

## Deconstruction in a Chinese Context: Its Evolution in the 1990s

### Chinese Novel Criticism

Yilan Wu<sup>1</sup>

Phacharaphon Chuenchit<sup>2</sup>

#### Abstract

Deconstruction criticism is one of the important literary criticism schools in the second half of the 20th century, which has opened up new fields of literary criticism with its unique critique strategies. This article takes Western deconstruction criticism as a reference and focuses on the deconstruction criticism of novels in China during the 1990s. It explores the evolution of deconstruction criticism in China and reveals, from one perspective, the characteristics of cultural exchange between China and the West in the context of globalization.

After deconstruction criticism was introduced to China, it underwent a certain degree of mutation in practice, which in fact formed the characteristics of Chinese deconstruction criticism. This is mainly reflected in the following five aspects: (1) The traditional reading method without "proliferation." (2) Difficulty in crossing the barrier between philosophy and literature. (3) Anti-traditional but not anti-logos. Chinese deconstruction criticism advocates anti-traditionalism, but its ultimate goal is not to overthrow the logos (central) status of tradition. (4) Emphasizing the marginal yet moving towards the center. Chinese deconstruction criticism stresses the "marginality" of literary creation and criticism, but its intention is to use the "marginal" to move towards the "center." (5) A strong historical sentiment. Although Chinese deconstructionist criticism sometimes exhibits theoretical hybridity and excessive destructiveness, its adaptation demonstrates an important cultural negotiation between China and the West. Ultimately, this evolution not only expanded the critical horizons of contemporary Chinese literature but also contributed to the formation of a uniquely Chinese mode of deconstructive practice.

**Keywords:** Deconstruction Criticism, Chinese Context, Evolution

---

<sup>1</sup> Professor, Ph.D., College of International Cultural Exchange, Central China Normal University,  
Email: wuyilan51@126.com

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Vongchavalitkul University. Email: phacharaphon\_chu@office365.vu.ac.th,  
Email: phacharaphon.c@chs.ac.th

---

## Introduction

Deconstructionism refers to a philosophical and literary trend of thought that has gradually formed and developed since the mid-1960s. In 1966, Jacques Derrida, a French scholar, gave a famous lecture on "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourses of the Human Sciences" at The Johns Hopkins University, which was regarded as the program of deconstruction. Since then, he has published three masterpieces: *La voix et le phénomène*, *De la grammatologie* and *L'écriture et la différence*, which laid a solid foundation for deconstructing the ideological trend. In Derrida's view, "deconstruction" is to eliminate or dismantle "structure", and the so-called "structure", according to Derrida, is that people can easily show that the word "structure" itself is as old as cognition, that is, as old as western science and philosophy, and their tentacles have deeply penetrated into the fertile soil of everyday language. At its root, people organize them with a metaphorical replacement to make them become (Derrida, 1978). Obviously, Derrida's so-called "structure" refers directly to the root of western cultural tradition, that is, "Logocentrism". In Derrida's view, the whole history of western traditional ideology and culture is the replacement history of a series of "structures". It can be seen that deconstruction was originally a philosophical trend of thought against traditional metaphysics, and its theoretical charm lies in its philosophical destructiveness.

Nevertheless, from its actual "disseminate" process, it reflects that it has greater influence and penetrating power on literary theory and literary criticism. If Derrida laid the theoretical foundation of deconstruction, Then the four theorists of the Yale School in the United States: Paul de Man, Hillis Miller, Geoffrey Hartman and Harold Bloom made this theory shine in the field of literary criticism, and they applied the critical method of deconstruction to the concrete analysis of western literature one after another, forming an upsurge of de-constructive criticism. Specifically, the Yale School resists the theorization tendency and advocates diluting the theory. In the words of P. de Man, deconstruction criticism is actually a kind of "theory that resists the theory" (P. de Man, 1986). In fact, deconstruction was introduced to the United States in the late 1970s, and the French philosophical speculative spirit of "deconstruction" was quickly assimilated by the American pragmatic spirit and became a new method of reading and literary criticism. In brief, the basic stance of deconstructionist criticism can be summarized into five points. first, no text has definite meaning; Second, although a text can refer to other texts, it does not refer to anything outside the text; Third, multiple interpretations of the same legal text may be incompatible with each other or even have nothing in common; Fourth, since the text does not lead people to the author's consciousness, it does not simply lead people to the author's consciousness, so it cannot be regarded as "communication"

from the author to the reader in any sense; Fifth, the critic's job is not to explain what the text means, but to carefully construct it into a new text. It can be seen that deconstruction entered literary criticism by deconstructing a series of concepts of literature and literary criticism, especially the concept of literature itself.

Almost in sync with the American deconstruction criticism fever, in the late 1980s, with the rise of "postmodernism craze" in China, the deconstruction criticism works of Derrida, Paul de Man, Hillis Miller and other scholars quickly flooded into China, and a number of deconstruction criticism researchers also emerged. Literary theory and literary criticism circles responded positively to deconstruction, especially Yale School. The development and spread of deconstruction criticism in China experienced a process from introduction, understanding to application, which set off a research climax in 1990s.

### **Research Objectives**

#### ***1. To Trace the Influence and Assimilation of Deconstructionism in Chinese Literary Criticism:***

**Criticism:** Since its introduction to China in the late 1980s, deconstructionism has exerted a clear influence on Chinese literary criticism. By focusing on the cultural and literary upheavals of the 1990s, this study aims to analyze the specific role of deconstructionism in reshaping Chinese literary production models and critical discourses.

#### ***2. To Identify the Characteristics and Patterns of Sinicized Deconstructive Criticism:***

This study critically analyzes how Chinese literature in the 1990s, especially in the analysis of full-length and medium-length novels, was reconstructed by deconstructive approaches. It contributes to identifying the characteristic variations, inherent characteristics and operational models of literary criticism as it developed in the context of Chinese literature, thereby providing a historical framework for understanding the development of contemporary Chinese literature.

