

On the Critical Reception of Lu Xun's Early Classical-style Essays of the Japan Period

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Abstract: Lu Xun's 鲁迅 (1881-1936) early classical-style essays are concerned with issues in the history and philosophy of science, as well as literature, philosophy, politics, and aesthetics during an era in which China went through profound cultural changes. Part of their significance also lies in the way they provide us with an unabashed glimpse at what Lu Xun, who was to become China's most important writer of the twentieth century, set out to accomplish with his intended literary career. They first appeared in the Chinese expatriate journal *Henan* 河南 (Ho-nan) (1907-8). Although they are products of his last student years in Japan, the fact that he chose to include the two longest of them at the very front of his 1926 anthology *Fen* 墳 (The Grave), indicates that he considered the views expressed therein neither too immature nor too dated to reprint at the height of his career as a creative writer. In fact, he suggests in his preface to *Fen* that one of his reasons for doing so was that the poets and causes treated there had, ironically, taken on an increased relevance for China in the years "after the founding of the Republic." Over the years since they were written, the content and style of these essays have been the subject of considerable scholarly scrutiny, but this has drawn out divergent views. Scholars in Japan have done an admirable job of tracing down the sources of some of the essays, although their interpretation was not without controversy there. Chinese scholars have first discounted, then eschewed, then annotated, and finally extolled them as harbingers of a new poetics or a profound meditation on unresolved issues still facing China. Westerners, by and large, give them a degree of primacy, but from different perspectives and to different degrees. This article examines the reception of these essays internationally, re-contextualizing it within the historical factors that have contributed to and molded it.

Keywords:

Lu Xun 魯迅, Mara Poetry, “Wenhua pianzhi lun” 文化偏至論, “Po e’sheng lun” 破惡聲論,

Kitaoka Masako 北岡正子

In 1906, after withdrawing from medical school, Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936), who came to be widely regarded as the founder of modern Chinese literature, returned to Tokyo and began to research and write five lengthy treatises in an archaistic classical prose style influenced by that of the eccentric anti-Manchu philologist Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (i.e. Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 [1868-1936]) in his publication *Minbao* 民報 (The People’s Journal),¹ for whom Lu Xun still professed in 1936 a life-long admiration, mainly due to Zhang’s uncompromising oppositional stance vis-a-vis the powers that be in China.²

¹ As he put it in his preface to *Jiwai ji* 集外集 (Collection of the Uncollected): “Later (i.e. after Yan Fu) I was influenced by Mr Zhang Taiyan’s and got ‘ancient’” 以後又受了章太炎先生的影響，古了起來。See *Lu Xun quanji*, 7:4, published in 1991. Hereafter cited as *LXQJ* (1991).

² See his moving “recollections” of Zhang Taiyan—two essays in *LXQJ* (1991) 6:545-551; 556-561. These are available in English translations by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang under the titles “Some Recollections of Zhang Taiyan” and “A Few Matters Concerned with Zhang Taiyan,” see *Lu Xun Selected Works*, 4:322-326; 327-334. Hereafter *LXSW*. For an extended discussion of their relationship, see Chan, “Zhang Taiyan yu Lu Xun de shitu jiaoyi chongtan.” Chan concludes that the Zhang Taiyan Lu Xun admired was the late-Qing anti-Manchu revolutionist-scholar and that they later grew apart due to opposing positions regarding the New Culture Movement and vernacular literature. Although this may be the case, I would argue that there is actually a degree of self-identification between the Zhang Lu Xun described in 1936 and himself. In some ways Zhang Taiyan is a foil in Lu Xun’s 1936 essays, but in others he becomes an alter-ego. In those essays, Lu Xun concludes his own life by harking back to the idealism of his youth.

