ABSTRACT

The theories on fiction in the early period of Literary Revolution in Modern China are very scattered, vague and unsystematic. The formation of such theories was often derived from the West and perhaps incorporated with some of the writer's own ideas. Even the two main literary societies of that period, namely the Literary Association (文 学 研究 会) and the Creation Society (创造 社), had failed to come up with a particular concrete theory on fiction, but rather some loosely-structured ideas were found scattered in their literary essays. Nevertheless, their contributions provided a guideline for the fiction writers during that period.

This academic exercise attempts to study these fragmented theories in a careful and analytical manner in order to find out the various important assertions and notions of the May Fourth writers. By so doing, we may prove that there is, in fact an existence of a linkage between such theories and the practice of fiction writing.

This paper is divided into seven chapters. Chapter one is a brief introduction to the purpose and scope of the study. The next chapter is devoted to the analysis of the fiction theories of the two prominent scholars Liang Qichao (梁 启 超) and Yen Fu (严 复), prior to the Literary Revolution, whose theories had deeply influenced the writers in the early 1910's and 1920's.
An account of the theories of non-fiction writers such as Hu Shih (胡适), Zheng Zhenduo (郑振铎), Lou Jialun (罗家伦) and Zhou Zuoren (周作人) can be found in chapter three. The main emphasis of their theories was on the necessity of writers to reflect the reality of society and nature of man. Hence, the writer's social experience is vital to fiction writing.

Chapter four is devoted to the three famous fiction writers Lu Xun (鲁迅), Shen Yeubing (沈雁冰) and Yu Dafu (郁达夫). The main points here concern their theories, which were derived from their own writing experience.

The theories of the Literary Association and the Creation Society are briefly discussed in chapter five.

In chapter six, some of the works written by Lu Xun (鲁迅), Bing Xin (冰心), Xu Dishan (许地山), Ye Shapjun (叶绍钧) and Yu Dafu (郁达夫) are studied with reference to the above-mentioned theories to see if the theories are put into practice.

The seventh chapter is a concluding chapter in which the weakness of these theories are brought up for discussion. In spite of certain defects that existed in these theories, their contributions to the literary world in modern China are affirmed, and it was through these theories that the status of fiction was raised to that of poetry.