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Chapter 1 : The romantic generation of modern Chinese writers - Details - Trove

Leo Ou-fan Lee. *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese* www.nxgvision.comdgc, MA: Harvard, Jeremy Murray ()
Lee's study recounts the lives and works of a generation of writers that spans mainly the decades before and after the May Fourth Movement.

Instead, they trace its origins back at least to the late Qing period. The late Qing was a period of intellectual ferment sparked by a sense of national crisis. They translated works of Western expository writing and literature, which enthralled readers with new ideas and opened up windows onto new exotic cultures. In this climate, a boom in the writing of fiction occurred, especially after the abolition of the civil service examination when literati struggled to fill new social and cultural roles for themselves. Stylistically, this fiction shows signs of both the Chinese novelistic tradition and Western narrative modes. In subject matter, it is strikingly concerned with the contemporary: In this sense, late Qing fiction is modern. These poets would become the objects of scorn by New Culturalists like Hu Shi, who saw their work as overly allusive, artificial, and divorced from contemporary reality. Peking opera and "reformed Peking opera" were also popular at the time. Republican Era [edit] This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. September Learn how and when to remove this template message The literary scene in the first few years before the collapse of the Qing in was dominated by popular love stories, some written in the classical language and some in the vernacular. This entertainment fiction would later be labeled "Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies" fiction by New Culturalists, who despised its lack of social engagement. Throughout much of the Republican era, Butterfly fiction would reach many more readers than its "progressive" counterpart. In the course of the New Culture Movement, the vernacular language largely displaced the classical in all areas of literature and writing. Literary reformers Hu Shih and Chen Duxiu declared the classical language "dead" and promoted the vibrant vernacular in its stead. Hu Shi once said, "A dead language can never produce a living literature. Though often said to be less successful than their counterparts in fiction writing, poets also experimented with the vernacular in new poetic forms, such as free verse and the sonnet. Given that there was no tradition of writing poetry in the vernacular, these experiments were more radical than those in fiction writing and also less easily accepted by the reading public. Other poets, even those among the May Fourth radicals e. May Fourth radicalism, combined with changes in the education system, made possible the emergence of a large group of women writers. While there had been women writers in the late imperial period and the late Qing, they had been few in number. These writers generally tackled domestic issues, such as relations between the sexes, family, and friendship, but they were revolutionary in giving direct expression to female subjectivity. The s and s saw the emergence of spoken drama. In the late s and s, literary journals and societies espousing various artistic theories proliferated. Among the major writers of the period were Guo Moruo, a poet, historian, essayist, and critic; Mao Dun, the first of the novelists to emerge from the League of Left-Wing Writers and one whose work reflected the revolutionary struggle and disillusionment of the late s; satirist and novelist Lao She; and Ba Jin, a novelist whose work was influenced by Ivan Turgenev and other Russian writers. In the s Ba Jin produced a trilogy that depicted the struggle of modern youth against the age-old dominance of the Confucian family system. Comparison often is made between *Jia Family*, one of the novels in the trilogy, and *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Many of these writers became important as administrators of artistic and literary policy after Most of those authors who were still alive during the Cultural Revolution were either purged or forced to submit to public humiliation. By it had adopted the Soviet doctrine of socialist realism; that is, the insistence that art must concentrate on contemporary events in a realistic way, exposing the ills of nonsocialist society and promoting a glorious future under communism. The literary ideals of the League were being simplified and enforced on writers and "cultural workers". Maoist Era [edit] After coming to power in, the Communists gradually

