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“Western Marxism” in Mao’s China

ZENG Jun, WANG Yichen

Abstract: China’s reception of “Western Marxism” is a critical part of the global history of Marxism. This paper examines three aspects of the reception of Western Marxism in literary and art criticism during the early years of Mao’s China (1949–65): the Western Marxist critique of surrealism, debates over Marx’s *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, and Sartrean existentialism and Western Marxism. The impacts of Western Marxist literary thought upon Chinese literary studies during the early years of the PRC are discussed, along with the extensive influx of Western Marxism that began in the reform era of post-Mao China (1978–) as a renewal of the early exchanges that were disrupted during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76).

Western Marxism entered China nearly a century ago. It has been a part of the formation and development of Chinese Marxism as a “Western contemporary” (Liu, Aesthetics). The reception of Western Marxism began with Chinese translations of some Western Marxist writings in the 1930s. These writings widely spread during a period after the establishment of PRC in 1949, and gained immense popularity during the reform era (1978–present). The academic exchange between China and the West is a reciprocal process including “the eastward journey of Western studies” and “the westward journey of Chinese studies”, in which questions arising from both of the source contexts are also transferred to the target contexts through modification, transmutation, and appropriation. Hence, when it comes to the issue of Western Marxism’s reception in China, we should regard Western Marxism as an “intrinsic other” rather than an extrinsic one. As Liu Kang (刘康) remarks, “‘The Chinese Questions of Western theories’ study in China is both extraneous and immanent in terms of its objects and methodology. Though extraneous to China, Western theories and the questions ensued, once appropriated and transformed in China, can turn into intrinsic ones in the history of China’s academic thought” (“The China Question”). This paper reviews the reception of Western Marxism during the early years of the Mao era (1949–1965). In particular, this paper examines how these Western theories were interpreted (even “misread”) with regard to “the Chinese Questions”, and how they impact the construction of the Chinese knowledge system of literary theories.

1. “The Eastward Journey of Western Marxism” under the International Communist Movement

The global transformation of Marxism in the 20th century represents a worldwide atlas of “Marxism after Marx” (McLellan, Marxism). The coexistence of Western, Soviet, and Chinese Marxism provided the historical moment for “the Eastward Journey of Western Marxism” (西马东渐). Western Marxism is an indispensable branch of Marxism in the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe and North America. The post-WWI failures of the Bolshevik revolutions in some Western European countries triggered critical reflections on classical Marxism by Lukács, Gramsci, Korsch, and their like, thus opening up the early stage of critical theory that targeted advanced capitalism. The critique theorists were convinced that it was the weak revolutionary consciousness of people (or citizens) under capitalism that led to the failures. Early Western Marxists, therefore, “inverted the trajectory of Marx’s development,” and focused more on academic achievements by “increasingly turning back from economics and politics to philosophy” (Anderson, Considerations 52). Meanwhile, the tradition of Classical Marxism focusing on revolutionary practice in Soviet Russia, China and other regions. After the victory of Russian October Revolution, Chinese intellectuals were greatly encouraged in their struggle for national salvation and Marxism began to widely spread in China. Thus, Soviet Russia became a critical pivot for the transmission of Marxism in China.

Despite the fact that Chinese Marxism (a.k.a. Maoism), Soviet Marxism (Leninism-Stalinism), and Western Marxism all originated from the same source of classical Marxism, they took different paths corresponding to their historical, political, and social circumstances. Meanwhile, World War II, the ensuing Cold War and the contestations and cooperation among China, Soviet and Euro-America opened up an intricate period for global Marxism. What is particularly noteworthy here are as follows: the “two Marx” dispute between Western and Soviet Marxists regarding Marx’s *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*; Western Marxism’s (including Eastern European Marxism) critique of Soviet Marxist orthodoxy in the aftermath of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU); and lastly, the evolvement of the Sino-Soviet relationship from its earlier “honeymoon” to the ruptures and breakdown of the 1960s. These factors all laid the ideological background of “the Eastward Journey of Western Marxism.”

