combines genres in her more recent *Extravía permanencia* (Strange Permanence, 2004); and Verónica Zondek (b. 1953), who uses her often abstract poetry to reconstruct and learn through pain and memory. Carmen Berengué (b. 1946) has continued in the avant-garde vein with her radical, experimental, feminist work. She writes hermetic poetry that frequently deals with the situation of marginalized, oppressed, fragmented subjects both during and after the dictatorship. Elvira Hernández (b. 1951) also deals with marginal identities, expressed in ruptured syntax in books like *Santiago Wariia* (1992), in which she connects the city to its indigenous past, and *La bandera de Chile* (1991), where she empties and resignifies the national emblem (some of these works circulated clandestinely before they were published in the early 1990s).

Juan Luis Martínez (1942–93) is also in the avant-garde line in his attempt to create a new kind of poetry. *La nueva novela* (1985) is a poetic object or an inter-artistic experiment with a new kind of literary expression that incorporates humor and textual play (he is a clear descendant of Nicanor Parra). Tomás Harris’s (b. 1956) mythological and poetic voyages through the city chronicle uneven devel., while Diego Maqueira (b. 1951) combines high cultural and popular registers and alters the conventional depiction of time. Raúl Zurita (b. 1951) extends an avant-garde desire to put poetry into action and uses surrealistic images, self-referentiality, and multiple voices in his poetry. He is recognized for conjugating written words with performances via sky and desert writing and photos in his texts, which form a Dantesque chronicle of Chile’s suffering: *Purgatorio* (1979), *Anteparaito* (1982), and *La vida nueva* (1993).

In the 1990s, the transition to democracy opened the doors to increased expression and new voices, many of whom have become known as the shipwrecked generation. Some names associated with this group are Diego Ramírez (b. 1982), Paula Ilabaca Nuñez (b. 1979), and Héctor Hernández Montecinos (b. 1979), who chose diverse styles to question social and literary convention in work that is not limited to writing but includes music, visual elements, installation, performance, and recordings. Some recent winners of the Neruda Prize in poetry (for writers under 40) include Rafael Rubio (b. 1975), Javier Bello (b. 1972), and Malú Urriola (b. 1967).


J. Kuhnheim

**CHINA, MODERN POETRY OF.** In China, there is not a single standard term for modern poetry. Before 1949, poetry written in the contemp. vernacular and nontraditional forms was commonly called New Poetry (or Vernacular Poetry). After 1949, China was divided into three political entities: the People’s Republic of China on the mainland (PRC), the Republic of China on Taiwan (ROC), and Hong Kong under Brit. rule. Whereas New Poetry continued to be used in the PRC, it was gradually replaced by the term *mod. poetry* in Taiwan and Hong Kong as the result of a flourishing modernist movement.

In 1917, Hu Shi (1891–1962), then a PhD student in the U.S., published a short essay titled “A Preliminary Proposal for Literary Reform,” in which he envisioned a new poetry written in the “living language” (as opposed to cl. Chinese as a “dead language”) and freed from traditional forms. Although certain genres of traditional Chinese poetry, such as folk song, ballad, and *ci* (see *CHINA, POPULAR POETRY OF*), employ a fair share of the vernacular, the New Poetry that Hu advocated was iconoclastic in its rejection of all poetic conventions, incl. parallelism, stock imagery, allusions, and imitation of ancient masters, as well as its lang. and forms.

Understandably, Hu’s call for radical reform was met with crit. from conservative scholars, some of whom...
were his close friends. On the other hand, the poetry reform, newly dubbed Literary Revolution by Chen Duixiu (1879–1942), a mentor of Hu and then dean of humanities at Peking University, triumphed as it converged with the May Fourth movement. Born in the demonstrations against Western imperialism in 1919, the May Fourth movement was spearheaded by progressive intellectuals, some of whom were teaching at Peking University at the time. The movement critiqued all aspects of traditional Chinese culture and introduced mod. Western concepts of science, democracy, and nationalism. Within a few years, New Poetry became a standard bearer of the new "national literature" written in the "national language."

The period 1920–30 witnessed a blossoming of New Poetry. Various foreign trends—such as "romanticism," "symbolism," "realism," Japanese "haikai," and prose poetry (see PROSE POEM)—provided inspirations to a new generation of poets, many of whom had studied abroad and were avid readers and translators of foreign poetry. Poetry societies and jours. also mushroomed. Among the most influential were the Creation Society (1921), the New Crescent Society (1923), and the jour. Les Contemporains (1932). The Creation Society was best represented by Guo Moruo (1892–1978), who had studied in Japan and translated J. W. Goethe before he turned to proletarian lit. The New Crescent was led by Xu Zhimo (1897–1931) and Wen Yiduo (1899–1946). Xu, who had studied in the U.S. and Britain, was dubbed the Chinese Shelley in his pursuit of love, beauty, and freedom. Wen, who had studied art and lit. in the U.S., theorized the ideal poetry as a synthesis of the beauty of painting, music, and architecture. Dai Wangshu (1905–50) was the most influential poet of Les Contemporains; he studied in France and translated symbolist poetry into Chinese. During the 1920s and 1930s, intense debates unfolded along ideological lines, which were often simplified as art for art's sake versus art for life's sake, or "pure poetry versus poetry of social conscience."

