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Multilayered Subversion and Double-edged Subjectivity: Chinese Avant-garde Literature of the Second Half of the 1980s

Abstract

This thesis analyzes Chinese avant-garde literature of the second half of the 1980s in order to identify the main literary features that are common for the otherwise very diverse works of this literary current. First part of the thesis describes literary-political conditions, discursive changes and literary-theoretical discussions between 1978 and 1989 related to the rapid development of Chinese literature of that period and relevant for the following analysis. Second part then analyzes works of selected authors of the Chinese avant-garde literature and using Western literary theory in combination with the theoretical background described in the first part of the thesis it identifies the most important characteristics of the given literary current. The thesis then reaches the conclusion that the works of the Chinese avant-garde literature of the second half of the 1980s show a critical amount of common features, such as subversion, metafictional elements or questioning of the values of memory and subjectivity, that not only confirm the status of the Chinese avant-garde literature as a very unique literary phenomenon, but also establish it as a specific product, particular reflection as well as important constituent of its era.