Three features in the Chinese reception of Western Marxist literary theory deserve attention: Firstly, Russian translations as mediation. Many Chinese translations of Western Marxist theory were retranslated from Russian translations, and the Russian prefaces often constituted standpoints or benchmarks for Chinese scholars to comment on Western Marxist theory. For some untranslated Western Marxist texts, Chinese scholars could only derive second-hand impressions from works of Soviet scholars. Moreover, as Soviet Marxist doctrines have been diffused in Eastern European satellite states, some crucial viewpoints and comments of Hungarian and East German critics

can be traced back to the Soviets, such as the critique of Lukács. As a result, “the Soviet influence” is an important factor in understanding the early reception of Western Marxism during the Mao era.

The second feature is the direct translation from the source languages. For example, Garaudy’s *Kafka and the Prague Spring* was translated from *Revue de littérature française* (“Kafka”). Indirect translation of translations also occurred. Translations of articles and reviews by European, American, and Asian scholars were published on “classified journals” with restricted circulation, such as *Modern Literary and Cultural Theory Translations* issued by the Institute of Literature of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and *Digest of Foreign Social Sciences* by the Federation of Shanghai Societies for Philosophy and Social Sciences. Their style of writing and narrative were often less bellicose, but more scholarly and analytical in tone than those written under the Soviet influence. Usually, an “editorial note” was added to these articles as a disclaimer (for further criticism only), cautioning the readers of their “bourgeois tendencies.” For example, a book review written by David Thoreau Wieck published in a special issue on existentialism in *Digest of Foreign Social Sciences*, summarizes the aesthetic features of the philosophy (Wieck, “An Existentialist Aesthetic”).

Finally, the third feature is the extensive coverage of leading scholars in the International communist movement, socialist sympathizers, and left-wing ideological-leaning intellectuals in Western Europe and North America, as they are considered as part of the “international united front”. For example, Antonio Gramsci primarily appeared in China as an outstanding revolutionary leader of the PCI (Partito Comunista Italiano), while Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir were invited to visit China in 1955 as “socialist fellow-travelers”, and the “Brecht fever” in 1959 was triggered by the 10th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the PRC and East Germany (or the DDR; Deutsche Demokratische Republik).

It should be noted that the “Eastward Journey” occurred even earlier than the early years of the Mao era.. For example, according to some accounts, reception of Bertolt Brecht’s works began as early as 1929 (Yu, “Brecht Studies”). Almost at the same time, Lukács’s name appeared in Chinese translations and scholarly works: For example, Zhang Siwei(张斯伟)’s translation of *Philosophy and Marxism* written by Soviet philosopher Abram Moiseevich Deborin offered a detailed introduction to Lukács and his *History and Class Consciousness* in Chapter 6 (Deborin, Philosophy). In the mid-1930s, the July School represented by Hu Feng also started to take in Lukács’s points. In addition, *Art Style* (艺风) published a translation of Sartre’s short story “The Wall” as an “anti-fascist” work in 1940 (Sartre, “The Three Men”).

2. The Academic Map of the “Eastward Journey of Western Marxism” in Mao’s

China

An academic map of “the Eastward Journey of Western Marxism” can be sketched based on the timeline of Western Marxist works’ entering China and on the Chinese scholars’ focus on the key texts and questions arising from them:

Time	Nationality	Theorist	Recipient/Translator (Translation Agency)	Key Text	Key Question
1929– (1952–)	Germany	Bertolt Brecht	HUANG Zuolin (黄佐临)	<i>Discursive Talk on the Ideas of Theatre</i>	Debates on the “ideas of theatre”
1930– (1953–)	Hungary	György Lukács	HU Feng (胡风)	<i>Tolstoy and the Development of Realism</i>	Criticism of “irrelevance between world views and methods of creation”
1953–	Italy	Antonio Gramsci	<i>People’s Daily</i> (《人民日报》)	<i>Gramsci, Founder of the Communist Party of Italy</i>	The international united front
1940– (1949–)	France	Jean-Paul Sartre		<i>Mes impressions sur la Chine nouvelle</i>	
1957–	France	Henri Lefebvre	ZHU Guangqian (朱光潜)	<i>Contribution à l’esthétique</i>	Construction of Marxist aesthetics
1958–	France	Roger Garaudy	LUO Dagang (罗大冈)	<i>D’ un réalisme sans rivage</i>	Criticism of “limitless realism”
1958–	France	Maurice Merleau-Ponty	The Group of Western Philosophy History, Institute of Philosophy, Chinese Academy of Sciences (中国科学院)	<i>Existentialism</i>	Criticism of Bourgeois philosophy (Existentialism)

			哲学研究所西方哲学史组)		
1958–	Britain	Cristopher Caudwell	ZHU Guangqian (朱光潜)	<i>On Caudwell's "Beauty"</i>	Discussions on the nature of beauty
1961–	Germany	Erich Fromm	QIU Hui, TU Jiliang (translators) (裘辉、涂纪亮)	<i>Marx's Concept of Man</i>	Criticism of bourgeois humanism, and theory of human nature
1963–	Austria	Ernst Fischer	ZHENG Kelu (trans) (郑克鲁)	<i>Das Problem der Wirklichkeit in der modernen Kunst</i> (<i>Realistic Problem in Modern Art</i>)	Criticism of "limitless realism"
1963–	Germany	Walter Benjamin	ZHENG Kelu (trans) (郑克鲁)	<i>Das Problem der Wirklichkeit in der modernen Kunst</i> (<i>Realistic Problem in Modern Art</i>)	Artists and representation
1963–	Yugoslavia	Predrag Vranicki	HU Wenjian et al (trans) (胡文建, 等)	<i>Historija Marksizma</i>	"Internal references"
1963–	Poland	Adam Schaff	LIN Bo et al (trans) (林波, 等)	<i>Filozofia Człwieka Marksizm a Egzystencjalizm</i>	"Internal references" for humanist issues

1963–	Germany	Herbert Marcuse	LIU Lei (trans) (刘磊)	<i>Interpretations of “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844” in Social Democrats and Bourgeois Literature</i>	Humanist interpretation and criticism of <i>Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844</i>
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Brecht’s literary works and drama theory began to sporadically spread in China after the founding of the PRC and, as abovementioned, induced a “Brecht fever” during the 10th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the PRC and East Germany in 1959. Some of Brecht’s poems and dramas were published as *Selected Works of Brecht* (Selected Works). In the same year, Huang Zuolin (黄佐临) ’s *The German Dramatist Brecht* systematically introduced Brecht’s writing experience and drama theory: “Those who fail to study Stanislavski well may be inclined to naturalism; if you merely add percussions and vernacular dialogues to classical Chinese opera, it could hardly do better than tradition. It now reminds me of Brecht. Is it possible to gain inspiration from him?” (“German Dramatist”157–173). Apparently Huang Zuolin was pondering about stripping down, via Brecht, the straitjacket to Chinese theatre imposed by the Soviet Stanislavski theory. In 1962, Huang underscored Brecht’s “alienation effect” to revive the Chinese tradition of *xieyi* (expressive) dramaturgy as a way to renovate Chinese theatre. (“Debates on”). Chinese scholars then engaged in heated discussions on dramaturgy with increased interest in Brecht. Huang’s interpretation is strategic, for it challenged the Stanislavski system, a mouthpiece for socialist realism, whereas Brechtian “alienation effect” smacked of formalistic expressionism. In part, he took advantage of Brecht’s title of “realist master” to consolidate his vision that “Brecht must be in the flip side of bourgeois idealist art,” while he also saw the formalist mode as a way to rejuvenate *xieyi* (expressive) tradition of Chinese dramaturgy.