### **Research scope**

This study focuses on the development of deconstructive criticism in Chinese literature in the 1990s. This was a pivotal period for the reception and application of Western literary criticism theory in China. As one of the most sophisticated schools of criticism in contemporary China, deconstructive criticism has been applied to almost all art forms such as novels, poetry, cinema, television and painting. However, from the 1990s to the new millennium, the writing of novellas and criticism related to short stories developed

rapidly. Therefore, this paper mainly takes deconstructive criticism in Chinese novels in the 1990s, focusing in particular on the popularity, adaptation and transformation of deconstructive criticism in Chinese literary circles, with the critical discourse surrounding the novel "Abandoned Capital" as a case study. The study used documents extracted from the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database - a comprehensive digital platform established by Tsinghua University in 1999, including academic journals, theses, conference proceedings, etc.

## Research Methodology

This paper examines the spread and transformation of deconstructive criticism in China in the 1990s, adopting a multi-method approach to ensure a comprehensive and sophisticated analysis:

**1. Detailed textual analysis:** The content of the collected deconstructive critical texts will be analyzed to clarify their underlying meanings, rhetorical structures, stylistic features, authorial intentions, and reader reception.

**2. Comparative poetics:** This method will be used to contrast the deconstructive theory applied in the West with its practical application in China to clarify the similarities and differences in critical practice, thereby highlighting the unique "Sinicization" features that have emerged.

**3. Influence study:** Chinese literary criticism differs from novel criticism in content, form, and ideology. By using the historical comparative framework, this study will trace the practical connections and lines of influence from French and American deconstruction to Chinese literary criticism, emphasizing the empirical evidence of theoretical transmission.

**4. Interdisciplinary analysis:** By applying the profound knowledge from psychology, cultural studies and formal analysis to the study of Chinese deconstruction criticism, the study becomes more profound and comprehensive. This approach aims to clarify the interdisciplinary nature of critical practice and better express the uniqueness of Chinese deconstruction, thereby grasping the inherent law of Chinese literary development.

## Data Collection and Analysis

### 1. Population and Sample

Object of study: The spread and change of deconstructive criticism in Chinese literary circles in the 1990s.

Specific samples: Chinese deconstructive criticism texts of novels in the 1990s, especially the deconstructive criticism of medium-length novels. The deconstructive criticism texts studied in this paper are all from CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure), which is a knowledge infrastructure project jointly initiated and established by Tsinghua University and Tsinghua Tongfang in June 1999. CNKI is a comprehensive digital knowledge service platform integrating journals, doctoral dissertations, conference papers, newspapers, yearbooks, patents, standards, scientific and technological achievements, reference books and other resources.

## 2. Data collection method:

Systematic Document Collection and Analysis: The documents used in this study are mainly collected from CNKI. The author conducts a comprehensive collection and review of relevant academic articles, critical essays and references to evaluate and analyze the emergence, understanding and application of deconstructionism in Chinese literary criticism in the 1990s.

Case Study Focus: The study uses selected critical debates as specific examples of deconstructionist practices in Chinese literature. Specifically, the study focuses on an in-depth analysis of the debates on the novel "Abandoned Capital" as a typical example.

## 3. Data analysis:

Textual analysis and comparison: The collected critical texts will be analyzed in terms of their content, structure, style, as well as the author's intentions and reader's responses. At the same time, through a systematic comparison of Western and Chinese deconstructive criticism, the paper will analyze the models of variation and adaptation.

Inductive synthesis: Through the analysis of multiple cases, the study will summarize the defining characteristics and evolutionary logic of Chinese deconstructive criticism.

Interdisciplinary interpretation: Using interdisciplinary methods to analyze deconstructive criticism in depth from multiple perspectives to provide a rich, contextualized understanding of the phenomenon.

## Research analysis

In the 1990s, there was a deconstruction upsurge in Chinese criticism circle, which actively studied the essence of western deconstruction criticism from the cognitive paradigm, ideological concepts, literary criticism methods and criticism strategies, thus forming a deconstruction criticism group that can't be ignored, and a large number of deconstruction criticism articles emerged. For example, Yijian Li (1988) Construction and Deconstruction of Zhaoyan Ye's Novels, Jingyuan Zhang (1992) Deconstruction of Myth —— Comment on Wang Anyi's Brothers, Xiangdong Zhang (1997) Deconstruction and Contemporary Chinese Literary Criticism, Hengshan Jin (1997) Deconstruction Interpretation of Big Breasts and wide hips, Xiang Fu (1994) The Gate of Eden: A Spatial Perspective of Novels in the New Era, Hua Qi (1999) Chinese American Women Writers' Deconstruction of China's Traditional Male-dominated Culture —— On Maxine Hong's Feminist Novel The Woman Warrior, Wenquan Zhuang (1999), An Immortal Work that Successfully Deconstructed the American Dream, etc. Another example is the "Debate on the Ruined City" from 1993 to 1996. China literary critics interpreted and analyzed Pingwa Jia 's novel *Ruined City* in a deconstructive way, and Xiaoli Xing (1998), Jiefei Li (1996), Luhua Han (1996) and Juntao Chen (1996) emerged.

However, As the old Chinese proverb goes, "The tasty orange, grown in southern China, would turn sour once it is grown in the north." Deconstruction criticism, which was born in the western background, can't be completely transplanted in the soil of China. In the special context of China, deconstruction criticism inevitably produces variation. These variations constitute the characteristics of Chinese deconstruction criticism, and also make us clearly see that it is fundamentally different from the western deconstruction criticism, which is summarized as follows:

### 1. No "proliferation" of traditional reading methods

One of the characteristics of deconstruction criticism is the dual reading mode derived from proliferation. Deconstruction holds that language is rooted in differences and is a changing "systematic game of differences", which makes the meaning show increasing diversity, which is called proliferation. "Grafting" is a strategy to realize this reading mode, which transcends subjectivism and objectivism and makes the seemingly solidified text "multiply" endless meanings. In the proliferation of interlocking words, the meaning of the text can be discovered endlessly, like glass marbles.