Zhang Taiyan edited *Minbao* from July 1906 to October 1908. This choice of style was in itself a major statement. By so doing Lu Xun rejected the ornate, Qing-identified *pian wen* 駢文 (parallel prose) but also bucked the popular trend toward a modernized, simple *wenyan wen* 文言文 (classical prose) used by Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929) in his journal *Xinmin Bao* 新民報 (The New People), which came to be referred to as *Xinmin ti* 新民體 (the style of the “New People”). I have argued elsewhere that Lu Xun was trying to create a style that was at once more authentically “Chinese” by reverting to the *guben* 古文 (classical-style essay) of the Han 漢 (206 BCE-220 CE), Wei 魏 (220-265) and Jin 晉 (265-420) eras, while at the same time attempting to develop a discursive style that could accommodate modern concepts and also resonate with a moral and intellectual authority akin aurally and linguistically to that of the classics.³

Lu Xun published five essays and one translation in *Henan* 河南 (Ho-nan) magazine under the pseudonyms of Ling Fei 令飛 (Let Fly) and Xun Xing 迅行 (Swift Travel/Action). They came out in the following order:

“Ren [jian] zhi lishi” 人間之歷史 (History of [(the Evolution of) Humankind], published under the pen name Ling Fei 令飛, *Henan*, no. (*hao* 號) 1 (December 1907): 85-96.⁴

³ See my chapter titled “Lu Xun’s Han Linguistic Project: the use of *wenyan* to create an ‘authentic’ Han vocabulary for literary terminology in his early essays.”

⁴ The original title of the essay *Ren zhi lishi* 人之歷史 was *Renjian zhi lishi* 人間之歷史 when it was published in *Henan* magazine in 1907. Lu Xun revised the title to *Ren zhi lishi* 人之歷史 (History of Humankind) for publication in 1926 in his anthology *Fen*.

“Moluo shi li shuo” 摩羅詩力說 (On the Power of Mara Poetry) by Ling Fei, serially in two parts, *Henan*, no. 2 (February 1908): 70-90; and *Henan*, issue (*qi* 期) 3 (March 1908):45-74;⁵

“Kexueshi jiaopian” 科學史教篇 (Lessons from the History of Science) by Ling Fei, *Henan*, issue 5 (June 1908): 76-89;

“Wenhua pianzhi lun” 文化偏至論 (On Imbalanced Cultural Development), under the pen name Xun Xing 迅行, *Henan*, issue 7 (August 1908): 1-18;

“Pei-tuan-fei shi lun” 裴彖飛詩論 (On Petöfi’s Poetry), a translation published under the name Xun Xing, *Henan*, issue 7 (August 1908): 65-72;

“Po e’sheng lun” 破惡聲論 (Toward a Refutation of Malevolent Voices), by Xun Xing, *Henan*, issue 8 (December 1908): 16-31.

These essays have been considered to have continuing relevance by Chinese readers in part because Lu Xun himself included the majority of them (the first four from the above list) when he edited and compiled the first collection of his essays under the title *Fen* in 1926. In his preface to *Fen*,

⁵ The journal *Henan* itself used the terms *hao* 號 (number) and *qi* 期 (issue) alternately. In the list here I used the terms as they stood on the original copies of the journals, which I have seen. This is at variance with the reprinted set, which uses *qi* on the newly-designed front covers, but preserves the original numbering nomenclature inside.

written in Xiamen and dated October 30, 1926 “on a night of great winds” 大風之夜⁶ (probably symbolic of the threatening political situation in China, which in part was responsible for his leaving warlord-governed Beijing) he noted:

The poets I talked about [in “On the Power of Mara Poetry”] no one has mentioned again until now, and this is another minor reason that I have not been able to bring myself to discard this old manuscript. How excited I used to get at the mere mention of their names! After the proclamation of the Republic I forgot all about them, but how could I have imagined that they would surprisingly begin to appear nowadays time and again before my eyes.

其中所說的幾個詩人，至今沒有人再提起，也是使我不忍拋棄舊稿的一個小原因。他們的名，先前是怎樣地使我激昂呵，民國告成以後，我便將他們忘卻了，而不料現在他們竟又時時在我的眼前出現。⁷

Lu Xun seems to be alluding to what he saw as the quashing of the May Fourth spirit and the demise of the New Culture Movement. Further on in the preface he talks about the need to continue to protest the warlord government’s massacre of unarmed demonstrators, most of them students, in front of Government House on March 18, 1926 as well as his desire to continue to offend their apologists by publishing this anthology. Indeed, my suspicion after re-reading his

