



Qian Zhongshu

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p.121. "Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, each of which has had a noteworthy influence in Chinese history." The influence of Judaism in Chinese history is negligible.

P15. *An Annotated Guide to Chinese Current Periodicals in Hongkong*. This is a list of periodicals published in Hong Kong, not a list of holdings in Hong Kong libraries, and should not be regarded as one of the "many union lists and library holding lists of Chinese periodicals in China and other countries."

P16. *Chinese Periodicals in British Libraries*. This 1972 publication is superseded by *A Bibliography of Chinese Newspapers and Periodicals in European Libraries* (P12). The entry should be deleted.

Wolff states that he hopes "this manual will prove useful to all who approach the subject—beginners, experienced China scholars, and especially teachers." Those competent in the Chinese language may find their time better spent reading any of the three comprehensive bibliographical manuals published in 1980: Wu Hsiao-ju 吳小如 and Chuang Ming-ch'ün 繆銘權, *Chung-kuo wen-shih kung-chü tz'u-liao-shu chü-yao* 中國文史工具資料書舉要 (Hong Kong: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan); Wang Ming-ken 王明根, Wu Hao-k'un 吳浩坤 and Po-ming 柏明, *Wen-shih kung-chü-shu ti yüan-liu ho shih-yung* 文史工具書的源流和使用 (Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-pan-she); and the Library, Chinese Department, and History Department of Nanking University, *Wen-shih-che kung-chü-shu chien-chieh* 文史哲工具書簡介 (Tientsin: T'ien-chin jen-min ch'u-pan-she).

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Qian Zhongshu, by Theodore Hutters. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982. Pp. 187, Preface, Chronology, Notes, Bibliography, Index. \$16.95.

A major literary figure of twentieth-century China, Qian Zhongshu is, as Theodore Hutters puts it, a man of "awesome abilities and knowledge" (p. 11). To do justice to his topic in the first published book-length study of Qian, Hutters has not only drawn on the sweep of Chinese literature, but also recruited voices from a small army of general theorists from Herman Melville to Wolfgang Iser. The result is both a general purpose introduction to Qian and his work and an extensive argument for analysis of elements of his prose style as crucial to an understanding and evaluation of his achievement. It is an intelligent, stimulating, and crowded agenda.

In the role of a general-purpose study the book offers a chapter on Qian's biography, a nonsense bibliography, and chapter-length discussions of his works, beginning with his literary criticism and then building on that to explore his familiar essays and fiction. The book quite understandably stops short of discussing Qian's recent four-volume survey of Chinese literature, *Guanzhui bian* (*Pipe-awl chapters*, as translated by Hutters, with the "b" of "bian" sagging to a "p" on pages 11 and 178, perhaps from the weight of the topic), which was appearing just as Hutters was finishing his study. The biography is a solid improvement over anything preceding it, based in part on the author's interviews with Qian which helped dispel a number of misconceptions about his past. The bibliography contains judicious notes and restricts itself to the most pertinent primary and secondary sources. C. T. Hsia, as the only previously published major authority on Qian, has cause to blink at his new name, Xia Zhiqing, and it would have been proper to include the articles by Mai Bingkun since they contain interesting and helpful remarks and are cited in the notes to Hutters' own list of primary sources. But these are technical quibbles over the best bibliography of Qian's work anywhere. The chapters devoted to Qian's "shorter criticism," his engaging and bewildering *Tan yi lu* (*On the art of poetry*), and his allusive and elusive familiar essays are all pioneering studies, very much welcome to the field. These

chapters also serve to develop in stages the methodology by which Hutters presents his original analysis and appraisal of Qian's well-known fiction, culminating in a study of the novel *Fortress Besieged* (*Wei cheng*), which confirms its place as a major artistic achievement of twentieth-century Chinese literature.