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nationalized the publishing industry, centralized the book distribution system, and brought writers under institutional control through the Writers Union. Periodic literary campaigns targeted figures such as Hu Shi and other figures from the New Culture period, especially Hu Feng , a protege of Lu Xun who, along with his wife Mei Zhi , did not toe the Party line on literature. The ability to satirize and expose the evils in contemporary society that had made writers useful to the Communist Party of China before its accession to power was no longer welcomed. This conflict came to a head in the Hundred Flowers Campaign " Mao Zedong initially encouraged writers to speak out against problems in the new society. Having learned the lessons of the anti-Hu Feng campaign, they were reluctant, but then a flurry of newspaper articles, films, and literary works drew attention to such problems as bureaucratism and authoritarianism within the ranks of the party. At the time of the Great Leap Forward "59 , the government increased its insistence on the use of socialist realism and combined with it so-called revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism. Despite the literary control and strictures to limit subjects to contemporary China and the glories of the revolution, writers produced widely read novels of energy and commitment. The writers decried the waste of time and talent during that decade and bemoaned abuses that had held China back. This literature, often called " scar literature ", or "the literature of the wounded", discussed the experiences of sent-down youth with great though not complete frankness and conveyed disquieting views of the party and the political system. Intensely patriotic, these authors wrote cynically of the political leadership that gave rise to the extreme chaos and disorder of the Cultural Revolution. Many of these themes and attitudes were also found in Fifth Generation films of directors trained after , many of which were based on published novels and short stories. Some of this fiction and cinema extended the blame to the entire generation of leaders and to the political system itself. The political authorities were faced with a serious problem: During this period, the number of literary magazines rose sharply, and many from before the Cultural Revolution were revived. Poetry also changed in its form and content. Four " misty poets ", Bei Dao , Gu Cheng , Duo Duo and Yang Lian expressed themselves in deliberately obscure verse which reflected subjective realism rather than the realism of the sort promoted during the Cultural Revolution. There was a special interest in foreign works. Recent foreign literature was translated, often without carefully considering its interest for the Chinese reader. Literary magazines specializing in translations of foreign short stories became very popular, especially among the young. Some leaders in the government, literary and art circles feared change was happening too fast. The first reaction came in with calls to combat "bourgeois liberalism," a campaign that was repeated in These two difficult periods were followed by the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign in late At the same time, writers remained freer to write in unconventional styles and to treat sensitive subject matter. A spirit of literary experimentation flourished in the second half of the s. As in the May Fourth Movement, women writers came to the fore. China is the largest publisher of books, magazines and newspapers in the world. There are more than literary journals across the country. Living in France but continuing to write primarily in Chinese, Gao Xingjian became the first Chinese writer to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature in

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Basic characteristics[edit] The nature of Romanticism may be approached from the primary importance of the free expression of the feelings of the artist. Samuel Taylor Coleridge and others believed there were natural laws the imaginationâ€”at least of a good creative artistâ€”would unconsciously follow through artistic inspiration if left alone. The concept of the genius , or artist who was able to produce his own original work through this process of creation from nothingness, is key to Romanticism, and to be derivative was the worst sin. This particularly in the effect of nature upon the artist when he is surrounded by it, preferably alone. In contrast to the usually very social art of the Enlightenment , Romantics were distrustful of the human world, and tended to believe a close connection with nature was mentally and morally healthy. Romantic art addressed its audiences with what was intended to be felt as the personal voice of the artist. So, in literature, "much of romantic poetry invited the reader to identify the protagonists with the poets themselves". The application of the term to literature first became common in Germany, where the circle around the Schlegel brothers, critics August and Friedrich , began to speak of romantische Poesie "romantic poetry" in the s, contrasting it with "classic" but in terms of spirit rather than merely dating. Friedrich Schlegel wrote in his Dialogue on Poetry , "I seek and find the romantic among the older moderns, in Shakespeare, in Cervantes, in Italian poetry, in that age of chivalry, love and fable, from which the phenomenon and the word itself are derived. Margaret Drabble described it in literature as taking place "roughly between and ", [24] and few dates much earlier than will be found. In English literature, M. Abrams placed it between , or , this latter a very typical view, and about , perhaps a little later than some other critics. The early period of the Romantic Era was a time of war, with the French Revolution â€” followed by the Napoleonic Wars until These wars, along with the political and social turmoil that went along with them, served as the background for Romanticism. The first emerged in the s and s, the second in the s, and the third later in the century. That it was part of the Counter-Enlightenment , a reaction against the Age of Enlightenment , is generally accepted in current scholarship. Its relationship to the French Revolution , which began in in the very early stages of the period, is clearly important, but highly variable depending on geography and individual reactions. Most Romantics can be said to be broadly progressive in their views, but a considerable number always had, or developed, a wide range of conservative views, [31] and nationalism was in many countries strongly associated with Romanticism, as discussed in detail below. In philosophy and the history of ideas, Romanticism was seen by Isaiah Berlin as disrupting for over a century the classic Western traditions of rationality and the idea of moral absolutes and agreed values, leading "to something like the melting away of the very notion of objective truth", [32] and hence not only to nationalism, but also fascism and totalitarianism , with a gradual recovery coming only after World War II. This is most evident in the aesthetics of romanticism, where the notion of eternal models, a Platonic vision of ideal beauty, which the artist seeks to convey, however imperfectly, on canvas or in sound, is replaced by a passionate belief in spiritual freedom, individual creativity. Arthur Lovejoy attempted to demonstrate the difficulty of defining Romanticism in his seminal article "On The Discrimination of Romanticisms" in his Essays in the History of Ideas ; some scholars see Romanticism as essentially continuous with the present, some like Robert Hughes see in it the inaugural moment of modernity , [35] and some like Chateaubriand , Novalis and Samuel Taylor Coleridge see it as the beginning of a tradition of resistance to Enlightenment rationalismâ€”a "Counter-Enlightenment"â€” [36] [37] to be associated most closely with German Romanticism. An earlier definition comes from Charles Baudelaire: This movement was led by France, with Balzac and Flaubert in literature and Courbet in painting; Stendhal and Goya were important precursors of Realism in their respective media. However, Romantic styles, now often representing the established and safe style against which Realists rebelled, continued to flourish in many fields for the rest of the century and beyond. In music such works from after about are referred to by some writers as