Unlike Brecht, who was positively received, Lukács was always the target of heavy criticism in Mao’s China. However, it was these criticisms that allowed Lukács’ works to be available “for further criticism only.” *The Index to Literature on the Revisionist Lukács* (1960) not only listed Lukács’ main corpus in English, German, Russian, and Chinese but also classified them in four divisions of philosophy, politics/society, aesthetics, and literature. Such detailed indices show a systematic study of Lukács in the 1960s, with a broad international scope (The Index). Realism has always been the focal point of China’s critique of Lukács. In 1964, Yi Qun (以群) mentioned Lukács’ *Tolstoy and the Development of Realism* in the authoritative Chinese textbook he edited, *The Basic Principles of Literature*, disparaging Lukács’ “absurd

conclusion that *Weltanschauung* does not matter in creative methods”, as Lukacs cited Balzac and Tolstoy as examples to prove that “reactionary *Weltanschauung* of great realist writers do not inhibit them from depicting social reality in a comprehensive, correct and objective way” (Yi, *The Basic Principles* 241). Lukacs’s view of the irrelevance between the world view and creation is apparently at odds with the doctrine of socialist realism. The attack on Lukacs, now in hindsight, is a critical move for the canonization of socialist realism in the early years of the PRC.

Gramsci’s works were partly translated in the first few years, although his literary thought and aesthetic ideas failed to be appreciated sufficiently, and he was considered primarily as an Italian Communist Party (PCI) leader in the Chinese account of the PCI history or his biographies. On the 20th anniversary of Gramsci’s death in 1957 (“Italian people”), the *People’s Daily* in an eulogy mentioned his *Prison Notebooks* and praised him for “revealing new, Marxist insights into the history of Italy,” adding that “*Prison Notebooks* and his ‘prison correspondences’ have great implications for theoretical education and literature” (Hu, “Gramsci”). Of even greater concern is the review of Gramsci in Vranicki’s *The History of Marxism (Historija Marksizma)*, which showed interests in Gramsci’s theory. Vranicki gave an overview of Gramsci’s revision of classical Marxism in terms of politics, philosophy, literature, and art, with high regard of his literary thought (The History 402–415).

As a leading figure of Existentialist Marxism, Jean-Paul Sartre and his partner Simone de Beauvoir were invited to visit the Soviet Union in 1954, and by the Chinese government to visit China the next year. After the visit to China, Sartre wrote *Mes impressions sur la Chine nouvelle (My Impressions on New China)*, which was published in *People’s Daily* on November 2, 1955, and discussed practical issues such as the construction of the PRC, the reform of the writing system, and the writers’ ideological remolding (Zeng, “Mao Zedong Aesthetics”). As noted by Liu Mingjiu (柳鸣九), however, Sartre “remains skeptical and vigilant” in ideology and thinking, and thus has still been sought for joining the “international united front”. (Collected Works 553). Sartre’s symbolic identity as a socialist was larger than being an existentialist philosopher. Qian Gurong (钱谷融) comments that Sartre had “deviated from the original stand and merged himself into the camp of socialist realism” since he was a “humanist” and “they (humanists) love people and life after all” (“On ‘Literature is About Humanity’”). Translation of his works in Mao’s China touched on philosophy, literary creation, and literary theory, although at the same time, whether Sartre was an existentialist or a Marxist also sparked controversy. Some insisted that Sartre was “peddling bourgeois ideology under the guise of Marxism” (Xu, “Translator’s Preface” iii).

Henri Lefebvre, who is known in China for the theory of space, has also attracted attention in the early years of the PRC. His *Contribution to Aesthetics* was added in

1957 as a supplement to the framed, nationwide “aesthetic debate” (1956-63) . The most significant part of this book is its 2nd chapter, *Aesthetics of Marx and Engels (Marx et Engels sur l'esthétique)*, which explicates Marxist aesthetics on the basis of *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 (Contribution to Aesthetics)*. This was the earliest Chinese reception of young Marx's *1844 Manuscripts* in the early years of New China. Zhu Guangqian (朱光潜) cited Lefebvre's *Contribution to Aesthetics* (Zhu, “Beauty”). And in 1960, Zhu expounded rather formally Marx's aesthetic thought in the *1844 Manuscripts* (Xia, “Young Marx”). Of course, the extent to which Zhu Guangqian was influenced by Lefebvre needs further scrutiny. Lefebvre's “Revolutionary Romantics,” which critiques dogmatic tendencies in socialist realism, was also introduced into China via translation of some Soviet criticism (Polev, “Against Revisionism” 198–224).