Regarding grafting, the most common thing is to search for keywords that condense different values and meanings, so as to find out the origin of proliferation. For example, Derrida made a positive and negative analysis of the word pharmakon in Plato's *Phaedrus*. He thought that in Greek, "pharmakon" has two meanings, one is "good medicine" to cure diseases and save lives, and the other is just the opposite, which is "poison" that kills people. Another grafting method is more wonderful but little known. This paper discusses the phonetic, morphological, etymological or semantic connection of a word, so as to achieve the effect of touching one side and connecting the other. For example, the word "hymen" in English means "marriage" and also means "hymen", but the root of the word is "men", which has both male and female opposing characteristics in word formation. Deconstruction critics start from this and point out that the meaning of "hymen" refers to destroying the hymen with male strength to achieve marriage. Another example is the family communication relationship between "semen", "semes" and "semantic features", from word formation to meaning, from "pen" to "pennis". These seemingly linguistic fortuities give deconstruction criticism a great deconstruction space, making it easy for them to find a breakthrough only from words when reading.

However, this deconstructive reading method is not effective in China, because China's ideographic block characters and English and French pinyin characters are two completely different systems. Grafting method is based on language analysis, and the initial use of grafting method is based on English and French, which makes it impossible to graft deconstruction criticism into Chinese system. It is not suitable for Chinese to draw words from related families and graft them from them to enrich the meaning of the text. From the word formation, English is composed of "affix+root+affix", that is, hypotaxis; Chinese is a combination of meanings, that is, parataxis. Therefore, English is a formal analysis, while Chinese is a meaningful analysis. Similarly, taking the word "hymen" as an example, it can't reflect the masculine characteristics opposite to women in the Chinese system, so it is difficult to extract the deconstruction power from the word itself. Therefore, in Chinese deconstruction criticism, it is almost impossible to find a critical article that can subvert the whole text by just one word like Plato's *Pharmakon*.

Although many domestic researchers advocate and admire Derrida's "double reading", they hope to use this method to enrich the interpretation of many texts, especially to dig out the new meanings of classic texts. However, our entry point is not from words, but often from grasping the overall meaning of the text, looking for a breakthrough in the reorganization of meaning. Zhibin Wu (2001), *Rootless Writing*:

the Deconstruction of "father" in Hui Wei and Mian mian's Works is to deconstruct the meaning of the word "father" from three levels, namely, the traditional lifestyle, survival significance and writing mission represented by the word "father". Although it is also a deconstruction of a word, it is still a deep excavation in a single sense. The deconstruction of "father" is based on the opposition of "children/father" in meaning, unlike "hymen", which is not influenced by "word form-meaning" horizontally. Taking The Deconstruction of Privacy in Novels in the New Period established by Jianli Qi as an example, this paper also analyzes the writers' different treatments of such themes based on the different definitions of privacy in different stages, thus showing the value of novels in the new period. It can be seen that most of the critics are based on a thorough understanding of the original intention of the text, and then they will explain how this original intention dispels tradition. From this point of view, Chinese deconstruction criticism has not "proliferated" in reading, and basically still adopts the traditional reading method, that is, it is extended in depth according to the literal meaning, rather than spreading between word forms. On the basis of this "same value" reading. Only by searching for their own contradictory factors from the combination of meanings can critics show the trajectory of subversion and its value. When China's critics use deconstruction criticism, they don't start from the difference and ambiguity of a word, but start from the meaning to reveal the internal conflicts, and transform the internal differences of this text into the differences between different critical positions. Western deconstruction criticism advocates that we should make good use of the differences of deconstructed objects to achieve complete subversion. On the other hand, Chinese deconstruction criticism always deconstructs on the premise of acknowledging the significance of the proposition.

## 2 It is difficult to cross the barriers between philosophy and literature

Derrida's own deconstruction is mostly the works of some famous philosophers, such as the deconstruction of Plato in *Dissemination*. He insisted that no text was completely dominated by philosophical concepts and opposing concepts, and all texts could be read as "literary". However, Derrida also believed that no text could be "completely" literary: all language and interpretation behavior depend on philosophical categories and philosophical assumptions. In fact, in Derrida's works, the opposition between philosophy and literature has disappeared through his interpretation of the two texts, and they must be understood as a couple as much as possible. Among them, the "pleasure of text" brought by "difference" communicates the mutual reading of philosophy and literature. Thus, Plato's *Phaedrus* became a story full of doubts; Rousseau's *The Confessions* became a dialectical record of confession and sophistry. The explicit reference of words is paralyzed, the meaning

is suspended, and the text is caught in endless infighting. As far as Derrida's original idea is concerned, the relationship between literature and philosophy is very representative. In fact, any great literary work in history will eventually point to the ultimate problem of mankind. The plot of *Remembrance of Things Past* (Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*) scattered, but the sense of life in it is self-evident. However, equating philosophy with reading literature and reading philosophy in a literary way will inevitably subvert the absoluteness of philosophy, but at the same time it will also subvert the significance of philosophy, because the foothold of philosophy is the wisdom of survival. Its reflection result is not a specific explanation for each object, but only a principled explanation. "The principled interpretation and the "situational" interpretation of literature are fundamentally contradictory. Western deconstruction critics can't do anything about this. They can read literature as philosophy, but it's hard to tear philosophy apart like Derrida. Therefore, P.de Man of the United States subverts the logical and grammatical basis of philosophy from the perspective of rhetoric, and only points out that philosophy is also fictional.

