and notions. As a scholar, on the other hand, as someone keenly interested in the cycles of history, in the behaviour of groups, I mourn traditions past and am caught up in the nostalgic practice of sustaining sometimes archaic traditions, since the scholarly enterprise concerns, to a great extent, the maintenance and preservation of culture.

What first attracted my interest to the three movements I wish to touch on briefly today (these three bold groupings labelled Romanticism, Marxism and Surrealism) is that they all have, embedded within the ethos of the systems they perpetuate, the notion of rebellion as laudable. All three develop their own unique type of protest, and demand changes which they regard as necessary and beneficial. Furthermore, they are all very much concerned with forms of culture, that is, with ways of thinking and behaving. It does seem somewhat paradoxical that in order for each to maintain its historical, academic status as a definitive group of styles of thought and production, they have been forced into — and are thus constrained by — fairly static categories, since the practice of scholarship involves the process of defining characteristics which can then be used to catalogue knowledge and culture. This act of cataloguing, involving the restrictions required by definition, seems to me antithetical to the impetus behind the spirit of rebellion at the core of these three move-

ments, which agitate for change. Hence, the very elements which make these movements vital are sublimated and neutralized by attempts to study them.

The kinds of names given to these three movements indicates the arbitrariness of the processes of periodization. Indeed, there appear to be no comprehensive and consistent criteria for what determines the naming of an era, a period, or a movement. Romanticism is perhaps the most loosely coined of the three terms, and indicates a set of ideas, or a spirit which implicates many European countries at more or less the same time. Though urging individuality, Romanticism does not seem to spring from any one individual, but rather summarises a *Zeitgeist*, an overall mood, which, it is sometimes proclaimed, still prevails in certain quarters to this day. As Morse Peckham writes, Romanticism refers to both "a specific historical movement" and "a certain" characteristic of mind, art and personality, found in all periods and in all cultures" (1970: 231).

This notion of a "characteristic of mind" seems to be something which each of these movements makes reference to. In other words, each invokes a style of thinking, a way of perceiving and evaluating the world which is endorsed by a certain set of people. And yet, repeatedly, in the description of revolutionary movements (including the Renaissance) one comes across the endorsement to individuality. In fact, in 1877, this was seen by Albert Hancock as the single defining characteristic of the English Romantic poets:

The Romantic Movement then means the revolt of a group of contemporary poets who wrote, not according to common or doctrinaire standards, but as they individually pleased... there are no principles comprehensive and common to all except those of individualism and revolt.

(in Rieder, John. *Wordsworth and Romanticism in the Academy*, In Favret, Mary, 1994:29)

So what did the Romantics, as individuals, purportedly rebel against? According to *The Concise Oxford Companion to English Literature* (1990), Romanticism is identifiable in its representing "an unending revolt against classical forms, conservative morality, and human moderation" (484), and C.E. Vaughan defined in the Romantic rebellion the "revolt from the purely intellectual view of men's nature, that recognition of the rights of the emotions, the instincts, the passions..." (in Rieder, John, In Favret, 1994:29).

Classical, conservative, intellectual — the act of rebellion is an effort against constraints, against boundaries, which is why it is often tied to notions of excess and freedom, which so often run contrary to the ideals of traditions reenacted in ritualistic repetition. But why do some defy, where others comply? Why are some subservient to tradition, whereas others demand transformation? What is it which brings about change? Why, for example, have the San people of South Africa remained unchanged for some twenty thousand years, whereas in the contemporary western world, the distance between parents and their very own children has become so vast, and is so commonplace, that a cliché — the "generation gap" — has been invented to describe it? This is the central question of this paper which, I admit in advance, I remain unable to answer.

The dual aspects of destruction and creation housed within the term "rebellion", highlight the moment of refusal necessary for revolution, the spark which rejects what has gone before. This refusal must be directed towards authority, since one cannot rebel against those one perceives as having less power than oneself. (An exercise of force on those less powerful than oneself is tyranny, not rebellion.) So, in order for rebellion to be possible, one must undermine that which claims to have power over one, which one, indeed, recognises as powerful in the very act of speaking out against it. Each act of rebellion, then, requires a particular premise, or command, which it refuses to validate. For rebellion, one does not of necessity require principles, only discontent. One need not have necessarily formulated a particular policy, but one needs must know one's enemy. This is the spirit of revolution — the rejection of forefathers.

