

## THE IMPACT OF LITERARY TENDENCIES IN CHINA IN THE 1980S ON LU YAO'S WORKS: TRANSFER FROM THE "SCAR LITERATURE"

### ТО А «LITERATURE OF REFORM» ВПЛИВ ЛІТЕРАТУРНИХ ТЕНДЕНЦІЙ КИТАЮ 1980-Х РОКІВ НА ТВОРЧІСТЬ ЛУ ЯО: ПЕРЕХІД ВІД «ЛІТЕРАТУРИ ШРАМІВ» ДО «ЛІТЕРАТУРИ РЕФОРМ»

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The work of Lu Yao (路遥, real name – Wang Weiguo 王卫国, 1949–1992) had a significant impact on the development of realism in Chinese literature after the completion of the "Cultural revolution". A prominent figure among the Chinese realist writers, who worked in the vein of "Scar literature" and "Literature of reform". The defining trends in Chinese literature of the 1980s were the dominance of the "Scar literature" and a "Literature of reform", which personified trauma and the memory of the "Cultural revolution". The "Scar literature" and a "Literature of reform" were of great importance in shaping modern Chinese literature and were the first stage in the liberalization of literary policy in post-Mao China. Lu Yao's work marked the transition from the "Scar literature" to a "Literature of reform" which highlighted the social and moral changes in Chinese society in the 1980s. Lu Yao does not try to offer his "reform script", in his works as other writers tried to do; Lu Yao presents reforms as a difficult period of doubts, objections, losses instead, and, at the same time, the faith of the younger generation in a better future. Lu Yao's works based on the complex of psychological and social conflicts, the solution of which the characters are trying to find. At the same time, Lu Yao, as a writer with creative idea always tried to express social aspirations and moral values. The purpose of the proposed paper is to identify the literary trends of China in the 1980s in the work of Lu Yao, as well as to trace the features of the artistic world of Chinese realist writers of the second half of the twentieth century. The author's ability to create vivid characters is significantly for the success of a literary work. The latter requires special attention to reflect psychological conditions and mental experiences, so that the reader can feel the author's personal state of mind. Based on the analysis of Lu Yao's novel "The Ordinary World", we conclude that the author combines elements of various literary movements, particularly the "Scar literature" and a "Literature of reform", portray social conflicts and cultural identity of the Chinese nation through deep realism and detailed character studies.

**Key words:** China, Chinese literature, Chinese literature of the 1980s, contemporary Chinese literature, realism, "Scar literature", a "Literature of reform", "Search for roots literature", "Cultural revolution", Lu Yao's literary works.

Творчість Лу Яо (路遥, справжнє ім'я – Ван Вейго 王卫国, 1949–1992) здійснила значний вплив на розвиток реалізму в китайській літературі після завершення «культурної революції». Видатна постать серед китайських письменників-реалістів, яка працювала в дусі «літератури шрамів» та «літератури реформ». Визначальними тенденціями в літературі Китаю 1980-років було домінування «літератури шрамів» та «літератури реформ», які уособлювали травму та пам'ять про «культурну революцію». «Література шрамів» та «література реформ» мали велике значення на формування сучасної китайської літератури та були першим етапом лібералізації літературної політики в Китаї епоху після Мао. Творчість Лу Яо знаменувала собою перехід від «літератури шрамів» до «літератури реформ», яка висвітлювала соціальні та моральні зміни в китайському суспільстві 1980-х років. У своїх творах Лу Яо не намагається запропонувати свій «сценарій реформ», як це намагалися зробити інші письменники; натомість Лу Яо представляє реформи як складний період сумнівів, заперечень, втрат і, водночас, віри молодого покоління в краще майбутнє. Творчість Лу Яо заснована на складних психологічних і соціальних конфліктах, вирішення яких герої намагаються знайти. При цьому Лу Яо як письменник з власною творчою ідеєю завжди намагався висловити соціальні прагнення і моральні цінності. Метою запропонованої статті є виявлення літературних тенденцій Китаю 1980-років в творчості Лу Яо, а також простежити особливості художнього світу китайських письменників-реалістів другої половини ХХ століття. Успіх літературного твору багато в чому зумовлений майстерністю автора у створенні яскравих персонажів. Останні вимагають особливої уваги відображення психологічних станів і душевних переживань, завдяки чому читач здатний відчувати душевний стан самого автора. На основі аналізу романів Лу Яо «Звичайний світ» ми даємо висновок, що автор поєднує в собі елементи різних літературних течій, зокрема, «літератури шрамів» та «літератури реформ» – зображуючи соціальні конфлікти та культурну самосвідомість китайської нації за допомогою глибокого реалізму та детального опрацювання характерів.