Chinese critics seldom talk about this point when they accept western deconstruction criticism. They only introduce this concept, but rarely dismantle philosophy itself. Strictly speaking, among the numerous critical texts, there is only one *On the Subversion and Deconstruction of the Classic Text of the Six Classics* by Taoist Poetics, which makes a "deconstructive" analysis of the relationship between Taoism and Confucianism from a philosophical point of view. The article points out: "In the conflict between the two poetic systems of Confucianism and Taoism, Taoist poetics takes the thorough subversion and deconstruction of the classic text of Six Classics, the home of Confucian poetics, as the logical starting point, thus constructing its own theoretical system." (Naiqiao Yang, 1996) Based on "speech" and "meaning", this paper discusses the different concepts of life and culture of Confucianism and Taoism, and points out that their mutual deconstruction in thought is mutual falsification, but in the end they fall into the trap of logic and never leave the way of literary criticism. That is to say, when China's critics try to make a postmodern interpretation of Chinese classical philosophy, they always operate on the level of "literature", while the central concepts like "harmony between humanity and nature" are always in the high position of philosophy and dare not move. There are historical reasons for this:

1) China has only had the organizational system of "philosophy" since modern times, and the theory of "subjectivity/objectivity" was completely transplanted from western learning, from Plato and Aristotle to Hegel and Heidegger, and our philosophical construction was completed by the west. Derrida's thought is the

western deconstruction of itself. When we accept Derrida's theory, it means that we deconstruct our fragile modern philosophy by ourselves. This is equivalent to a post-modern farce of "constructing (western) philosophy/deconstructing (western) philosophy" in our own country.

2) China has a tradition of "literature, history and philosophy are inseparable" since ancient times. Our so-called philosophical texts, such as *Tao Te Ching*, *The Works of Zhuang Zhou* and *The Analects of Confucius*, are very literary and fictional classics. As far as the text itself is concerned, it obscures Derrida's thinking that both philosophy and literature can be interpreted as fictional texts. From a historical point of view, China is rich in "literary-style" philosophy, thus lacking a rigorous philosophical system like Plato and Hegel, which is just a retrograde development process with the West. Primitive thinking determines that the initial culture of human beings is "literature, history and philosophy", and Plato's Dialogue on Literature and Art contains profound philosophical thoughts. The difference is that western philosophy has gone through the dialectical process of affirmation-negation-negation-negation in the hands of Plato, Hegel, Nietzsche and Derrida, who want to return to the era when literature and philosophy are common. While China is in the stage of "affirmation-negation", modern scholars have made great efforts to establish a relatively strict philosophy in China, and have not finished the road of "negation (chaos)". How can they immediately start the work of "negation of negation" like Derrida? From a realistic point of view, in the 1990s, most people in China were indifferent to philosophy, and philosophical novels had a very small audience in China. Chengzhi Zhang's *History of the Mind* is an example. Even so, the novel uses boring philosophy as a "literary" deconstruction, and there is no reader in China.

Therefore, in contemporary China, philosophy and literature are still two distinct disciplines, and Chinese deconstruction criticism has not tried to communicate them.

### 3 Anti-tradition without anti-logos

According to statistics, it is not difficult to find that the critical angle of Chinese deconstruction critical articles in 1990s mostly started with "anti-tradition". Especially since the middle and late 1990s, the deconstruction and subversion of "tradition" has almost become a tried-and-true topic of deconstruction criticism. In the deconstruction criticism in the west, "anti-tradition" is also the main topic of Derrida, Yale School and other critics, but their anti-tradition is anti-logocentrism, which is actually the western rationalism tradition against Plato. In the field of literature, it is anti-phonocentrism, deconstructing the binary opposition between words and characters, and further thinking that words can better express the

essence of language. The fuzziness of literary meaning is precisely the most essential feature and the most fundamental charm of language. Therefore, any text is a word game that lacks unity, and a series of related categories such as plot, theme and thought no longer exist.

In western deconstruction criticism texts, anti-tradition and anti-logos can be equated to some extent. China absorbed the "anti-tradition" spirit of deconstruction criticism and translated and introduced the "anti-logos" theory, but domestic researchers used them separately. Because China's tradition is not logos, but Confucianism and Taoism deeply rooted in the soul of Chinese people. History, morality, benevolence and righteousness, emotion, male and female superiority and inferiority ..., all of which are the first and most vulnerable categories of China's Confucianism and Taoism culture. Therefore, we can see that many critics use skillful deconstruction terms to deconstruct a wonderful work from a traditional category that is familiar to Chinese people. After all, China's culture is very different from that of the West. The greater the difference, the more innovative it is to analyze China's text with western weapons. Yan Wan (1998) in *Deconstructed Allusions A New Comment on Wang Anyi's Novel Song of Eternal Sorrow*, borrowed the allusions "Song of Eternal Sorrow of Emperor Xuanzong of Tang Dynasty and Yang imperial concubine" to analyze Anyi Wang's deconstruction of the traditional theory that beauty (woman) is favored, that is, the beauty in reality has neither happiness nor legendary experience, showing "resolution" .Yuan Zong (1994) deconstructed and criticized the love mode of Yao Lu's novels, and analyzed how China's unique traditional maternal love view was replaced by the contemporary utilitarian love view ... These are the focus of Chinese deconstruction and criticism text.

China's traditional "modernity" is also the main object of deconstruction. In *Farewell Fable*, Yiwu Zhang (1997) applied the same deconstruction method to Heng Liu's novel *Daydream on the Canghe River*, which "profoundly questioned the discourse of modernity in an allegorical way." He pointed out that Heng Liu's text refers to many articles about "modernity" in China's modern and contemporary literature, and through this writing, he sharply criticized the discourse of "modernity" and the central position of intellectuals' discourse. Similarly, some critics believe that in the book *Ruined City*, the traditional scholar-bureaucrat thought is twisted with the distorted modern human nature and becomes the object of criticism. The understanding of this work shows the diversity of group deconstruction reading to a certain extent. Pingwa Jia deconstructs the narrative authority and depth mode at different levels through the narrative

game mixed with literature and white, so that readers can interpret the text according to their own understanding, thus making the novel present various meanings.