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"Late Romantic" and by others as "Neoromantic" or "Postromantic", but other fields do not usually use these terms; in English literature and painting the convenient term "Victorian" avoids having to characterise the period further. In northern Europe, the Early Romantic visionary optimism and belief that the world was in the process of great change and improvement had largely vanished, and some art became more conventionally political and polemical as its creators engaged polemically with the world as it was. Elsewhere, including in very different ways the United States and Russia, feelings that great change was underway or just about to come were still possible. Displays of intense emotion in art remained prominent, as did the exotic and historical settings pioneered by the Romantics, but experimentation with form and technique was generally reduced, often replaced with meticulous technique, as in the poems of Tennyson or many paintings. If not realist, late 19th-century art was often extremely detailed, and pride was taken in adding authentic details in a way that earlier Romantics did not trouble with. Many Romantic ideas about the nature and purpose of art, above all the pre-eminent importance of originality, remained important for later generations, and often underlie modern views, despite opposition from theorists.

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Chapter 3 : Top 10 Famous Writers in Modern China

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The collection of Chinese texts presented here is intended as a resource for students of written Chinese from the advanced beginner level onward. The selections represent a wide range of periods and genres, but all are well known in modern-day China and worth reading in their own right. Each text can be displayed in your browser window or downloaded for use with Chinese text reading and dictionary software such as Clavis Sinica or Wenlin. Clicking on "Download Text" opens a GB-coded version of the text you can download for later use. Some of the texts are also provided with original English translations created by University of Michigan students. The numerical ratings next to each title provide a rough measure, on a scale from one to seven, of the relative difficulty of the text based on the usage frequency of the characters it contains in modern Chinese. A low number indicates a relatively accessible text, with a low percentage of less commonly used characters. A higher number indicates a more difficult text, with a higher percentage of such characters. This measure does not, obviously, take into account the additional challenges posed by texts written in the traditional literary style. Looking for Simpler Readings or Audio Recordings? For additional readings at the beginner level, try out the Stepping Stones e-textbook, a set of 15 multi-media lessons designed to introduce the most commonly used characters. For additional practice texts at the intermediate levels, visit the Chinese Voices Project website. This is a collection of short annotated and graded texts about life in modern Beijing. Each text is accompanied by an MP3 audio recording, so you can listen to the stories as you read along. Struggling to Learn Chinese Characters? There are an increasing number of online study aids for students of written Chinese at every level. A number of resources designed to help you learn Chinese characters, including web-based applets and smartphone apps, have been created by the author of this site. Having Trouble with these Texts? If you can see the Chinese characters but need help reading and understanding them, please click here. This web site receives over unique visits each day and has earned a five-star "Essential" rating from the Asia Observer. It is constantly being expanded, and new contributions are welcome. If you find this to be a useful resource, please consider adding a link from your own website. Comments, suggestions, and corrections should be directed to dporter umich.