This is why truly revolutionary movements cannot indefinitely sustain their revolutionary principles, since sooner or later a synthesis is formed and the dialectical procedure begins anew. So revolutionary movements must either conform to their own internal order and form a tradition, as each of these three movements under investigation have done in varying ways, or they must burn themselves out, which is what the Futurists, the Dadaists and the Punks achieved so effectively.

Let us turn to a few other hallmarks of the Romantic era. Its leading spokesman in England was undoubtedly William Wordsworth, who set the trend with his The Preface to the Lyrical Ballads (1800), in which his rallying cry concerns the rediscovery of the truth of feeling over thinking, and imagination over reason. First and foremost, in order to facilitate this move, he favours the individual above the group, and so the notion of the "Romantic genius" is born. Keats praises the "egotistical sublime" which enables Wordsworth's creations to bear the mark of genius, and there is an incredibly strong emphasis here on Wordsworth's "self" existing as a unique and separate creature.

The notion of individuality is important here, and it is this which ties the Romantics (or the act of rebellion itself, for that matter), to the Surrealists, whose theoretical ground rules were laid by Andre Breton. Breton writes in a tract called Revolution Now and Forever (1925), that "the idea of revolution is the best and most effective safeguard of the individual" (1978: 320). Breton and the Surrealists rebelled not only against a specific group, but against the very notion of grouping, and they vehemently proclaim to oppose, according to David Gascoyne, (one of the few English surrealists), "bourgeois society... religion, patriotism and the idea of the family" (1935: 135). Breton even goes as far as to declaim that they "are disgusted by the idea of belonging to a country at all" (1978: 318). In this statement, their rebellion is stated in its purest form, and borders on outright anarchism.

Andre Breton's revolution is similar to that proposed by Wordsworth, in that he too rebels against the notion of rational judgement. Breton also maintains a version of the "negative capability" Keats ascribes to Wordsworth — the ability to hold "uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (letter quoted in The Concise Oxford Companion to English Literature: 393), which sounds remarkably similar to Breton's notion of marvelling at disparate

juxtapositions without requiring reasonable justification of one's delight.

Breton was undoubtedly a forceful and charismatic leader, and the Surrealist group was formed and shaped by his powerful personal charisma, perhaps more so than by the ideas he advocated. So, paradoxically, the most ideological of the three movements, the one which desired the most complete liberation of the mind from all authoritative constraints, depended most on the demands of one individual. Even though he insisted on a total rebellion against all authority, he nevertheless insisted that his own supremacy as leader of the Surrealists be maintained. Over the years, those closest to him, who were part of the initial founding of the Surrealist group, including Philippe Soupault, Louis Aragon and Paul Eluard, were tried, judged, and ostracised by Breton for what appears to be nothing less than asserting their individuality.

Where Romanticism and Surrealism are unashamedly ideological, and focus the brunt of their attack on the liberation of the imagination, Marx roots his discourse, as has been mentioned, in the material nature of existence. The materialistic revolution envisioned by Marx, however, only occurred decades after his death, and the revolution eventually took place because of the forcefulness of his ideas, his texts, rather than as a result of his personal magnetism and charm, as may, perhaps, have been the case with Breton. In this sense, Marx's materialistic philosophy is the most ideological of all, since it is housed entirely in ideas, and not in any manifestation of personality or physical presence.

Perhaps the greatest difference between Marxism and the other movements discussed here, is that Marx is not primarily preoccupied with literature as such.* However, as the other two movements also have political implications (democracy in the case of Romanticism and anarchism in the case of Surrealism), so too Marx's thesis contains implied suggestions for literary production, though these have not always been consistently interpreted. His theoretical justifications are also the most explicitly rational of the three, and his justification for rebellion lies in, what Bertrand Russell calls his "rational formula summing up the evolution of mankind" (1991: 748). Marx also has the most easily identifiable enemy — the bourgeoisie; and his goal is the most direct — the liberation and eventual rule of the proletariat. And yet, even though his thesis is rooted so firmly in the material, it does seem that, ironically, his descriptions of the ideally human worker seem similar to the Romantic relationship between the artist and his art, in that it becomes a uniquely individual gesture. Take for example the following passage in which he puts himself in the position of the creative, and therefore human, labourer on the completion of a task:

I would have... objectified in my production my individuality and its peculiarity and thus both in my activity enjoyed an individual expression of my life and also in looking at

* Although, if we are to believe Breton, Surrealism is also concerned more specifically with the mind than art, when he states, for example that they are "not precisely artists" but rather "Cavir". (In Polizotti: 307), and somewhat less obscurely, "Surrealism is not a poetic form, it is a cry of the mind, turning back on itself... determined to break apart its fetters" (Declaration of January, 27, 1925 In Nadeau: 244).