In a word, in Chinese deconstruction criticism texts, there is no tradition and habit of pushing meaning from different extension to infinite cycle, but always paying attention to and seeking ways and means to obtain meaning, so what is deconstructed in Chinese criticism articles is the ways and means to obtain meaning, not the meaning itself. *White deer plain* deconstructs Confucian culture, and at the same time sets up an outlook on life that does nothing and does everything. Yucheng Zhang (1997) thought that Shuo Wang's novels only deconstructed the tradition, and at the same time implied that Shuo Wang created a new way of discourse statement. The reason why Chinese people are keen on deconstructing tradition is not to deny and subvert the meaning of tradition itself, but only to inject new content. The traditional view of love is deconstructed by the new view of love, the traditional view of history is deconstructed by the new view of history, and the traditional way of discourse is deconstructed by the new way of discourse. As far as the concept of love, history and discourse itself are concerned, their dominant position remains unchanged, and Chinese people are keen to deconstruct its temporary connotation rather than deny the existence of this concept. Therefore, no matter how Chinese people deconstruct and anti-tradition, their foothold is always to confirm a new value that occupies the position of Logos. Meaning goes to nothingness, but it is not nothingness in the end, but leads from different extension to another logos. Therefore, in the literary world of China in 1990s, the deconstruction of critical texts is almost always to explain the establishment of a new meaning, and its value is to deconstruct (replace) the old meaning. The integrity of the plot is the basic premise of their deconstruction, and different interpretations on this basis are the starting point of their deconstruction, and the ultimate value is what they will finally establish after deconstruction.

Even in the most deconstructive avant-garde texts. In *Deconstruction of Style: The Existence of Avant-garde Text*, Xiangdong Zhang (1996) expounded the deconstruction process of avant-garde text to traditional novel style from three aspects: language, narrative and plot, and pointed out that language is an infinitely expanding fragment; Narration is an exposed fictional act; The plot is a disorderly and absurd game. In avant-garde literature, the text is regarded as a world where people speak differently, and the "unity" of traditional novels has been completely dispelled. Various interpretations of a text may be incompatible or even have nothing in common, but they are all equally reasonable. All of these reflect Derrida's statement that "meaning is territorial and different". However, Xiangdong Zhang himself admits

that "there is also a huge difference between any theory and practice ... Many essential things often exist in the form of another phenomenon opposite to it, and as an essential style deconstruction, it often exists in a non-deconstructive state, which is especially reflected in the traditional novel style, while avant-garde texts try to prove this deconstruction theory with their own texts." This shows that he also admits that the deconstruction factor is ultimately contained in the whole of Logos, and the avant-garde text only shows it to extremes, and the central concept of Logos is still the dominant idea of the author.

#### **4 Advocating the edge and moving towards the center**

The strategy of "edge" interpretation is one of Derrida's important theories. In traditional reading, in order to unify the theme, some components or meanings are often suppressed and excluded to metaphor or secondary position. These marginal components are not only excluded objects, but also the basis for the formation of grades. "Marginal" reading is to grasp the fragments that seem to be in the "marginal zone" of the text, and make these edges the beginning to counter the previous reading and destruction level, and then explain that the text has no constant structure and definite meaning. This kind of reading has created the nature of subverting the text through its own marginal components.

After "marginal" reading was introduced to China, it was not only regarded as a method of text interpretation, but also used as a strategy of literary creation and criticism. The specific performance is that the creative theme turns to village men and women, and its focus also turns to country slang. Among them, dialect creation has become the main form of marginal strategy. Since the 1990s, Li Chi and Fang Fang's novels of Wuhan City School, Pingwa Jia's novels of Shaanxi Province School and Shaogong Han's novels of Hunan Province School have emerged, which shows the prosperity of dialect creation. This not only brings a fresh rural atmosphere to the increasingly solemn and heavy novel world, but more importantly, the marginal values contained in the marginal language have greatly impacted the traditional ideas of Chinese culture in the Central Plains, thus blowing a strong wind of deconstruction. The "*A Dictionary of Maqiao craze*" in 1997 fully illustrated this point. Earlier, this paper has mentioned that critics have shown extraordinary enthusiasm for the language of the book, which is not only a sensitive consciousness of language turn, but also a new historical perspective. Zhengbao Zhou (1997) unscrambled the word "awake" in *A Dictionary of Maqiao*, "The whole world is turbid and I am alone, and everyone is drunk and I am alone". The word 'awake' has been used as a compliment from ancient times to the present, but in Maqiao, 'awake' is stupid." He accurately realized that Maqiao people's understanding and application of the word

"awake" hides another perspective, the cold eyes of ancestors on the politics of powerful countries and different cultures, and the inevitable ambiguity between different historical orientations. Critics value the unique charm of Maqiao dialect, and more importantly, the impact and deconstruction of the culture represented by dialect on orthodox culture. The boundary and difference of that meaning are the essence of deconstruction criticism. *A Dictionary of Maqiao* provides a new way of understanding and grasping the human world in a literary way.

Dictionary novels (such as *A Dictionary of Maqiao*) or legendary novels (such as *Ruined City*) provide critics with brand-new operating objects, and a marginal novel different from orthodox literature has triggered "marginal" deconstruction criticism. This kind of deconstruction criticism has three characteristics: first, it emphasizes alienation and challenge from the central discourse, and insists on subverting the central authority and dissolving the center; Second, constantly return to the special context of individual experience, and show the fate that his self-expression is suppressed by power discourse; Third, create the image of the "other" in the marginal state. On the one hand, this kind of criticism advocates conscious marginalization, decentralization to power discourse, and challenges the institutionalization with non-centralized language mode, unique style of writing, miscellaneous state and dialect. Or challenge the Shanghai School or Beijing School, get rid of the centralized misunderstanding of "Beijing-oriented consciousness", and position the deconstruction criticism from the elements and realistic basis. On the other hand, they pay attention to the role orientation of deconstruction criticism and the "edge" construction after subverting the center, trying to get out of the "center-edge" conflict between the world and China, and between Beijing and other places. Although they regard themselves as marginal, they advocate the cultural transcendence mode of seeing China from the local land and the world from China, but their potential intention is to share the central discourse power. Shaogong Han (1997) wrote in the Postscript of *A Dictionary of Maqiao*: "If we don't want communication to be a kind of mutual cancellation and obliteration, we must be alert and resistant to communication, and guard our tenacious expression in compromise-this is the premise of a benign communication." He takes Maqiao language as the basis for sharing equal right to speak, and he still believes that words can represent the speaker's rights and thinking. Critic Zhengbao Zhou (1997) also lamented: "Meditation and search are still the responsibilities of writers. At the end of the 20th century, Shao Gong dedicated Maqiao Dictionary, so we once again realized an exploration related to 'roots', a heavy negation of traditional cultural values, or a peaceful and objective sharp criticism that crossed Maqiao. " This passage is the best annotation to the good