**Ключові слова:** Китай, китайська література, китайська література 1980-х років, сучасна китайська література, реалізм, «література шрамів», «література реформ», «література пошуку коренів», «культурна революція», творчість Лу Яо.

**Problem Statement.** The dominant role in the literature of China in the 1980s was occupied by the "Scar literature", which has a great historical significance as the first stage in liberalizing China's

literary policy in the Post-Mao Era. For the previous three and a half decades, literature served as politics more than ever in China's long literary history. The persecution of writers during the "Anti-

Rightist Campaign" (1957–1958) and the "Cultural Revolution" (1966–1976) taught Chinese writers the fatal consequences they could face for portraying unflattering images of socialist society or for portraying humanistic principles or romantic love.

After the defeat of the "Gang of Four" and the end of the "Cultural Revolution" in 1976, the development of Chinese literature entered a new period, which used to be named as the Literature of the New Period. Due to rapid development and changes, a new aesthetic worldview, diverse literary phenomena, free literary polemics, and bright literary achievements, it demonstrates its unique style and has become an essential page in the history of the modern Chinese literature. Lu Yao was one of the most famous authors of this time, who was undoubtedly influenced by literary trends in the Post-Cultural Revolution period.

#### **Analyzing recent research and publications.**

The methodological basis of the paper are the works of such researchers as Wang Gang (王干), Liang Xiangyang (梁向阳), Wang Yu (王愚), Li Xing (李星), Ding Zeng'u (丁增武), Makoto Yasumoto, Ivan Semenist.

The Chinese critic Wang Gang (王干) expressed the view that modern literary history considers "Scar literature", "Reflexive literature", and "Literature of reforms" as three dyachronic literary directions of thought. It seems to be a constantly evolving literary process. By reading these works today, we discovered that the process is not linear; sometimes three of them come into contact with one another. Trauma literature and reflective literature, as short-lived literary currents, to a certain extent suppressed and liberated public discontent with national disasters and individual traumas. The next step is to face a new life again. The main aim of reforming literature, which is to replace scars and reflective literature, is based on time and is inevitable due to the history of that time. The spring wind of that time was experienced by Chinese writers, who employed literature to reflect the people's voices and timely passed on the demands of the people for social changes and progress. Writers call for changes in time and social progress through literature [8].

Ukrainian researcher I. Semenist's research on "Scar literature" shows that although the revolutionary cause was not questioned, it challenged the instrumental subordination of culture to it. It restored the importance of individual autonomy, the expression of conscience, complex moral dilemmas, and the role of literature in uncovering dark aspects of society. The emergence of "Scar Literature" within two years of Mao Zedong's death and the fall of the 'Gang of Four' shows the authors' courage in reviv-

ing the traditional duty of Chinese writers to expose injustice and corruption. Thus, the "Scar Literature" has great historical significance as the first stage of liberalization of the literary policy of the Communist Party of China in the post-Mao era [1, c. 135–136].