Modern Chinese Literature The Advocate 2. This well-known short story describes the conversion of a lawyer from an employee of a wealthy provincial landlord to an advocate for the impoverished local citizens as they begin to speak out against his oppressive rule. View Text Download Text Drunkenness 2. One of the characters featured in the selected chapter is Cheng Ji Si Han, the first emperor of Yuan dynasty. Published in , his autobiographical novel Jia The Family recounts the lives of the three sons of a powerful family and offers a powerful critique of contemporary society. Chinese English Hands 2. A close friend of Lu Xun, she is best known for her political satire and her depictions of life under Japanese rule and in small towns still governed by feudal customs. Her style, at once sweeping and compassionate, has been compared to that of Tolstoy, Flaubert, and Ba Jin. Ting Yuan Shen Shen, which has been adapted as a popular television series in Taiwan, tells the story of a young couple whose relationship is complicated by a difference in their social classes. The two chapters selected here depict the first encounter of the pair. View Text Download Text Laughter 2. A friend of Bertolt Brecht, she published three novels about life under communist rule that are known for their depictions of upscale urban life and their sceptical portrayals of Europeans and upper-class Chinese. This well-known piece, published in her first collection of short stories in , combines familiar elements of war, the decline of a prominent family, and a romance between a wealthy widow and a divorcee. A film adaptation of the story was produced by Ann Hui in View Text Download Text Medicine 2. View Text Download Text Midnight 2. His massive and immensely popular novel Midnight depicts the conflicts among different social forces amidst the chaos of post-depression Shanghai. This novel was important in the evolution of revolutionary realism in China and

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provided insight into the politics and complex social relations of the s. As one of the pioneers of modern Chinese literature, Zhu Ziqing is best remembered for prose works that depicted the life and landscape of China with grace and subtlety. His studies in the US and UK exposed him to the Western poetic tradition, and inspired his own experiments with vernacular poetry in both free style and traditional forms. His work is known for its expressiveness and imagination, its assertive use of the first-person voice, and its iconoclastic exploration of themes of love, beauty, and freedom. Twelve of his best-known poems are included here. View Text Download Text Remembrance 2. He studied European literature at Oxford and the University of Paris before returning to China and beginning a teaching career at Tsinghua University. Coming from a peasant background himself, Zhao employed forms of expression and story-telling that were rooted in this society, contributing to the emergence of a new "proletarian" literature vaunted by Mao and characteristic of the revolutionary era. Selected here are the first two chapters from one of his best-known stories. Her novels attracted a wide following for their explorations of the female psyche and of the condition of women in contemporary China, as well as their celebration of the social changes brought about by the communist revolution. This prize-winning novel, published in , is set during the Land Reform Movement of the civil war period Chapter 24, presented here, describes of the subtle beauty of the country orchard and the excitement of peasants whose class-consciousness is awakened after the redistribution of land by the communist party. Set in a small Beijing teahouse, the play opens with a panoramic depiction of characters from a wide spectrum of social backgrounds, providing a mosaic representation of Chinese urban society at the turn of the last century. The second chapter, included here, depicts the dramatic moment when the character Fu Gui loses the entire fortune of a well-to-do family to gambling. It sets the scene for the hardship and suffering his family will endure in the decades to follow. The opening chapter is presented here. An active participant in the May Fourth Movement and a close friend of Ba Jin, she was also an important figure in the history of early feminist literature in China. Her short story "West Wind" explores dilemmas familiar to successful professional women both within China and elsewhere. The heroine is a successful intellectual who encounters a former admirer whom she had rejected for the sake of her career and independence ten years before. The poem dates from the Northern Dynasties A. His erotic novel Roupuyan, the first chapter of which is excerpted here, draws irreverently upon both Confucian classics and the arts of the bedroom in recounting the adventures of a lusty poet who is determined to marry the most beautiful woman in the world. With skill and subtlety, Cao captures the personalities, emotions, and complex relationships of the inhabitants of upper-class Qing society. In the well-known twenty-seventh chapter, presented here, the heroine Dai Yu likens her own fate to that of a flower, which blooms for only a short time before withering. Known both for its eroticism and rich depiction of contemporary social history, the work paints a troubling panorama of social life in the early modern China. The selected chapter tells the story of Ximen Qing, a shop owner who has risen rapidly in socio-economic status by allying himself with corrupted officials, and depicts both the domestic strife and sexual liaisons that characterize his household life. His supernatural tales explore the boundaries between the normal and the strange, human and ghost, reality and illusion. He was also an incisive social critic and commentator who spoke out against injustice wherever he saw it. The eleven representative poems selected here touch on topics including friendship, nature, love, and war. His poetry is admired for his expansive imagination and extraordinary spirit of freedom and grandeur, which has captured the fascination of generations of poetry-lovers in China and abroad. Selected here are fifteen of his best known poems. The nine poems collected here are intensely personal, and equally vivid in their depictions of natural scenes and states of mind. Sometimes called the most popular novel in Asia, it tells the story of the late Han Dynasty in the second and third centuries. A leading advisor to the Qianlong Emperor, Chi Yun, also known as Ji Xiaolan, oversaw the compilation of the imperial encyclopedia and frequently served as the chief examiner in the imperial civil examinations. The Shanxi Merchant is a brief, cutting parable about the vices of greed and ingratitude. Seven of the strategies are presented here, together with brief explanatory anecdotes. While the novel exists in many widely varying versions, all readers will be familiar with the famous story about Wu Song and the tiger