⁶ *LXQJ* (1991) 1:5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

preface is that the name of this anthology, *Fen* has nothing to do with “burying” his earlier works, as some have thought, and may actually allude to the deaths of the protestors.⁸

The archaic style of classical Chinese in which the early essays were written proved an impediment to readers, so much so that they were eventually translated into *baihua wen* 白話文 (vernacular Chinese), first by a group at Nanjing Normal University, including Hong Qiao 洪橋 and others in 1976,⁹ an edition that was never officially published (perhaps because Hong Qiao had been labeled one of Hu Feng’s 胡風 (1902-1985) “Rightist” [*youpai* 右派] co-conspirators).¹⁰ In 1978 they were again translated by Lu Xun scholar Wang Shijing 王士菁,¹¹ whom C.T. Hsia once praised as

⁸ Although the preface is dated October 30, 1926, the volume was first published in March 1927 in Beijing by his literary associates in the Unnamed Society 未名社. Eileen J. Cheng discusses Lu Xun’s preoccupation with ensuring martyrs will be remembered in her monograph *Literary Remains: Death, Trauma, and Lu Xun’s Refusal to Mourn*, which I think tends to confirm my theory regarding the hidden meaning of this title.

⁹ A *neibu* 內部 (internal circulation) book with no author accreditation treating six of the early essays came out under the *Lu Xun wenyang lunwen shiyi* 魯迅文言論文試譯 (A Draft Vernacular Translation of Lu Xun’s Early Theses in the Classical Style) in 1976. It also contains an appendix (pp. 260-285) of remarks about the early essays from Lu Xun, Xu Guangping 許廣平 (1898-1968), Tang Tao 唐弢 (1913-1992), Li Jiye 李霽野 (1904-1997), Wang Yeqiu 王冶秋 (1909-1987), Li Helin 李何林 (1904-1988), Sun Yong 孫用 (1902-1983) etc. and a two page bibliography (pp. 286-287) of journal articles about them from 1946-1970s. The last page (p. 288) contains an afterword that is refreshingly unapologetic regarding the content of the essays, saying that they “are a thorough manifestation of Lu Xun’s revolutionary democratic fighting spirit.”

¹⁰ Professors Hu Zhu 胡鑄 and Fu Xiao 符喙 argue that the mid-1950s campaign against Lu Xun’s erstwhile protégé the Marxist literary theoretician Hu Feng was in reality just an extension of a purge by Mao directed at associates of Premier Zhou Enlai 周恩來 (1898-1976), which also saw General He Long 賀龍 (1893-1969) and erstwhile Communist intelligence chief Pan Hannian 潘漢年 (1906-1977) as casualties. See “Mao Zedong qiaoda Zhou Enlai bao yijian zhi chou: Hu Feng yuan’an tanyuan.”

¹¹ See Wang Shijing’s *Lu Xun zaoqi wupian lunwen zhuyi*. This book contains an afterword by the translator assessing the significance of the essays from a Marxian perspective. The afterword, completed in June 1977 was slightly revised in August 1980 (pp. 248-267 of the 1981 edition). Notable in this volume is the exclusion of the 1908 essay “Po e’shen lun,” which must still have been deemed too controversial.

one of Lu Xun's most capable biographers. The next year the longest of these, "Moluo shi li shuo" was again translated into *baihua wen* by Zhao Ruihong 趙瑞蕪 (1915-1999), then Professor of Chinese and Comparative literature at Nanjing University.¹² William A. Lyell, perhaps the foremost American Lu Xun scholar at the time, said a whole book could be devoted to that essay alone, and indeed Zhao Ruihong did precisely that in 1982. Zhao's book contains an extensive afterword in which he presents his views on "Moluo shi li shuo." There he proposes that it constitutes a manifesto for a romantic literary movement:

...The movement in literature and art that Lu Xun advocated early on was none other than a patriotic and romantic movement in literature and art. "On the Power of Mara Poetry" is a concentrated reflection of Lu Xun's thought and feelings in this period and his views on literature and art, as well as his aesthetic tendencies. "On the Power of Mara Poetry" is the manifesto for just such a movement, or perhaps it could be called its programme. We are completely justified in viewing it as a romantic literary programme for the modern Chinese revolution; although it mainly introduced and evaluated a number of the most representative and influential romantic poets from Western and Eastern Europe, yet it also combined in a fortuitous and valuable way Lu Xun's views at that time on the natural world, the era, society and the road toward the Chinese people's liberation as he understood it then. We can without hesitation rank it within the international treasure-chest of significant contributions on romantic literature...