It is important to pay special attention to studies that explore Lu Yao's literary works. Liang Xiangyang (梁向阳), who is the author of "Biography of Lu Yao" ("路遥传") believes that Lu Yao's novel "The Ordinary World" in the context of the rapid development of society and the interpenetration of Chinese and Western cultures continues to win new supporters [5]. According to Chinese literary critic Wang Yu (王愚), Lu Yao's creative career is short-lived, but the ideological and figurative diversity and touching power of his work have their own characteristics inherent in all the works of the artist [15]. In turn, Li Xing (李星), a Chinese writer, critic, vice president of the Chinese Prose Association (中国小说协会副会长), believes that Lu Yao made a breakthrough in the formation of the artistic foundations of realism of post-Maoist time [14]. Professor Ding Zeng'u (丁增武), studying Lu Yao's prose, expressed the opinion that one of the main foundations of his work is the expression of a national-cultural mentality (文化心态). The so-called "cultural mentality" is a reflection of modern rational thinking based on traditional cultural sensuality (emotionality) [5]. Japanese literary critic Prof. Makoto Yasumoto (安本实), devoted more than 20 years to the study of the life path and work of Lu Yao, believes that Lu Yao "is one of the writers who will forever remain prominent representatives of modern Chinese literature" and that "Lu Yao's work has reached the heights of world literature" [13].

**The aim of this paper** is to establish the link between the creative concepts in Lu Yao's works and the literary trends in Chinese literature during the 1980s; to assess how various literary trends affected Lu Yao's creativity and the artistic qualities of his literary works; to examine the distinctions between the works of various tendencies of literary and the creative inspiration behind Lu Yao's works.

**Main Findings.** It can be said that all the 1980s were a decade when writers' enthusiasm was the highest at the end of the 20th century, researchers were most active, and achievements were extremely impressive. The 1980s saw the emergence of prosaic creativity, which was inextricably linked to the "Scar literature" ("伤痕文学") at the end of the 1970s. Back in the heyday of "Scar literature", a group of writers who dared to think and had a wealth of experience headed the fight to overcome the limitations of the common slogan "restoration of realistic creative

methods". They put forward the idea of deepening realism and used its possibilities. The writers have been able to write many works with significant ideological and historical depth due to their own creative practice. An important feature of the "Reflection literature" ("反思文学") in the process of creation is the restoration of the absurd nature of the "Cultural Revolution" on the political and social levels, from general identification of social misconceptions to the synthesis of historical experience and lessons. In comparison to the novels of "Scar literature", his view is deeper, more sober, the subject is deeper, and he has a brighter rational color [11, p. 83–84].

Since 1978, the focus of employment in China has been on economic development. The backstory of this era has led writers to invest their creative enthusiasm in real life. Literature reforms were born. In general terms, the book "Literature of Reform" (改革文学) sought to portray social inconsistencies during the transition between old and new systems, as well as documenting the difficulties of reform and the consequent shifts in ethical attitudes and moral beliefs. From the point of view of creative methods, realism is the main direction, emphasizing attention to the formation of the portrayal of the characters, especially the portrayal of the reformer [11, p. 85].

The "Scar Literature" emphasizes the importance of showing kindness in the face of both physical and spiritual difficulties. The "Reflection literature" is a writer's profound reflection on the ten-year history of adversity caused by the Chinese nation, in terms of awareness of suffering, in the face of a joyless life. Literature of reforms is a comprehensive analysis of the national spirit and the existing system on the literary level in the face of struggle and suffering of the Chinese nation [3, p. 310].

Generally, whether it is "Scar literature", the "Reflection literature" or "Literature of Reform", the educational role they play is mainly based on the socio-political level, and the purpose of the narrative is to present literary arguments in favor of social-political practices of the time. The emergence of the "Search for roots literature" (寻根文学) around 1985 has gone beyond the socio-political level, penetrated into the depths of history, and prompted cultural and anthropological reflections on the survival of the Chinese people and their national character. Researcher Zen Pan (曾攀) emphasizes: "Having survived the pain of "scars" and "reflections", literature began to seek the soul of the nation and the roots of culture that were damaged and gradually disappeared. It can be said that the tendency to search for roots has restored the internal function of litera-

ture in solving ethnic and cultural problems with the Fourth of May Movement" [12].

It was in this great literary genre that Lu Yao began, developed, and reached the peak of his creativity. It accurately depicts the human nature, but also reflects how society rebuilds the soul. He projected the traces of historical development while creating the image of his character. This projection reflects the serious thinking of the writer and his passionate and detailed analysis of reality, society, history, and suffering.