Hutters emphasizes that Qian's style shared with other twentieth-century Chinese writers the motive of shocking readers out of easy assumptions and habits of thought conditioned by traditions. On the other hand, Qian put the heritage of the Chinese literary language and rhetoric to use in a more positive way than his predecessors. Just as he did not allow his style to be identified solely with one model or another, so his creative works have tended to act as a respirator of ideas, inhaling them only to exhale them, and thereby undercut any easy and static allegiance to a given thought. Rather, an ironic force guides the flow of thoughts, moving them from the playful to the sharply satirical to the tragic. As developed in his short essays, this practice needed to be modified when Qian turned to fiction. Qian needed to learn how to create a solidly imagined world and characters who engage the reader before he set to overpowering them with his ironic and ultimately tragic vision. In more concrete terms, Qian needed to allow narrative and dialogue to develop his stories before overwhelming them with the ironic intrusions and diversions of Qian's distant narrator, something he did not accomplish in his shorter stories so well as in the renowned novel *Fortress Besieged*.

Both praise and criticism are due Hutters for his handling of the various impressive tasks he undertakes. For a book which gives the reader an unrivalled exploration of continuity and development in Qian's work, *Qian Zhongshu* can be unnecessarily discursive. The chapter on *Tan yi lu* does deliver on this promise to illustrate that book's "characteristic modes of discourse" (37). But if it also follows through on its commitment to "shed some light on the principles behind the creative prose" (38) that are the subject of later chapters, there is more soft backlighting than demonstrative highlighting. For example, the reader is twice reminded of Qian's commitment as a theoretician "to make literature autonomous," (39) but this point is not developed for the reader to gauge very well its meaning and importance for Qian. It might be helpful to know that he repeatedly returned to this theme in *Tan yi lu*, or even to consider the form of the book against the circumstantial background of the author: a young Chinese who was educated overseas to pour his knowledge of Chinese literature into an international scholarly form of writing and a Chinese intellectual surrounded by his contemporaries' denunciations of traditional literary language. Qian then poured his mastery of international scholarship into a traditional Chinese form, using literary language while also freely demolishing a host of traditional literary theories. Now this is a man who valued autonomy. And Hutters knows it, but seems reluctant to deal with it. Hutters can also assert major concepts with great cogency, such as his several well-formed conclusions about *Fortress Besieged*. For example, "the final meaning of the novel is surely the demonstration of how the alienation which a corrupt world brings about is manifested in everyone" (136-137). Alas, this is buried in the middle of a discussion on techniques of characterizations, and intentionally or not, attracts more attention to whether the methods Hutters employs are leading us to a definitive statement, or assumes that we have already arrived at one, or whether the point is so evident or irrelevant that it does not require pointed demonstration, rather than to the cohesiveness and importance of what Hutters is otherwise arguing.

Hutters has brought an admirable range of historical and theoretical concepts to bear on Qian's writing, and he is not prone to borrow them uncritically or apply them too narrowly. Chapter Four, "The Essays," presents a major example of the field and depth of vision Hutters can provide, drawing a parallel between stylistic reforms in seventeenth-century Europe and twentieth-century China and placing Qian in that context. Yet, somehow this educated and apt frame of reference does not seem to do justice either to the fundamental assumptions behind Chinese prose reform, the resulting complexities, or Qian's relationship to them. Hutters' demonstration of Qian's style as being baroque, after the manner of the seventeenth-century Europeans, is apt. So too is his reference to the sense of quandary which some Chinese writers felt in trying to fashion a rich

new vernacular style which did not surrender its autonomy to the monopoly on rhetoric held by literary language. Yet to make this issue the central one in prose reform and its spokesmen as broadly representative is dubious. Hutters does touch base with many of the prominent writers on prose style during the Republican era. He does not, however, frame his argument clearly or adequately in presenting the elements of style to be considered, distinguishing genres and the issues peculiar to them, or delimiting the very different contexts in which various critics made their various statements.

The telescoped history of prose issues offered by Hutters begins with citing Hu Shi's "Eight Don'ts" and emphasizing his injunction: "Don't use balanced phrasing—in prose discard parallelism, in poetry discard regulation" (71). Actually, Hu Shi wrote, "Don't emphasize antithetical couplets" (bu zhong duiou 不重對偶); in the original statement he expanded on this advice and made it plain that he regarded parallel structure to be a natural part of language, unnatural only when it becomes the primary cohesive principle of writing, a prescriptive form as in the *pianwen* 駢文 style of some Qing dynasty essays. Similarly, when he said "Don't use allusions" Hu did not intend an absolute rejection of allusions or other figurative and rhetorical devices, but only a narrow, prescriptive use of them which pre-empted innovative and individual observation. The assault on widespread practices among writers using Classical Chinese did not add up to an indictment of the classical language, except in the utilitarian, pragmatic sense that it had lost its usefulness in a modern era striving for mass education.