Roger Garaudy's impact on Chinese literary theory and aesthetics mainly manifests in two aspects. One is the theory of “realism without borders” in his *D'un Réalisme Sans Rivages (Realism without Borders)* published in 1963. This “revisionist” publication stoked criticism from the Soviet bloc. Nevertheless, China had a lukewarm response. A paper by the critic Luo Dagang (罗大冈), and an editorial note of an article in *Modern Literary and Cultural Theory Translations* mentioned Garaudy's name. The Chinese find “without borders” rather problematic, suspecting that Garaudy's true intention was to expand realism to include modernist techniques in order to instill new life to the petrified mode of realism.

The other aspect was Garaudy's interpretation of “alienation”. His “On Alienation” (De l'aliénation) depicted Marxism on the basis of “human” in the first chapter of *The Humanism of Marxism (Humanisme Marxiste)*. It not only manifested the humanist value in Western Marxism, but acquainted Chinese scholars with the ideological and philosophical value of Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (The Humanism). Similar views on realism by Ernst Fischer, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Austria, were also translated into Chinese along with the translation of *D'un Réalisme Sans Rivages (Realism without Borders)*. Fischer believed that in contemporary alienated capitalist society, “Neorealism” represented by Franz Kafka, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce have great artistic value. It is also noteworthy that he quoted Walter Benjamin in *Das Problem der Wirklichkeit in der modernen Kunst (Realistic Problem in Modern Art)* in his argument of the loss of artist's historical consciousness in capitalist society, and art becoming the object of suspicion.

Chinese scholars came to know Merleau-Ponty's existentialist treatise *Phenomenology of Perception* (The Main 270–311) through Garaudy's critique of modern French philosophies. Because of the international united front, the Chinese were somewhat soft on Sartre. However, assaults on Merleau-Ponty's “bourgeois,

reactionary, and idealist” existentialism showcase the Chinese position in early years of Mao’s China. While Merleau-Ponty’s aesthetic theory were mentioned (“Eye and Mind”), what Chinese scholars emphasized is still philosophy: For example, *Philosophy of Existentialism*(1963) included some passages from Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception* and *Adventures of the Dialectic*. It should be noted that a chapter of *Adventures of the Dialectic*, “Western” Marxism”, was included. Merleau-Ponty’ touted Lukács’ innovation in Marxism in *History and Class Consciousness* (The Group of Western Philosophy History, Existentialism). Probably from this time on, the Chinese began to recognize the notion of “Western Marxism”.

In early PRC years, Marxist theories from Eastern European Soviet bloc were well received. However, unlike the current research on “Eastern European Neo-Marxism”, these Eastern European theories by then were not considered as a separate system of thought. Two works deserve attention: first, *The History of Marxism* by Yugoslavia Predrag Vranicki’s. Its narrative covers classical Marxism to global Marxist variations till the mid-20th century, thus breaking the lineal, antagonistic Soviet model. And Chinese scholars could probably learn from it a novel perspective on global dissemination of Marxism. The second *The Philosophy of Man: Marxism and Existentialism (Filozofia Człwieka Marksizm a Egzystencjalizm)* was written by A Schaff from Poland . It critiques the Soviet dogma of Marxism, drawing on existentialist views on humanity. (Schaff, *The Philosophy*).