……魯迅最初想提出的文藝運動，不是別的運動，而就是愛國主義和浪漫主義的文藝運動。《摩羅詩力說》最集中地反映了魯迅這時期的思想感情和文藝觀點，他的

¹² See Zhao Ruihong, *Lu Xun Moluo shi li shuo zhubi, jinyi, jieshuo*.

美學傾向。《摩羅詩力說》就是這個文藝運動的宣言，或者可說是它的綱領。我們完全有理由把《摩羅詩力說》看成是近代中國革命浪漫主義的文學綱領，雖然它主要是介紹、評論西歐和東歐幾位最有代表性的，影響最大的浪漫派詩人，但其中也十分可喜可貴地結合著魯迅當時對自然界，對時代、社會、對當時所理解的中國人民解放的道路、對人生和藝術的觀點。我們可以毫無愧色地把《摩羅詩力說》列入世界浪漫主義的文獻寶庫中……¹³

But I would argue that there is more to it than that. In “Moluo shi li shuo,” Lu Xun reassesses the Chinese literary legacy, offers a sweeping view of Western and Eastern European poetry in the 19th century, assesses Byron (1788-1824), Shelley (1792-1822), and Pushkin (1799-1837), champions Lermontov (1814-1841) and Mickiewicz (1798-1855), lionizes Petöfi (1823-1849), explains “terrorism,”¹⁴ and posits a new poetics for China in the 20th century.

In 1983 a selected Chinese translation of Kitaoka Masako’s 北岡正子 articles on the sources Lu Xun used in writing “Moluo shili shuo” was done by He Naiying 何乃英 and published as a single volume.¹⁵ In 1984 Zhao Ruihong published a revised edition of his book, partly as a result of reading Kitaoka in Chinese translation and also my cooperation with him in hunting down English

¹³ Zhao Ruihong, *Lu Xun Moluo shi li shuo zhushu, jinyi, jieshuo*, 256. I did an edited translation into English of a longer conference paper by Zhao, which elaborates his views, under the title: “Lu Xun's *Mara* and the Advent of Comparative Literature Study in China” published in *Cowrie: a Chinese Journal of Comparative Literature* 1:2 (1984): 35-46.

¹⁴ See my article, “Lu Xun and Terrorism: a Study of Revenge and Violence in *Mara* and Beyond.”

¹⁵ See Kitaoka’s *Moluo shi li shuo caiyuan kao*, translated by He Naiying and Chen Qiufan 陳秋帆, published in Beijing. These articles were originally published serially in *Yaso* 野草 (Wild Grass), a Japanese journal on modern Chinese literary studies beginning with no. 9 (October 1972) – no. 30 (October 1982). Kitaoka left the project unfinished in 1982, but has come back to it of late and produced a new monograph on the topic in 2015—see below.

sources. In 2006 Kitaoka revised some of her earlier articles on the young Lu Xun, publishing these as a volume of her collected essays.¹⁶ In 2007 it was announced that Hong Qiao's 洪橋 *baibua wen* translation of "Moluo shi li shuo" would be finally be published formally after numerous revisions.¹⁷

In autumn of 2007, the former editor of the influential monthly *Dushu* 讀書 (Study) and later professor at Tsinghua University, Wang Hui 汪暉, gave a lecture at New York University devoted to the last of Lu Xun's 1908 essays, "Po e'sheng lun."¹⁸ This was published as an article "Sheng zhi Shan E: Shenme shi Qimeng? Chongdu Lu Xun de 'Po e'sheng lun'" 聲之善惡：甚麼是啟蒙？重讀魯迅的破惡聲論 (The Goodness and Malevolence of Voices: What is Enlightenment? Rereading Lu Xun's "Toward a Refutation of Malevolent Voices"), which later came out in English.¹⁹ Wang Hui contends that this essay gives us the most comprehensive articulation of Lu Xun's complex