The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War on July 7, 1937, radically changed the poetry scene. Educational and cultural institutions were destroyed or relocated, and poets were scattered across the country. As a result, mod. poetry spread to all corners of the land, from Chongqing, the temporary capital of wartime China, to Shanghai under Japanese occupation, to Kunming in the southwest, to the northwest under Chongqing, the temporary capital of wartime China, to the northwest under

### CHINA, MODERN POETRY OF 233

in the PRC, most poets stopped writing and focused on scholarship or trans. Even so, they did not escape persecution in the successive political campaigns throughout the 1950s and 1960s, which culminated in the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). A few weak voices from the underground were silenced. The desolate situation did not change until the late 1970s, when China under Deng Xiaoping opened its door to the free world and embarked on an ambitious program of national modernization.

On the other side of the Taiwan Strait, in contrast, a modernist movement thrived despite censorship and a cultural policy of conservatism under the Nationalist regime (KMT). Led by Ji Xian (b. 1913) and Qin Zihao (1912–63), both of whom had started writing poetry in pre-1949 China, the postwar generation of young poets in Taiwan embraced "avant-garde poetry and art in the West, incl. *surrealism and high *modernism. The most influential poetry societies and jours. were Modernist Poetry Quarterly (1952) and the Modernist School (1954), the Blue Star (1954), and the Epoch (1954). They not only created experimental works of the highest caliber but interacted with young poets in Hong Kong, who shared their enthusiasm for avant-garde art and lit. In the conservative social climate in Taiwan in the 1950s and 1960s, the modernist poetry movement was often derided and attacked. However, it was unstoppable as its influence spread. As a result, Modern Poetry became both a standard term and an institution in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

The next challenge to mod. poetry came in the early 1970s when Taiwan suffered a series of setbacks in the international political arena: the loss of its seat to the PRC in the United Nations and the severance of diplomatic relations with Japan and the U.S. These diplomatic setbacks triggered a legitimacy crisis and an identity crisis among intellectuals and writers, who demanded a "return" to Taiwanese society and Chinese cultural roots. Mod. poetry in Taiwan took a sharp turn toward realism and nativism, with the latter paving the way for the large-scale nativist literature movement (1977–79). Many poets, both old and young, embraced an idealized rural Taiwan, expressed concern for social maladies, and even critiqued the ruling regime. Into the 1980s, as the democracy movement steadily gained momentum, mod. poetry played an important role in raising public awareness of the repressed past and the hopeful future of Taiwan.

A new page also turned in the PRC in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In the liberalizing atmosphere of post-Mao China, commonly referred to as the New Era, underground poetry burst on the scene and enjoyed phenomenal success. The immediate predecessors of underground poetry were poets who wrote during the Cultural Revolution and whose works were hand-copied and circulated among the urban youths who had been sent down to the countryside by Chair- man Mao. Chinese trans. of foreign poetry also provided them with an important source of inspiration. The most influential poetry in post-Mao China was represented by Today, founded by a group of young
poets and artists in Beijing in 1978. The new generation of poets had recently experienced the Cultural Revolution; their works expressed disillusionment with politics on the one hand and a yearning to return to the private world, romantic love, and nature on the other. The new poetry stirred up a nationwide controversy; critics who condemned its obscurity and individualism called it Misty Poetry. As its popularity grew, however, the negative connotations disappeared.

In the latter half of the 1980s, the newcomers defined themselves against Misty Poetry, rejecting the latter's lyricism and introspection. Instead, they engaged in a broader range of experiments and developed more radical poetics.

Censorship never ceased to exist in post-Mao China. Throughout the 1980s, Deng Xiaoping authorized several political campaigns against lit. and art that were considered too liberal or “bourgeois.” Misty Poetry was constantly targeted. After the violent crackdown on student demonstrations in Tiananmen Square in June 1989, several poets were arrested and imprisoned; more left China in self-imposed exile. In the 21st c., Chinese society has undergone dramatic transformations. Culturally speaking, it has become not only more diverse but more oriented toward pop commercialism. Poetry has lost the prestige and universal appeal that it once enjoyed. Ironically, while China's economic success has made possible more poetry prizes, jour., readings, and conferences than before, poetry readership has shrunk and the impact of poetry diminished. It is also ironic that despite completely different histo., poetry in 21st-c. mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong faces very similar conditions: commodification of culture, the Information Age, and new technologies. Poets tend to see themselves as poetry makers rather than “poets,” and many turn to the Internet as an important venue where free, democratic, and global interactions take place.

The story of mod. Chinese poetry since 1979 is dramatic, to say the least. It arose in reaction against cl. poetry, the most ancient and respected cultural form in traditional China, and successfully established itself as a representative of mod. lit. early on. It has drawn on the rich trds. of world poetry for resources but, in doing so, has repeatedly found itself embroiled in debates that question its cultural identity. What is clear is that mod. poetry represents a new aesthetic paradigm that is simultaneously related to and clearly distinguished from cl. poetry. It has broadened the Chinese lit. trad. in lang. and form and enriched it with a wide range of subject matters and sensibilities that are unique to the mod. era.