Hutters moves on to imply a stylistic connection between the similarity of Qing dynasty examination essays and those essays derisively referred to as "foreign *bagu*." This assertion is not supported by any source, and can really be taken as too literal an interpretation of the term "foreign *bagu*," which referred more to formalism in thought that appeared dogmatic and stereotyped. Hutters then appropriates a quote by Lu Xun on how to write fiction, although the topic at hand is essay writing. Furthermore, parallelism was never an issue in fiction to begin with, and Lu Xun never pointed to parallelism as a major concern in his essays on how to write. True, he did ridicule traditionalists by a parody of parallel style, as Hutters illustrates in an excellent example (75). But by arguing against them using their own form of argument Lu Xun was doing more to ridicule their point than to show that parallelism was an ineffective means of argument. Irony can easily turn on itself, as in the example Hutters cites, and Lu Xun's use of parallelism cannot always be reduced to a principle of "deliberate irony" (74). Neither can Zhou Zuoren's use of rhetoric be so characterized. When Hutters turns to Zhou Zuoren's criticism of the Ming dynasty Gong'an School of writers, reacting against other classical schools, he does not consider that Zhou's evaluation of their work as "empty and facile, clear without being deep" (72) was a comment on both the style and the insights of these writers, not the rhetorical features alone. Zhou did not at all preclude, for example, the idea that a new foreign influence unavailable to the Ming writers might offer twentieth-century writers a different inspiration for insight and for expression.

On the contrary, Hutters draws the conclusion that "classical prose is hobbled by a rhetorical baggage" (73). Hence he draws a sharp distinction between a classical language with a monopoly on rhetoric and a vernacular "so lacking in resonance as to satisfy no one" (73). This conception is not enhanced by alluding to Hu Shi's verse as representative in its insipidness either of writing in vernacular as a whole or of prose essays in particular. Perhaps, after all, the issues were not so much linguistic but social, involving the roles of writers, their conflicting goals, and their use of the language, not that language itself. It is striking, for example, that Hutters can find parallels with seventeenth-century European prose reform and not touch at all on reforms in Japan, where Zhou and Lu Xun were educated, and which probably influenced Hu Shi. As for foreign influence, Hutters takes up briefly the issue of "European styles" (73) and the "universal disapproval" they encountered. As it turns out, Hutters is referring to the disapproval of Qu Qiubai, who can hardly stand for universal opinion, when one target of his criticism was the language of Shen Congwen's fiction. If "styles" here refers to vocabulary and grammar, then the point being stressed by Qu

Qiubai was whether a text was intelligible when read aloud, especially to the uneducated masses. Lu Xun was a serious and sustained advocate of importing foreign words and grammatical structures, and even Qu did not have any absolute argument against them except in the context of literature "for the masses."

What ultimately concerns Hutters, and the reason he lays stress on parallelism, is the study of sentence cohesion, a topic he opens up and develops quite engagingly in remarks on Lu Xun, Feng Fei-ming, and finally Qian Zhongshu. As the one rhetorical device taken up by Hutters which is useful to the analysis of relationships between sentences, parallelism does provide a theme on which to build, but the confusion of this topic with historical observations on lexical, grammatical, and other rhetorical elements internal to sentence structure does not serve to clarify and support the main point of interest as Hutters moves into closer focus on Qian Zhongshu.

We may see, as Hutters does, that Qian's use of baroque style is the resolution of a certain stylistic quandary. But even more it is the subversion of belief that the acquisition of the new, vernacular language in writing would bring with it the clarification of and progress in thought itself which Qian's predecessors had hoped for. Qian's baroque and ironic form made an issue of the assumptions of the superior value of vernacular as much as his essays conformed to the obligation to use it. And his essays also teased and satirized his contemporaries, from the Lin Yutang humorists to tub-thumping socialists, as much as they ridiculed a lazy traditional formalism. In taking advantage of the real gains to be made by showing a parallel between seventeenth-century Europe and twentieth-century China, Hutters has sacrificed a necessary accounting of the substantial contrasts between these two prose reform movements, the very separate contexts in which various Chinese writers presented very different goals and motives for their different emphases on prose reform, and consequently the differences between the significance of Qian's use of the baroque and its function in seventeenth-century Europe.