¹⁶ See Kitaoka, *Rojin Kyūbō no Yume no Yukue: Akumaha Shijinron kara "Kyōjin Nikki" made*. This work deals with the second half of Lu Xun's period of study in Japan. Chapter one discusses the role Lu Xun's study of German played in his idea of promoting a literary movement; chapter 2 is on his idea that the nation could be saved through the power of poetry and the formation of the idea of a school of Mara poets; chapter 3 is on the image and significance of man in "On the Power of Mara Poetry;" chapter 4 discusses the poet as madman, the "self" in "The Diary of a Madman;" appendices on Yan Fu's 嚴復 (1854-1921) *Tianyan lun* 天演論 (Evolution and Ethics) as a premise to understanding Lu Xun's concept of man; Lu Xun and Petöfi, with a focus on the meaning of *xiwang* 希望 (hope); on Dr. Galla Endre and Hungarian scholarship "On the reception of the literature of the so-called 'oppressed nations' in modern Chinese literature 1918-1937" (1972). A Chinese translation by Li Dongmu 李冬木 has been published in 2015 under the title *Lu Xun Jiuwang zhi meng de quxiang: cong E'mopai shiren lun dao Kuangren riji* 魯迅救亡之夢的去向：從惡魔派詩人論到狂人日記 (The Direction taken by Lu Xun's dream of [national] salvation: from his treatment of the Satanic school of poets to "The Diary of a Madman").

¹⁷ The announcement was made in Zhou Zhengzhang 周正章, "Moluo shi li shuo Hong Qiao jinyiben xu" 摩羅詩力說洪橋今譯本序 (An Introduction to Hong Qiao's Modern Translation of "On the Power of Mara Poetry"), *Lu Xun yanjiu yuekan* 魯迅研究月刊 (Lu Xun Research Monthly), no. 8 (2007): 80-83. I have not seen this volume.

¹⁸ *LXQJ* (1991) 8:23-37. English translation by Jon Eugene von Kowallis in *boundary2: an international journal of literature and culture* 38, no. 2 (summer 2011): 39-62.

¹⁹ The Chinese article appeared in the journal *Kaifang shidai* 開放時代 (Era of openness). See Wang Hui, "Sheng zhi shan e: Shenme shi qimeng? Chongdu Lu Xun de po e'sheng lun." For an English translation of Wang Hui's article by Ted Hutters and Yangyang Zong, see "The Voices of Good and Evil: What Is Enlightenment? Rereading Lu Xun's 'Toward a Refutation of Malevolent Voices'."

ideas on the relationship between tradition and modernity in China, particularly in terms of the reasons for his use of archaistic language²⁰ to argue a radical social critique that questions both the value of majority rule and the gentry-led anti-superstition enlightenment movement.

What is it about this group of stylistically archaistic and ostensibly quite “dated” essays that continues to engage Chinese intellectuals over a hundred years after their publication?²¹ I would contend that it is the way they serve as a blueprint for the future of Lu Xun’s literary career and set out clearly and in no uncertain terms what he stood for in the rest of his life. Wang Dehou 王得后, the most distinguished senior scholar of Lu Xun studies in mainland China, has suggested that Lu Xun’s early essays can be said to fit together into chapters of a full-length book. He argues that from *ren* 人 (humankind) in “Ren zhi lishi” 人之歷史 (A History of Humankind), Lu Xun moves to science in “Kexue shi jiao pian”; from there to intellectual history (“Wenhua pian zhi lun”), thence to literature, both Chinese and Western (“Moluo shi li shuo”) and then ends with his views on religion in the 1908 essay “Po e’sheng lun.”²²

Sun Yongjun 孫擁軍 says that other scholars see them as indicating “a demarcation of two lines of development (*xiansuo* 線索) in his thought up to 1907, moving from the development of

²⁰ See my article entitled “Lu Xun’s Han Linguistic Project: the use of *wenyan* to create an ‘authentic’ Han vocabulary for literary terminology in his early essays,” in which I address Lu Xun’s use of a pre-Qing, pre-*pianwen* written *guwen* style with an archaistic ring to give his arguments a culturally authoritative resonance akin to that of the classics.