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excerpted here. The film was banned in China because for its portrayal of the devastating impact that Maoist policies of the period had on ordinary, well-meaning people. The determined efforts of the principal characters to sustain some degree of dignity and normalcy in their lives make for a damning critique of an intrusive political system whose methods and ideologies seem at times to border on the insane. This excerpt from the script presents the dialogue from the opening scenes of the film. Written in , the song was based on a northern Shanxi folk song. It survived the many upheavals that followed, and became one of the most commonly heard anthems of the Cultural Revolution. This excerpt comes from the first part of the film, when the two orphan boys, Douzi and Shitou, have just been inducted into the brutal world of the Peking Opera training academy. View Text Download Text Hero 3. The emperor has gained his throne at the cost of many lives, and he constantly fears for his own. When a nameless minor official claims to have killed three legendary fighters who were plotting against him, the emperor invites him to tell his story. This excerpt from the script begins with the owner sending his nephew on an errand that will lead to a fortuitous meeting with his aunt, and ends with the naming of the child that is the result of their liaison. Chinese English Liuyang He 3. View Text Download Text Meimei 2. Gong Li plays an educated young woman who is married against her will to a wealthy man who already has three other wives. She rapidly learns the Machiavellian rules of survival and supremacy that govern the frosty relationships among the women in a vicious game that can end only in tragedy. The film has been read as an allegory about both the condition of women and the corruption of modern Chinese society. The excerpt from the script presented here is from the beginning of the film, and follows the heroine as she is introduced to the household, its inhabitants, and its peculiar and ultimately deadly rituals. Chinese English Red Sorghum 2. The film tells the story of a Shandong wine distillery in the s, combining a colorful portrayal of peasant life with a bitter tale of resistance against the Japanese occupation. Chinese English Wo de Zuguo 2. An ironic allegory about the fate of rural women in post-revolutionary China, Yellow Earth tells the story of a teenage girl in Shaanxi province who has been betrothed since infancy with a boy in a neighboring family. Included here are the lyrics to the four best-known parts: Chinese English The Donkey and the Tiger 1. The fable explains the origin of a popular Chinese proverb, or chengyu, meaning "a person with a very limited outlook.