In a similar vein, *Qian Zhongshu* brings discourse analysis to bear in evaluating as well as analyzing Qian's short fiction. Here Hutters rightly emphasizes that he is dealing with the craft of fiction, not so much its art, and the results provide a major enhancement to our appreciation of the achievements and limitations of the stories. Moreover, in offering a final critical evaluation of the stories Hutters is careful to take the art into account as well as the craft. Those readers concerned with the evaluation of, for example, the story "Souvenir" (Jinian) would question more the adequacy of Hutters' approach than the accuracy of individual analytic points. Basically "Souvenir" is a tale of the discovery of mortality, particularly one woman's experience in becoming aware of her mortality during the course of an adulterous affair and its aftermath, as told through a disturbingly adulterous confrontation of comedy of manners with pathos, the two mated through carefully crafted symbolic imagery. Hutters has found the style as deadly as the theme is dour, arguing that the intrusive narrator never allows the principal female character enough life to engage the reader's sympathy or to develop beyond being merely a passive instrument of the narrator's ironic musings. There is truth in what Hutters writes, but instead of emphasizing what makes it one of the most impressive short stories of the 1940s, Hutters presents a list of some ten criticisms (110) better suited to describing one of the ten worst stories of the Republican era. The temptation to wrangle with Hutters over his list of criticisms overwhelms one's inclination to accept one or two well-placed remarks. At times he seems resolutely middle-brow in scolding Qian for not allowing the reader "to develop any real sympathy for the character" and maintaining "excessive detachment" (110). This sounds like criticisms of Henry James, and perhaps knowing that his remarks are simply a matter of taste rather than esthetic imperatives, Hutters argues that there is not "enough depiction of the heroine's inner struggles," and that her "passivity, alluded to again and again and reinforced structurally by the static and exterior descriptions of her mental state, at last renders her almost inert to the reader; it becomes difficult to maintain interest" (110). One may answer to this that if she is passive then it is difficult if not impossible for the writer to portray unformed thoughts. On the other hand, it is difficult to characterize as passive a woman who has defied her parents in order to marry the

man of her choosing and subsequently conducted an adulterous affair. Nor is it obvious that Qian's narrator is unsympathetic. Indeed, the memorable depiction of an air raid bombing in which the female character is impregnated, as it were, with the knowledge of death, and the final scene in which her husband remains by her in concern and compassion, are powerful moments of cruelty and mercy which create a sense of empathy far beyond a simple and contingent sympathy. Hutters' remarks actually raise the question whether he is himself disappointed in and unsympathetic to this sort of character. Unreflective and naive, she is a more limited personality than the central character of *Fortress Besieged*, and given that, she occupies a short story, after all, not a novel. It is a lesser achievement, to be sure, but not such a failure.

Another task Hutters has undertaken is close analysis of passages of Qian's prose, and again there is cause to admire this as an exemplary undertaking which gives structure and focus to important ideas; yet it also raises questions. At times Hutters offers dubious translations, which would matter less if they were not the focus of so much attention. Major examples occur in the translations of the essay "Tan jiaoxun" (Discussing Instruction). Hutters quotes Qian as writing: "To speak frankly, the world's distinctions between right and wrong, good and evil, heterodoxy and orthodoxy and so on are nothing more than the distinction between self and other, just like bodily cleanliness and filth" (85). Hutters here omits Qian's phrase "sometimes" or "at times" *you shihou* 有時候, so that the original translates more as: "... distinctions between right and wrong . . . and so on are *at times* nothing more than the distinctions between self and other . . ." The omission is natural because Hutters is emphasizing Qian's desire to shock readers and challenge them with specious logic. To modify the statement with the phrase "at times" raises the question whether Qian was so deliberate and singleminded in his pursuit of specious logic as Hutters implies, or whether he was at times being quite straightforward, realizing that his brashness required some degree of modification. Similarly Hutters translates the phrase *xiansha* 閒殺 as "killed" in the sentence: "If mankind could really improve itself it would not need to receive any more instruction; would it not then have been a waste that so many people have been killed?" (p. 87). The Chinese reader is much more apt to read the *sha* as a variant of *sha* 煞 used as a verb complement, and one could get by with a translation to the effect: "If mankind really improved itself, then there would be no need for instruction, and wouldn't that be wasting to death all these people (i.e., those devoted to moral instruction)?" The same problem in translation arises in the rendering of *mosha* 抹殺 in the sentence: "That *animal called man* [English in the original], although—contrary to what one would expect—not susceptible to complete extinction, has a few among its number who have achieved self-mastery and can save others." (87). *Mosha*, translated here as "extinction," would normally carry the connotation of "dismissed, erased, disregarded." Perhaps the sentence can stand then as: "While *that animal called man* actually cannot be altogether dismissed, indeed there are also those who can achieve self-mastery and save others" (p. 87). At least such translations would save Hutters several sentences of unnecessarily tortuous reflection (on page 88) and spare us an overdrawn portrait of Qian as a writer given to gratuitous, shocking statements.