As young Marx’s *1844 Manuscripts* and its Soviet studies were translated and aroused interests in China in the 1960s, a few western Marxist works, though under attack by the Soviets, came to China obliquely. In 1963, *Research on Marx’s Early Thoughts* excerpted the Soviet scholar Le Bajtnov’s essay “Economics-Philosophy Manuscript (1844)”, vehemently attacking “distortions” by Social Democrats and bourgeoisie such as Marcuse and Bloch (Adorno was also cursorily mentioned) of what young Marx meant in his *Manuscripts* (“Economics-Philosophy”) . The attention to *the 1844 Manuscripts* coincided with the Chinese critique of “humanism” at the time: “In the struggle against capitalism and modern revisionism, humanism as a theoretical concern was extensively discussed in both capitalist and socialist countries after WW II” (Research Materials). In such international context as well as the domestic debates (for example, “literature is about humanity”), “humanism” became antithetical to the class struggle and the CCP leadership. Chinese Marxists also took note of Erich Fromm’s two papers interpreting Marxist Anthropology on *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* through translations of materials “for further critiques”. In brief, although humanist tendencies in western Marxism was not quite recognized then, ideas of humanistic Marxism were then disseminated among Chinese scholars, and eventually paved the way for the 1980s conversations on western Marxism through reconsiderations of the *1844 Manuscripts*.

3. Western Marxism and Literary Discourse in Early Mao's China

As Feng Xianguang(冯宪光) observes, “Chinese academics then hardly took Western Marxism as a separate school of thought” (Western Marxist 202). And a loose consensus only took shape in the 1980s. Henceforth, we find it highly desirable to adopt a retrospective approach to deciphering the impact of Western Marxism on then China's literary discourse. Our focus will be on the ways by which Chinese literary theorists encounter, interpret, and relate Western Marxists to China Questions, as Liu Kang put it (“Chinese Encounters”).

Western Marxism came largely as a second-hand translation via the Russians. Such a mediated approach has brought about three drawbacks: Firstly, Chinese academics tended to mistake Russians' critique for the original thought of Western Marxists. With Russians' initial filtering and screening, Chinese scholars could at best access some excerpts from the original works, which has practically restricted Chinese understanding of Western Marxism. There was a time when they knew almost no other Western Marxists than Bertolt Brecht and György Lukács. Secondly, Chinese scholars felt increasingly disoriented by the diametrically opposed evaluations of the same theorist by Western and Russian critics. For instance, whereas the Yugoslavia critic Predrag Vranicki suggested in his *Historija Marksizma* that Ernst Bloch's concern about humanity “genuinely echoes Marx's humanist thought” (The History 527), the Russians insisted that “Bloch's view is absolutely incompatible with the Marxist-Leninist theory” (“Economics-Philosophy” 92). And thirdly, studies of Western Marxism were under the full sway of Sino-Soviet relations. This is evidenced by the “war of words (also known as Sino-Soviet Dispute) between the two communist giants in the early 1960s, vying for the ideological authority of the international communism. Ironically, the verbal conflict has prompted CCP to adopt a more relaxed attitude toward Western Marxists' critique of the Soviet's “dogmatic Marxism”. The publisher's notes to certain Western Marxists' works betrayed such subtle shifts. Take ASchaff's *Filozofia Człwieka* (Schaff, The Philosophy). Apart from summarizing the works' content, the Chinese editor in the editorial note only quoted the author, and commented that “in Poland, Stalinist errors aggravated the ‘crisis’...” Such a direct quotation without harsh critiques implies a more pragmatic approach towards Western Marxism on the part of Chinese scholars.

Western Marxism did contribute to literary criticism in early Mao's China, albeit as a theoretical Other subjected to critique. In other words, Chinese academics “sinicized” their Western contemporaries, in Liu Kang's parlance, largely through assaulting the latter. The treatment of György Lukács and Roger Garaudy epitomized such a paradox. Since Russian socialist realism was “touted as the first and foremost way of literary production in early Mao era” (Tao and He, A Study 93), other brands of