the object have had the individual pleasure of realizing that my personality was objective... our products would be like so many mirrors out of which our essence shone. (In Wiser, 1983:355)

Curiously, the one area in which Marx's philosophy is similar to that of Wordsworth and Breton, is that he bases much of his attack, his rebellion, the reason for his resistance, on damages wrought to the individual. In his description, the responsibility for this damage is due not to a particular group of people necessarily, but to a style of human relationships, dominated by capital. For example, part of his complaint about the industrial revolution is that it destroyed "all individual character" of work for the proletariat, whose work consequently "lost all charm", since it reduced the worker to "an appendage of a machine" (*Communist Manifesto* (1848) In Rius, 1998:114). Marx's justification for rebellion rests precisely in the individual's having been made powerless by capitalism, and that exchange value negates all individuality (In *Readings from Karl Marx*, 1989:61), and he claims that, in a free market economy, "It is not individuals, but capital that establishes itself freely" (151):

This kind of individual liberty is thus at the same time the most complete suppression of all individual liberty and total subjugation of individuality to social conditions which take the form of material forces.

(*Marx's Grundrisse*, 1973:153).

And yet, Marx's theories are essentially about groups, about classes, and he never suggests an easy solution by empowering the individual. As in Hegel's philosophy, the group is always more important than the individual. An uneasy tension is then created between Marx's valorisation of both particular individuals in the proletarian class, and the strength of the unified class as a whole.

In every one of these rebellions, it seems that sooner or later, the struggle between individual and group is at stake. But is this not perhaps what lies at the root of the revolutionary spirit itself — the desire of an individual person to assert themselves, to refuse to comply? It does seem ironic that all those joining the instigators of these revolutions inadvertently sacrifice part of their own liberty in agreeing with and supporting the leader they have chosen as their own, and this summarises one of the paradoxes which beset revolutionary movements — one often sacrifices one's individuality in the hope of attaining it.

There are also other uneasy contradictions and tensions beneath all three of these movements' revolutionary claims. For example, in *The Preface to the Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth calls for a return to everyday language, the "very language of men" (1988:109), yet his own poetry is surely far from the language of uneducated laymen, or "workers" if you will, and his aesthetic preoccupations are evident throughout. Andre Breton, for his part, produces endless rational arguments in defence of irrationality. And Marx, ultimately, sanctions the proletarian state over and above the individual, based on his defence of the very same individuals.

So it seems that each revolutionary idea, in some way nurtures precisely what it opposes. Perhaps, in distancing oneself from a notion in such explicit terms, as required by revolutions, it is

impossible not to incorporate the very ideas one kicks against, since one is forced to manifest these ideas by expressing one's distaste for them. Language creates meaning, and there is no such thing as negative meaning. What one might hope to mean by such an expression is rather the act of forgetting.

In Plato's *Phaedo*, Socrates refers to exactly this curious behaviour of opposites, in that they are invariably compelled to operate on the same continuum. For example, he states that the opposites of pleasure and pain are connected, and states:

They will never come to a man both at once, but if you pursue one of them and catch it, you are nearly always compelled to have the other as well. They are like two bodies attached to the same head. (1978:102).

Revolutionary movements, operating as they do in terms of opposition, inevitably set up bipolar systems which favour what they advocate above what they decrie, such as imagination/reason, proletariat/bourgeoisie, and individual/group. Part of the practise of Postmodernism is to diffuse these very bipolarities in which so much meaning is invested. Yet in subsuming these bipolarities, in investigating what each attempts to push to the boundaries of meaning, Postmodernism also inadvertently denies the possibility of revolution.

By toying with parody, irony, and pastiche as it playfully reflects the past, Postmodernism also abrogates its right to insist on one judgement over another. I believe that Postmodernism contains more than a fair measure of Pyrrhic skepticism, since it denies all foundational and absolute truths, and since all hierarchies are questionable, there is no reason to pursue either one or the other of bipolar creations.

Postmodern writers have also come to break down the tensions existing between the distinctions of artist and academic, with which I began this paper. One finds that many trading (with their consent or not) under the postmodern label, such as Julia Kristeva, Ihab Hassan, and Jacques Lacan, write creatively, even lyrically, of philosophy "serious" subject of cultural maintenance, and they certainly seem to regard themselves as being actively involved in the process of creating meaning, and not simply in maintaining it. They are purveyors as well as preservers.