²¹ The entire set of all issues of the journal *Henan*, in which they were first published, has been reprinted in a facsimile edition of nine physical volumes edited by Beijing Luxun Museum 北京魯迅博物館, published in 2014. This is a complete facsimile edition of the 1907-8 issues of the journal, so the archaic forms of the characters originally used by Lu Xun are unchanged.

²² See the collection of Wang Dehou’s articles published under the title *Lu Xun jiao wo* 魯迅教我 (What Lu Xun has taught me), 234-238.

man to the development of society; from the development of the mechanical to development at the spiritual level, indicating a gradual maturation of Lu Xun's evolutionary thinking into his idea of 'establishing the people'” 構建起魯迅思想發展的兩條線索：即由人的發展而至社會的發展，由器物層的發展而至精神層的發展，標誌著魯迅「進化論」思想和「立人」思想的漸趨成熟。²³ Whether or not future scholars will agree with these analyses, there is ample evidence to suggest that the essays constitute a manifesto, not only for Lu Xun's literary career, but for his intellectual interests as well. But that is the subject of a different paper²⁴ and my forthcoming book, which will include my newly-revised translations of four of the early essays.²⁵ With the present article I intend to focus on the reception of these essays in scholarly circles overseas.

One of the most remarkable oversights in 20th century Japanese Sinology may well have been Takeuchi Yoshimi's 竹内好 (1908-1977) attempt to write the essays out of his analysis of the development of Lu Xun's career.²⁶ Takeuchi claims to want to make an analysis of Lu Xun which focusses on his unchanging aspects. As he puts it in his book *Rojin* 魯迅 (Lu Xun):

Many critics insist that Lu Xun underwent a radical change in his ideas during the period of [the early 1930s].... With regard to the nature of this change, opinions vary. Some say that it is a change from evolutionism to a class-oriented thought. Others say that it is **from the individual to society**, from nihilism to hope. I do not deny that these changes might

²³ Sun Yongjun, "Lu Xun he *Henan zazhi* de yuanyuan," 71.

²⁴ See Jon Eugene von Kowallis, "Lu Xun's Early Essays and Present-Day China."

²⁵ Jon Eugene von Kowallis, *Warriors of the Spirit: Lu Xun's Early wenyuan Essays* (forthcoming).

²⁶ See Takeuchi Yoshimi's *Rojin* 魯迅 (Lu Xun) (Tōkyō: Nihon Hyōronsha, 1944; rept. Tōkyō: Miraisha, 1961; Tōkyō: Kōdansha Bungei Bunko, 1994/2006), 257 pps.. Hereafter *Rojin*. The 1961 edition is consulted here. This is also included in volume 1 of *Takeuchi Yoshimi Zenshū* 竹内好全集 (Complete Works of Takeuchi Yoshimi) (Tōkyō: Chikuma Shobō, 1980).

in fact have taken place in Lu Xun. However, I strongly disagree that these were precisely the factors that led Lu Xun to a decisive change.

多くの批評家は、魯迅がこの時期に転換を遂げたことを云おうとする…この転換は、たとえば進化論から階級闘争説、個人から社会、虚無から希望、その他さまざまな言葉で云い現されている。それらの言葉が云い現すようなものが、なかったとは私は思わない。しかし、それらが何か決定的なもののように考えることには、私は不同意である。²⁷

What concerns me is not how Lu Xun changed but how he did not change despite these potentialities for change. Indeed Lu Xun changed in the course of time, but still he did not change in the true sense of the word. I see the true face of Lu Xun in his unchangeable aspects.