intentions of China critics who use deconstruction criticism as a weapon. On the one hand, they affirm the writer's deconstruction of tradition, no matter what way it is adopted; On the other hand, they still regard this kind of deconstruction as a kind of reflection and perfection under the central discourse, and its ultimate goal is to obtain legal rights under the central discourse. His consciousness of reflection and search is still a strong sense of responsibility caused by humanism and rationalism, which is essentially different from Derrida's "marginal resolution center". The purpose of "marginal writing" and "marginal criticism" we use is not to cling to our marginal position and break the marginal-central model, but to move towards the center and become a more perfect center. Chinese people use the edge to talk about deconstruction, and its real intention is to find a shortcut to the center.

## **5 Strong historical complex**

In the criticism of traditional philosophy, deconstruction emphasizes time and again that discourse, meaning and reading are historic, resulting from the process of contextualization, deconstruction and re-contextualization. As the "source of ultimate truth and truth", the deconstructionist scholars represented by Derrida emphasize that it is manifested in the narrative structure and the stories with meanings produced by narrative procedures. It can be seen that deconstruction criticism is in a paradoxical situation of admitting historical concepts but not accepting them, and it is considered as the whole meaning of Logos central system. Between text and history, they equate history with the "context" of the text, which is a code game that can never confirm its authenticity.

When China scholars accepted the deconstruction criticism, they naturally resolved this paradox. On the one hand, they admit that the text is contextual, so it has many interpretations. On the other hand, they also think that there can be profound historicity under the text. This kind of historicity is true and credible, and it can react to narration, thus many "stories are newly edited and read" texts have appeared. With the attitude of challenging the central discourse, this kind of text advances into the intersection of ideological discourse contradictions in the text, interprets and digs out the discourse repression under the cover of official history (big history and big theory) from the special perspective of its small theory, re-examines the interaction between economic reproduction and cultural representation in the consumer society, and attaches importance to the dislocation between real life and human thought. In many deconstructive critical texts, Chinese people have shown a strong historical complex, which is mainly reflected in two aspects:

1) New reading of the story. The new reading here refers to reinterpreting the classic text in a deconstructive way. However, unlike Deman's dissection of Rousseau's *Confessions* and Derrida's interpretation of Descartes' books, the text is completely disassembled into a bunch of pieces that cannot be unified, but the deconstruction factors in the classic text are found out to attack the traditional culture represented by the classic text, but the integrity of the plot itself is maintained. For example, Dexi Sun (1997) made a deconstructive analysis of *The Journey to the West*, and the author rebelled against tradition. According to the small detail that Tang Monk's body was swallowed up by the river even after he became a Buddha, he thought that Cheng'en Wu exposed the cannibalism of the society at that time in his book, and pointed out that this understanding even inspired Xun Lu hundreds of years later. Finally, it is concluded that Cheng'en Wu, who lived in the Ming Dynasty, boldly deconstructed the foundations of society-Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Daoqing Rao (1999)' Baoyu Jia: Deconstruction Factor of a Structure', the author regards Jia Baoyu as a rebel who was predetermined by China traditional culture but dismantled this structure, and his novel statement is refreshing. There are quite a few deconstructive readings of Chinese classic texts, especially novels of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, which provides an operable way for a new interpretation of the texts and can effectively expand the research field of Chinese classical literature.

2) A new story. This kind of text includes two levels. First of all, writers borrowed allusions or old texts to create new works, such as *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow* by Anyi Wang, *New Journey to the West* by Haicheng, *Red Mop Flees at Night* by Xiaobo Wang, etc. They express their feelings through ancient names and describe the complex life of contemporary society. Their works are very deconstructive, not only for traditional texts, but also for today's reality. On this basis, critics show the edge of deconstruction criticism. *Journey to the West* is a household name, and *New Journey to the West* "is exactly the most avant-garde deconstruction text in the 1990s in an untimely way of rewriting classical novels." (Wei Yu, 1998). Dai Jinhua (1998) once wrote a long article to analyze the unique grammar of Wang Xiaobo's novels. She thought, "In Wang Xiaobo's works, historical and social scenes are not composed of conflicts between oppression/resistance, autocracy/freedom and rationality/ irrationality. On the contrary, they are just constant rules of ancient power games and two roles necessary for a specific 'sex scene'." As a result, "Red Mop Flees at Night" became a game for girls to follow the street prodigal son. The ancient Luoyang city was outlined as a space for rogue Jing Li and the policemen to "hide and seek", and Gu Chang'an became an "iron bucket" for their carnival. *Red Mop Flees at Night* only partially chose a behavioral motive from Biography of *The*

*Guest with the Curly Beard* (Guangting Du, 850-933 AD, Tang Dynasty). The "original" of the Tang Dynasty legend provided Xiaobo Wang with not even a fulcrum of the described events, but only an excuse to enter the Middle Ages.

The above two situations show that although Chinese people are keen on reading classic texts in a deconstructive way, unlike western deconstruction criticism, their starting point is not to show the "pluralistic and complex" interpretation mode of deconstruction criticism, nor is their purpose to demonstrate "historical circumstances" and "untraceable discourse, meaning and reading", but to find new significance of the times in the classic texts that have become history through new interpretation methods to support the current thinking. As Xiaobo Wang pointed out, it is an important and simple fact that contemporary China writers were "fed" by European and American culture and literature in the 18th and 19th centuries, or, to be precise, translated works. It is not only an extremely important but always invisible cultural resource of contemporary Chinese literature, but it actually constructs the knowledge pedigree and writing norms of contemporary writers born around 1950s. Therefore, the whole culture and literature in the 1980s are always entangled in the discourse structure of "19th century", which can never be said goodbye. However, in the 1990s, in the voice of "postmodernism", although it was suddenly abandoned by fashionistas, it was still a huge cultural "ghost" between writers and reality. How to get rid of this "ghost" completely, writers and critics all turn their eyes to history and use new theories to reconstruct and utilize history. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand the strong historical complex in China's deconstruction criticism text.