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Chapter 4 : The romantic generation of modern Chinese writers

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During this time, literature began to move in channels that were not entirely new but were in strong contrast to the standard literary practice of the eighteenth century. How the word romantic came to be applied to this period is something of a puzzle. Originally the word was applied to the Latin or Roman dialects used in the Roman provinces, especially France, and to the stories written in these dialects. Romantic is a derivative of *romant*, which was borrowed from the French *romant* in the sixteenth century. At first it meant only "like the old romances" but gradually it began to carry a certain taint. Romantic, according to L. Smith in his *Words and Idioms*, connoted "false and fictitious beings and feelings, without real existence in fact or in human nature"; it also suggested "old castles, mountains and forests, pastoral plains, waste and solitary places" and a "love for wild nature, for mountains and moors. In Germany, especially, the word was used in strong opposition to the term classical. The grouping together of the so-called Lake poets Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey with Scott, Byron, Keats, and Shelley as the romantic poets is late Victorian, apparently as late as the middle s. And it should be noted that these poets did not recognize themselves as "romantic," although they were familiar with the word and recognized that their practice differed from that of the eighteenth century. The reaction to the standard literary practice and critical norms of the eighteenth century occurred in many areas and in varying degrees. Reason no longer held the high place it had held in the eighteenth century; its place was taken by imagination, emotion, and individual sensibility. The eccentric and the singular took the place of the accepted conventions of the age. A concentration on the individual and the minute replaced the eighteenth-century insistence on the universal and the general. Individualism replaced objective subject matter; probably at no other time has the writer used himself as the subject of his literary works to such an extent as during the romantic period. Writers tended to regard themselves as the most interesting subject for literary creation; interest in urban life was replaced by an interest in nature, particularly in untamed nature and in solitude. Classical literature quickly lost the esteem which poets like Pope had given it. The romantic writers turned back to their own native traditions. The Medieval and Renaissance periods were ransacked for new subject matter and for literary genres that had fallen into disuse. The standard eighteenth-century heroic couplet was replaced by a variety of forms such as the ballad, the metrical romance, the sonnet, ottava rima, blank verse, and the Spenserian stanza, all of which were forms that had been neglected since Renaissance times. The romantic writers responded strongly to the impact of new forces, particularly the French Revolution and its promise of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The humanitarianism that had been developing during the eighteenth century was taken up enthusiastically by the romantic writers. Wordsworth, the great champion of the spiritual and moral values of physical nature, tried to show the natural dignity, goodness, and the worth of the common man. The combination of new interests, new attitudes, and fresh forms produced a body of literature that was strikingly different from the literature of the eighteenth century, but that is not to say that the eighteenth century had no influence on the romantic movement. Practically all of the seeds of the new literary crop had been sown in the preceding century. The romantic period includes the work of two generations of writers. The first generation was born during the thirty and twenty years preceding ; the second generation was born in the last decade of the s. The essayist Thomas De Quincey, born in , falls between the two generations. Keats and Shelley belong to the second generation, along with Byron, who was older than they were by a few years. All three were influenced by the work of the writers of the first generation and, ironically, the careers of all three were cut short by death so that the writers of the first generation were still on the literary scene after the writers of the second generation had disappeared. The major writers of the second romantic generation were primarily poets; they produced little prose, outside of their letters. Another striking

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difference between the two generations is that the writers of the first generation, with the exception of Blake, all gained literary reputations during their lifetime. Of the writers of the second generation, only Byron enjoyed fame while he was alive, more fame than any of the other romantic writers, with perhaps the exception of Scott, but Keats and Shelley had relatively few readers while they were alive. It was not until the Victorian era that Keats and Shelley became recognized as major romantic poets.

Chapter 5 : Chinese Text Sampler: Readings in Chinese Literature, History, and Popular Culture

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Chapter 6 : The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers

Despite the distance in time and space with the European Romanticism, the romantic mentality continued to inform the thinking and doing of intellectuals in Lu Xun's generation.

Chapter 7 : Popular Modern Romance Books

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Chapter 8 : About the Romantic Period

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