At the beginning of a new period of Chinese literature in the 1980s, Lu Yao turned his creative attention to real life in changing conditions, and especially to the feelings of ordinary people at the bottom of society. His main works – the story "A Touching Scene" ("惊心动魄的幕", 1980), the novels "Fate" ("人生", 1982) and "Hard Times" ("在黄文的日子", 1982), the novel "Ordinary World" ("平凡的世界", 1986–1989) and others – are devoted to describing the life of rural residents of the mountainous region of Shaanxi during the period of economic reforms of the 1970s–1980s. The author does not try to offer his "reform scenario" in the countryside, as other writers try to do; Lu Yao presents the reforms as a difficult period of doubts, denials, and losses, while at the same time, expressing the young generation's faith in a better future. At the heart of all of Lu Yao's works are complex psychological and social conflicts, which the characters try to resolve.

Lu Yao's novels, particularly "Fate", have a significant impact on literary and reading circles because of this. Subsequently, in the process of writing the novel "Ordinary World", Lu Yao did not succumb to the influence of new literary trends and consistently adhered to the traditions of the realistic method. On the one hand, this is due to the spiritual connection of Lu Yao with his small hometown of Northern Shaanxi. The cultural identity of the inhabitants of this area is associated with natural patience and indulgence. They do not reject someone else's culture, but they do not betray their own nature. Lu Yao's strong character and personal actions are a result of his own life experience.

Lu Yao's novel "The Ordinary World", in the context of the rapid development of society and the interpenetration of Chinese and Western cultures, continues to win new supporters. This is explained, on the one hand, by the fact that this novel is an outstanding work that depicts the survival, struggle, emotions and dreams of ordinary people in the ordinary world, and also describes the "era of great transformations", and the author plays the role of "historian-chronicler". On the other hand, the moral values expressed in this novel are an important legacy of the

thousand-year cultural tradition of self-improvement and social commitment. Therefore, this work encourages readers to work hard in pursuit of good [15].

The social changes in China in the 1980s were recorded by Lu Yao in his texts. His works are a reflection of society, the depth of social psychology in transition, and are characterized by foresight in describing ordinary people outside of suffering. The specificity of Lu Yao works is as follows: 1) do not avoid political events and political struggle; 2) the poison of political figures were created in order to reveal social and political problems; 3) the fate of many characters in the work is inextricably linked with politics.

**Conclusions.** It is meaningless for literature to list facts, arrange events, or simply describe the simple relationship between history and people. The writer is not tasked with systematizing history or reality. The objective of this inquiry is to determine if it can truly reveal the depth of the times that permeate people, and if it can be integrated into the historical context with characters' fates and choices. In the entire process of artistic creation, Lu Yao paid special attention to the communication and integration of time and historical consciousness. He believes that the writer's job is not only to please their contemporaries, but also, more importantly, to give history a profound explanation. Regarding modern life and histor-

ical events, he advocates using historical and artistic perspectives to analyze people's survival and living conditions in social contexts. Lu Yao believes that political life is an important part of social life, and sometimes it can have such an impact that it affects the direction of history. What measures can writers take to avoid this? All the masters of art in ancient and modern China and abroad do not avoid this. They do not passively adapt to politics, but rather actively assess it from a higher historical perspective.

In conclusion, the development and changes of time, the degree of influence of political, economic, cultural, and other social factors, as well as the life experience and worldview of the individual, all have a profound impact on the creative inspiration and expressiveness of the writer's works. Studying the literary trend of the 1980s, we conclude that in the novel "Ordinary World" by Lu Yao we see not only a social conflict between the populations in cities and villages, the image of a reformer, but also the serious thinking of the writer about the cultural mentality of the nation and human morality. Lu Yao combined realistic creative techniques and the characteristics of several literary trends in Chinese literature during the 1980s to create a masterpiece that features a rich plot and fully-fledged characters. Which in turn symbolized the transition from "Scar literature" to "Literature of reform".

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