Works Cited

- Breton, Andre. *What is Surrealism? Selected Writings*. Franklin Rosemont (ed). 1978. London: Pluto Press.
- Drabble, Margaret & Stringer, Jenny (eds). 1992. *The Concise Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Favret, Mary A. & Watson, Nocila J. (eds.) 1994. *At the Limits of Romanticism: Essays in Cultural, Feminist and Materialist Criticism*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Gascoyne, David. 1970. *A Short Survey of Surrealism*. London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.
- Marx, Karl. 1973. *Marx's Grundrisse*. Translated and Edited by David McLellan. Suffolk: Paladine.

Marx, Karl. 1989. *Readings from Karl Marx*. Derek Sayer (ed). London: Routledge.
 Nadeau, Maurice. 1987 [1994]. *The History of Surrealism*. London: Platin Publishers.
 Peckham, Morse. 1970. *Toward a Theory of Romanticism*. In Cleckner, Robert F. & Enscoe, Gerald E. (eds.) *Romanticism: Points of View*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
 Polizzotti, Mark. 1995. *Revolution of the Mind: The Life of Andre Breton*. London: Bloomsbury.
 Rius, Rius. 1998 [1978]. *Introducing Marx*. Cambridge: Icon Books.
 Russell, Bertrand. 1991 [1946]. *History of Western Philosophy*. London: Routledge.
 Tredennick, Hugh (trans. & ed.). 1978 [1954]. *The Last Days of Socrates*. Middlesex: Penguin Books.
 Wisner, James L. 1983. *Political Philosophy: A History of the Search for Order*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
 Wordsworth, William. 1988 [1800]. Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. In Maxwell-Mahon, W. D. (ed) *Critical Texts: Plato to the Present Day*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Книга, на столетие опередившая время

Феликс Кузнецов
 Институт мировой литературы им. Горького РАН

Когда Шолохов написал первые две книги «Тихого Дона», ему было 23 года. Двадцать три! ..

Случилось чудо: вслед за Есениным, а если обернуться вспять, вслед за Пушкиным и Лермонтовым — и в смысле возраста также — в русскую литературу пришел гений. И пришел он из самой что ни на есть глубины vzdыblенной революции России, из Лалекой и глухой донской станицы — полторы сотни верст до железной дороги, без образования, без связей и рекомендаций, мальчиком. О, эти — впомним Достоевского! — русские мальчишки! ..

«Несколько месяцев назад объявился у нас гениальный юноша (я взвешиваю эти слова) ... Ему 22 года. И он видел уже жизнь! Как там умеет он в такие годы увидеть — диво дивное. Люди говорят: «предвидение», другие — «подознание». Ну там «пред» или «под», а дело в том, что это диво — дивное за год таких шедевров наворотило, что только Бога слава да Русь-матушку! ..» Это о Леониде Леонове пишет духовный руководитель Третьяковской галереи, живописец и собиратель русской живописи Илларион Семенович Остроухов. И кому — федору Ивановичу Шляпину за границу в 1921 году.

Автор «Тихого Дона», а перед этим двух книг рассказов — в 23 года! .. Как говорится, без университетского образования. Из самой что ни на есть простой (мать не умела даже читать!), народной семьи! .. В это было трудно, невозможно поверить! .. И одновременно с чудом, а в какой-то степени именно по причине уникальной молодости автора пришла беда. О сути этой беды с пронизительной точностью сказал норвежский исследователь, подвигший роман «Тихий Дон» компьютерному исследованию, Геир Хьегто:

«... Обвинение, предъявленное Шолохову, можно считать уникальным; этот автор в такой степени является предметом национальной гордости, что бросить тень сомнения на полноту его главного произведения, «Иллады» нашего века, — значит совершить деяние, близкое к святотатству».

И это святотатство было совершено. Слухи о том, что «Тихий Дон» написал кто-то

当代欧洲文学 纵横谈

——北京大学“欧洲文学与
文学史”国际研讨会论文和
发言汇编

Collected Essays and Speeches Contributed to
The International Conference on European Literature
and Literary History at Peking University

北京大学外国语学院
北京大学欧美文学中心
《欧洲文学史》编委会

School of Foreign Languages and Literatures of
Peking University

Center for Studies of European and American
Literatures of Peking University

Editorial Board of *The History of European Litera-*
tures

主编：刘意青 罗 芃

民族出版社
The Ethnic Publishing House