At other times, even when Hutters provides a translation we can accept, he seems to turn a blind eye to the implications of the passage under scrutiny. The following quotation is taken from the discussion of the story "God's Dream" (Shangdi de meng):

Woman, with apparent care, laughed ingratiatingly. It was a laugh which extended through her whole torso, adding a quiver to the full curves of her body. What she said seemed to float up on that laugh from the bottom of her heart, each word rising and falling with the laugh: "You really are the omniscient creator of all things! Nothing can be hidden from you, I am really awestruck. Actually there isn't anything that I really want. You've been good to us and we're completely satisfied—it really can't be considered a request." (102)

Hutters comments that the "lengthy interlude" preceding the speech of the woman, both of which are cited above, is:

... not only so elaborate as to detract from the progress of the dialogue, it also adds nothing to what we already know: the insincerity of her flattery is quite apparent in the speech itself. This is especially the case in light of the fact that we have just been told that God is angry because of man's and woman's disregard of Him. It is as if Qian does not trust the reader to be able to sense the irony surrounding her remarks and that he feels obliged to draw our attention to it, reducing its force. (102-103)

Another reader might feel that all the quivering, the curves, the laughter, and so forth are describing a woman in a caricature of cloying, manipulative sexuality displayed to soothe and distract the angry God. He might be mildly titillated and perhaps drawn to reflect on Qian's repeated images of the heavens and the divine throughout his fiction as projections of profane human behavior. Huters, however, has reduced the passage to a redundant portrait of sheer insincerity, and in doing so misplaced his argument that Qian does not always trust his reader enough to see his point.

When Huters rises to his technical best he is very good indeed, as when he sets the guidebooks of Scholes and Kellogg aside to formulate the special and sophisticated quality of the novel *Fortress Besieged*:

What *Fortress* and Hongjian's disposition in it represent, however, is a society in which the old ways hang on, without making any sense, but where the shape of a new order from which these values can be confidently lampooned and transcended is yet to come into being. Thus Hongjian is forced, as it were, to conduct a personal satire within a highly problematic, "mimetic" situation—with tragic results. (138)

Here we may be moving very close to a view of Qian as a modernist whose unsettling vision will not be comfortably framed in conventions of one or another genre but undermines both the assumptions of the reader and the feckless character Fang Hongjian. This statement by Huters represents the best and most pregnant portions in *Qian Zhongshu*, next to which the flaws we may find are secondary.

Finally Huters gives a laconic account of the place of Qian's work in the social context of the 1940s. Rightly making allusion to the mixed reception accorded *Fortress Besieged* in post-war China, Huters follows this with a curious note: "The need for positive action in China after 1945 makes *Fortress's* hard fate understandable: most Chinese agreed then and would agree now that the bitter years after World War II were no time to laugh or even to engage in much self-searching" (157). Setting aside the assertion of having access to what most Chinese thought then or now and its relevance, those of the educated elite with the opportunity to read Qian's work certainly found time to laugh, whether they were entertained by the likes of Chen Baichen's satires, such as "How to get promoted" (*Sheng guan tu*), or Chang Ai-ling's comic moviescripts, such as "Long live the missus" (*Taitai wansui*). As for self-searching, there is not very much evidence that most readers read the work in that way; those who did have been among its admirers. Perhaps the pessimistic vision of entropy which haunts Qian's work was not conditioned so much by the war as a unique event, but as the latest manifestation of the tortured course of Chinese history in this century. This vision was not unlike Lu Xun's response to the Republican Revolution in "The True Story of Ah Q" and that of Ye Shengtao to the 1920s in *Ni Huanzhi*. Unlike them, however, Qian did not commit himself to portraits which implied solutions through social or political engineering. To those who saw such action as a way out of the clutches of entropy, Qian performed a service in satirizing his social peers, but he also dismayed them by pre-empting with such a satire any confidence in a new order. His openly hard look at human nature is the sort of writing that was controversial then and remains so today.