realism, such as Lukács' "socialist realism" and Garaudy's "realism without borders", have all come under attack. Ever since the beginning of Mao's China, literary theories of Western Marxism have been principally characterized as an antagonist and theoretical Other to China's literary criticism following Russian orthodoxy. Only a few Western Marxists were spared this fate. Bertolt Brecht, for one, received much acclaim from his Chinese counterparts, who, by drawing on his theatrical experiments, attempted to instill new life into their petrified mode of stage performance. As for Henri Lefebvre, the Chinese simply ignored him and his "revolutionary romanticism" (even though they themselves for a time debated on "revolutionary romanticism and revolutionary realism"). Sporadic translation of Western Marxism in early Mao era paved the way for its massive reception in the Reform and Opening Up era (1978-present). The early translations by and large covered three areas: realist poetics, interpretation of the *1844 Manuscripts*, and existentialist aesthetics mingled with Marxism. Taken together, these efforts have blazed the trail for latter studies.

From 1978 to 1982, four national symposiums on Marxist-Leninist literary theory were held, with the topics being respectively "Restore the Revolutionary Realist Tradition of Chinese Literature" (1978), "Study Humanity and Humanism under the Guidance of Marxism" (1980), "Marxism and the Artistic Law" (1981), and "Aesthetic Ideas in Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844" (1982) (Wu, "Review and Prospects" 384–396). In retrospect, these events resembled the Janus-faced god, looking both backward and forward, in a mixed bag of critique and praise. When they forfeited Russian dogmatism and took on such topics as realism, humanism and the *1844 Manuscripts*, Chinese academia were finally standing at the doorway on Western Marxism.

Academic interests coalesced apace. In 1979, the China Youth Arts Theatre staged "The Life of Galileo", paying tribute to Bertolt Brecht and setting off a nation-wide fever for modernist theater. 1980 witnessed the publication of *Marxism and Literary Criticism* by Terry Eagleton, and *Literary Essays of György Lukács*. These works opened the eyes of Chinese academia to literary form (by György Lukács), genetic structuralism (by Lucien Goldmann), decentered form (by Pierre Macherey), artistic aura (by Walter Benjamin), and epic theater (by Bertolt Brecht). The debate between Lukács and Brecht on realism and modernism also aroused a great deal of interests. Last but not the least, young Marx's *The 1844 Manuscripts* was widely studied, giving impetus to "practical aesthetics" of Li Zehou in the 1980s, serving as a rallying cry for the Cultural Reflection of the 1980s that critiqued, challenged, and rewrote much of the legacy of China's modernity as well as the Chinese tradition of the past millenniums.

Those literary theorists helped the Chinese gain a comprehensive view of Western Marxism. The 1980s is a historic decade of intermediary of Chinese and Western intellectual exchange. It has prepared Chinese academia for their future conversations

with their western contemporaries. Prior to the Reform and Opening up, Mao's China was largely closed off to the outside world. However, through the narrative of the traveling theory of Western Marxism that occurred during Mao era, we try to show that intellectual contacts, though sporadic and oftentimes contorted, had continued from time to time. China had not been completely isolated from the rest of the world, and it can never be. The story of the Chinese reception of Western Marxism is only one side of the global cultural phenomenon of the 'Red 1960s'" (He, Knowledge Profile 130). The other side of the story, namely, the export, reception, and impact of Chinese Marxist thoughts or Maoism in the West in roughly the same period that our story covers, from the 1950s to the 1970s, is as intellectually exciting as politically and socially revealing. Some of the papers in this special issue address the Westward Journey of Chinese Marxism, and its relationship to Eastward Journey of Western Marxism that our paper discusses is an important subject for further inquiry. The global cultural revolutions or upheavals of the 1960s set up the historical stage for the intellectual, social, and political movements in the following decades, with enduring impact on today's world. And China, being an integral and inseparable part of the world, had been a principal protagonist, commanding the limelight of the central stage of the 1960s, at least in ideological and cultural senses. As the spotlight on the global theater is once again cast on China now, the story of the both Eastward and Westward journeys of ideas, images, and speeches in the historical conjuncture about half a century ago needs be told and retold, heard and reheard.

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