## Research results

As a literary criticism mode, deconstruction criticism is undoubtedly the most controversial one in modern times. Literally, its exposition often gives people a sense of being radical and grotesque, and often appears in a negative and destructive manner, with few positive suggestions. At the same time, its theory also has defects that cannot be justified. Nevertheless, deconstruction criticism has made great achievements in essence. Its greatest achievement lies in the removal of the traditional monistic reasoning mode that has ruled people's thinking for a long time. It insists on anti-tradition and anti-authority with bold skepticism and gives great inspiration to modern people's thinking. The free play of language and the indeterminacy of meaning marked by deconstruction criticism provide a new perspective for re-understanding previous

literary works, and its unique and flexible criticism strategy opens up a new way in the field of literary criticism.

China took an active attitude towards deconstruction criticism which represents the postmodern characteristics of the West. In 1990s, China scholars actively applied the theory of translation and deconstruction to their own literary criticism practice and literary theory construction. In thinking, they transcend the logic of binary opposition and carries forward the pluralistic and equal thought of this school; In style, they inherited the free and bold exploration spirit of deconstruction criticism; In practice, they absorbed deconstruction criticism's unique critical methods and theories to guide Chinese literary creation and criticism at that time. "Seeking common ground" is the primary feature of China's study of western deconstruction criticism, and it is also the necessity for China's literary theory to seek new development under the background of globalization. Postmodernism is not only a product of the West, but also a global phenomenon. It can enter the East or the developing countries in some parts in the form of variants, which also shows that deconstruction criticism will inevitably mutate in the special context of China. This is reflected in the following aspects: on the one hand, the destructiveness of deconstruction criticism has been artificially strengthened, extending from the text level to the moral, value and even social level, thus causing arbitrariness and confusion in the application of deconstruction criticism. On the other hand, deconstruction criticism is endowed with stronger practical significance and operability, and the metaphysical and obscure writing style inherent in deconstruction is transformed into Chinese-style clarity and gentleness, which not only leads to doubts about tradition, but also has corresponding constructiveness.

## Summary

If the western deconstruction criticism is described by structure-deconstruction, the dynamic trajectory of Chinese deconstruction criticism should be described by structure-deconstruction-construction. It is in the middle of "breaking and standing", so its deconstruction is not complete, but its construction is not rigid. This is in line with China's national conditions, and "deconstruction criticism" may become our research focus and play its role in the literary criticism session in the 1990s, which is the inevitable result of cross-language practice.

Through research, this paper finds that different critics can draw different conclusions by using deconstructive discourse. Yiwu Zhang (1997), for example, thinks that only with the help of deconstruction

can literary criticism be given a new vision and way, and the developed countries and the developing countries can have a new exchange. In the post-modern knowledge transformation and the crisis of intellectuals, Yuechuan Wang (1994) argues that the post-modern writing language has lost its spiritual transcendence and value inquiry, and evolved into a kind of "discourse excretion" without thinking and meaning, and intellectuals have a terminal post-modern disease: aphasia. Yuechuan Wang showed the plight of postmodern intellectuals in the way of deconstruction, which was in sharp contrast with Yiwu Zhang's ambition of deconstruction. Yiwu Zhang is based on the native land and intends to absorb it for our use; Yuechuan Wang, based on the world, aims to introduce what we have forbidden. Yiwu Zhang's aim lies in the construction after deconstruction, while Yuechuan Wang lies in the deconstruction before reconstruction. Thus, the isolated evaluation and deconstruction criticism and its evolution in China can't reach a convincing conclusion.

As Min Zheng (1990) wrote when commenting on the western deconstruction criticism: "If we know the background of this trend of thought and the reason why it is a cultural turning point, we can appreciate its characteristics through the excessive words in this kind of literature." Only when we treat Chinese deconstruction criticism from a dynamic perspective can we affirm its positive significance in China. That is, at the turn of the 20th century and 21st century, China needs to "break the old and establish the new" and break the shackles of many moral, cultural and rigid traditions that have been formed and are being formed. After deconstruction criticism was introduced to China in the late 1980s, it combined with the specific context of China at that time, providing a new perspective and strategy for the equal dialogue between Chinese and Western cultures. Although China's deconstruction criticism in 1990s has various defects, such as mixed theories and excessive destruction, it has become an important part of the construction of contemporary literary criticism in China.

## Suggestion

By studying China's acceptance and evolution of deconstruction criticism in 1990s, this paper aims to provide ideas and suggestions for the development of Chinese literary creation and literary criticism.

First of all, in China in 1990s, deconstruction criticism has provided a new perspective and strategy for the communication between Chinese and Western cultures. In the 21st century, with the deepening of globalization and the internationalization of China's culture, deconstruction criticism has not declined, but

has gradually become a unique and important bridge for cultural exchanges between China and the West, promoting both sides to understand and accept each other's cultural characteristics more deeply.

Secondly, judging from the development track of deconstruction criticism after it was introduced into China, China's deconstruction criticism has played an important role in promoting literary and cultural innovation. In the process of "breaking the old and establishing the new", deconstructing criticism is helpful to break the shackles of moral, cultural and rigid traditions and provide a broad space for China's cultural innovation. By deconstructing criticism, we can re-examine traditional culture, explore its neglected value, and introduce new elements and concepts to promote the modern transformation of China culture.