Even were *Qian Zhongshu* a flawless book it would not be the last on this writer, and those who write succeeding ones may well find this first one indispensable. As one of the most important books on a single Chinese writer yet to appear, *Qian Zhongshu* sets up a powerful

conception of esthetic analysis which sustains a remarkably rich and broad discussion of Qian's work. This is encouraging to see.

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Ding Ling's Fiction: Ideology and Narrative in Modern Chinese Literature, by Yi-tsi Mei Feuerwerker. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982. Pp. 224. \$20.00.

Yi-tsi Mei Feuerwerker makes a brilliant argument in *Ding Ling's Fiction: Ideology and Narrative in Modern Chinese Literature*. Ding Ling's fiction, she states, resembles all writing in that ideology decides its limits. Yet, at the same time, the narratives in Ding Ling's stories never stop trying to redefine their own boundaries either by subverting or transforming ideology. The sometimes harmonious, sometimes dissonant fit between ideology and narrative gives the fiction its meaning.

On the basis of her thesis Feuerwerker divides the book into four chapters. Each shows how the writer either reconciled or failed to reconcile narrative practice to encompassing ideology. Ding Ling, Feuerwerker stresses, felt compelled to write under all circumstances. Her individual fate paralleled that of Chinese literature. To reinforce this theme Feuerwerker pays a great deal of attention to the images of writers which appear in Ding Ling's fiction. These help explain not only Ding Ling's own changing identity as a writer, but the basic contradiction her generation faced: how to develop a literature so closely in tune with revolutionary ideas that the bourgeois producers of those texts could efface themselves and their voices from the very work they created. At the end of each chapter Feuerwerker illustrates her generalizations with a close reading of individual texts.

However, *Ding Ling's Fiction* raises another issue, in some ways as valuable as the thesis itself. Feuerwerker's reading of Ding Ling rests on her familiarity with Western literary theory. If we wish to reveal *how* a literature is what it is, as Susan Sontag argued in her old essay "Against Interpretation," we must abandon naive, politicized, sociological arguments, all of which reduce literature to something else. Feuerwerker makes this point herself in the Introduction, and later through her very rich, well-informed readings.

When Feuerwerker uses the term ideology she does not mean political dogma. She has drawn together Barthes' notion of the cultural code, and Geertz's definition of ideology as "a body of maxims and prejudices which constitute both a vision of the world and a system of values" (16) to work out a method flexible enough to reach non-Western narrative. All writers exist inside cultural or ideological contexts which, in Feuerwerker's words, "make the world of experience initially intelligible and coherent as the writer begins to write." (154) Because ideology defines experience it constitutes a "perspective," which writers inscribe onto their work automatically. The literary critic must give up the crude notion of ideology as superimposition or mere distortion of the real, to understand the fundamental role of ideology in forming both experience and literature. Inside ideological boundaries writers carry out what Feuerwerker calls narrative practice, "the selection of theme and subject matter, concepts of character, notions of causality and plot, use of setting and metaphor, style and language, choice of narrative mode." (3) Theoretically, the elements of narrative practice, though subordinate to ideology, form an autonomous body of technique. But generally, the way writers construct narrative depends largely on the governing ideology. When a writer uses techniques which undermine or challenge the prevailing ideology, as Ding Ling did in "When I was in Xia Village," for example, she runs the risk of estranging her readers.

In Chapter One, "Subjectivism and Literature," which covers the period 1927 to 1930, Feuerwerker shows how the May Fourth notion of the self constituted an ideology. Within this ide-