In today's era when technology is changing with each passing day and AI technology is surging, traditional literature and culture are facing unprecedented impacts and challenges, which highlights the importance of scientific and technological development and profoundly reflects the subversive influence of AI technology in literature and culture. Re-examining the avant-garde deconstruction criticism that arose in the 1960s provides a more in-depth and diversified interpretation perspective, helps to understand the complexity and internal contradictions of AI literary works, digs out the neglected or marginalized meaning in the works, and enriches the connotation and extension of the works.

In the context of China, Chinese deconstruction criticism is expected to further promote cross-cultural communication and understanding. By using the method of deconstruction criticism, we can deeply analyze literary works under different cultural backgrounds, explore their commonness and differences, and thus enhance our understanding and respect for different cultures. This will help to build a more open and inclusive cultural environment and promote the exchange and integration of world literature.

#### 1. Facilitate Exchanges and Comprehension between Chinese and Western Cultures:

Deconstruction criticism, as a literary critical approach originating from the West, following its transformation in China, has furnished novel perspectives and strategies for cultural exchanges between China and the West. The research outcomes propose to continuously employ deconstruction criticism as a conduit to promote profound dialogues between the two in the realms of literature, philosophy, and the like. Through a comparative scrutiny of the similarities and disparities of deconstruction criticism in China and the West, both parties can augment their apprehension and esteem for each other's cultural heritages and impel the progression of global cultural diversity and inclusiveness.

#### 2. Propel Innovations in Literary Criticism and Creation:

During its metamorphosis in China, deconstruction criticism has manifested challenges and surmounting of traditional literary critical and creative modalities. The research results advocate the application of the tenets and methodologies of deconstruction criticism in contemporary Chinese literary creation and critical praxis. Writers and critics are spurred to shatter the traditional framework and probe into novel narrative modalities and expressive artifices. Via the process of deconstruction and reconstruction, the dynamism of literary creation can be galvanized, the connotations of literary criticism can be augmented, and the innovative evolution of Chinese literature can be expedited.

### 2.1 Intensify the Research on the Sinicization Course of Deconstruction Criticism:

Notwithstanding that deconstruction criticism has already experienced certain vicissitudes and advancements in China, its specific Sinicization process and mechanism remain to be further delved into. It is recommended to further explore how deconstruction criticism converges with traditional Chinese culture, literary theories, and critical practices to engender deconstruction criticism theories and methods with Chinese characteristics. Through interdisciplinary research approaches, such as those from psychology and cultural studies, a more comprehensive comprehension of the developmental trajectory and influential factors of deconstruction criticism in China can be attained.

### 2.2 Concentrate on the Application and Challenges of Deconstruction Criticism in Contemporary Society:

With the rapid alterations in society and the acceleration of the globalization process, deconstruction criticism is confronted with novel application scenarios and challenges in contemporary society. It is advisable to investigate how deconstruction criticism accommodates the development of nascent fields such as new media, online literature, and AI intelligent writing, and how it sustains its critical and innovative attributes in the context of globalization. Simultaneously, heed should also be paid to the function of deconstruction criticism in addressing social hot-button issues, promoting cultural diversity and inclusiveness, and so forth, and its value and significance in contemporary society should be explored.

## References

Culler, J. (1998). *On deconstruction* (Y. Lu, Trans.). Beijing, China: China Social Sciences Press.

Dai, J. H. (1998). Wise man's banter - read Wang Xiaobo. *Contemporary Writers Review*, 2, 21-34.

De Man, P. (1986). *The resistance to theory*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Derrida, J. (1978). *L'écriture et la différence*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Han, S. G. (1997). *Maqiao dictionary*. Beijing, China: The Writers Publishing.

Rao, D. Q. (1999). Jia Baoyu: A structural deconstruction factor. *Studies on "A Dream of Red Mansions"*, 1, 89-97.

Sun, D. X. (1997). Journey to the west: Divine deconstruction. *Journal of Huaiyin Teachers College (Social and Sciences Edition)*, 2, 26-29.

Tian, Y. (1996). *Dictionary of thought*. Hangzhou, China: Zhejiang Education Publishing House.

Wan, Y. (1998). Deconstruction of "Allusions" - a new discussion on Wang Anyi's novel song of everlasting regret. *Journal of Shenzhen University (Humanities & Social Sciences)*, 3, 50-55.

Wang, X. P. (1999). *Dictionary of literary critical terms*. Shanghai, China: Shanghai Literature & Art Publishing House.

Wang, Y. C. (1994). Post-modern knowledge transformation and intellectual crisis. *Academic Monthly*, 2, 67-72.

Wei, Y., & Song, H. T. (1998). Deconstruction and innovation——on Haicheng's novel. *New journey to the west. Novel Review*, 2, 49-50.

Wu, Z. B. (2001). Writing without roots: Deconstruction of "Father" in Wei Hui and Mian Mian's works. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, 2, 19-21. <https://doi.org/10.19290/j.cnki.51-1076/i.2001.02.005>

Yang, N. Q. (1996). On the subversion and deconstruction of the Six Classics by the Daoist poetics. *Tianjin Social Sciences*, 2, 87-95. <https://doi.org/10.16240/j.cnki.1002-3976.1996.02.017>

Zhang, X. D. (1996). Stylistic deconstruction: the existence of avant-garde texts. *Journal of Northeast Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)*, 4, 40-46.

Zhang, Y. C. (1997). Deconstructing traditional discourse transmission——Wang Shuo's novel theory. *Yindu Journal*, 3, 82-84. <https://doi.org/10.16140/j.cnki.1997.03.020>

Zhang, Y. W. (1997). Myth and sleep talk. In Y. W. Zhang (Ed.), *From modernity to postmodernity*. Nanning, China: Guangxi Education Publishing House.

Zheng, M. (1997). Deconstructing thinking and cultural tradition. *Literary Review*, 2, 53-60.

Zhou, Z. B. (1997). The meaning of the Maqiao dictionary. *Contemporary Writers Review*, 1, 4-13.

Zong, Y. (1994). Deconstruction of love mode in Lu Yao's novels. *Journal of Jining University*, 2, 46-51.