魯迅が如何に変わったかでなく、如何に変らなかったかが私の関心事である。彼は変ったが、しかし彼は変らなかったのである。いわば私は不動において魯迅を見る。²⁸

Rojin was written in 1943 and first published in 1944. Takeuchi did not study the early essays, insisting that they were products of an immature period, and therefore chose to begin his analysis of the “unchanging” Lu Xun with his creative period in Beijing (1918-1926). I would argue that that move was intentional because it was crucial to his creation of his image of Lu Xun as a litterateur. If he had included the early essays, then Takeuchi would have had to admit that Lu Xun was a thinker and as well as a creative writer and that would have upset his entire thesis (but not necessarily

²⁷ Takeuchi, *Rojin*, 132-133.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

deflated the positive image of Lu Xun in postwar Japan that Takeuchi had helped create). Although this image of Lu Xun was challenged by a number of scholars, including Maruyama Noboru 丸山昇, it was not until the late 1960s that Lu Xun's early essays started to be studied seriously in Japan, and this was in part a result of the textual studies done by Kitaoka Masako on the sources for Lu Xun's "Moluo shili shuo" in the Japanese journal *Yasō* 野草 (Wild Grass) and her exchange with Nakajima Osafumi 中島長文, which started with a review of her work he published in the journal *Hyōfū* 颯風 (The Tempest) on June 1973.²⁹

Kitaoka wrote, some years later in *Yasō*, that what had motivated her initial study was the way some scholars generalized about Lu Xun's early thought and early essays without having examined them in any detail:

I started to write these "Notes" because I wanted to know what materials Lu Xun used and how he put them together. I examined Lu Xun's thought and Lu Xun's vocabulary [of his early period] because I wanted to know if it was actually original or not. What is more, I can [perhaps well] tell [you] that one factor motivating me was my dislike of the attitude of certain persons writing at the time who held forth on what they claimed was Lu Xun's original literary thought of his early period without examining it in detail and without

²⁹ See Nakajima's Review of Kitaoka Masako's Notes on the Sources for "On the Power of Mara Poetry." Nakajima, "Ranpon 'Mara Shi Ryoku no setsu' dai yon go shō: Kitaoka Masako shi tsukuru to ko ro no 'Mara Shi Ryokusetsu zaigenkō nōto' niyosete" 藍本『摩羅詩力の説』第四、五章：北岡正子氏作るところの「摩羅詩力説材源考ノート」によせて (Sections 4 and 5 in the Blueprint [Original Version] of "On the Power of Mara Poetry"—in Response to Ms Kitaoka Masako's Work Notes on the Sources for Mara). *Hyōfū*, no. 5 (June 1973). Nakajima reviews her work on the Russian poets treated by Lu Xun in section 7 of "Moluo shili shuo" in *Hyōfū* no. 6, published in April 1974.

the slightest indication that they had even the least bit of lingering doubt. Consequently, an emphasis on empirical facts was my first consideration. As for opinions and assertions, [I felt that] they could come in a timely fashion after such [facts had been established]. To search out the sources as thoroughly as possible became my first consideration. To know from whence Lu Xun derived the source material he took on as well as what he rejected was my second consideration. In addition, on reading the works of the poets of the Mara school, to know whether or not and if so how their contents became an important element in relation to Lu Xun's literature was my third consideration. In the course of carrying out the above, not to allow hunches and preconceived notions to enter in and [at the same time] to speak carefully in matter of fact language -- this became my admonition to myself.

私がこのノートを書き始めたのは、魯迅がどのような材料をどの様に使って「摩羅詩力説」を組み立てたのかを知りたかった為である。（初期）魯迅の思想、魯迅の語彙と考えられているものが、果してオリジナルなものかどうかを知りたかったのである。それには、この時期の論文の文字をそのまま魯迅のユトバとして、初期魯迅の文学思想を何の腑分けもせぬままに論ずるという世の論者の余りにも疑いを知らぬ態度に嫌悪を抱いたのも動機の一つになっているといってもよいかもしれない。だから私は事実を重んじることを主眼とした。意見や主張はそのあとで出しても遅くはないと考えたのである。出来る限り材源を捜し出すことが第一。魯迅がその材源のどこをとってどてを捨てたかを知ることが第二、更に実際に摩羅詩派の詩人達の作品を読んで、それらの内の如何なる要素が魯迅の文学に連なってゆくのかを知ることが第三である。以上のことを行う場合には

何ちかの予見や先入観を持ち込まず事実の語りかけるものから出発することを自らのいましめとしたいと思っている。³⁰

I will return to Japan and Kitaoka later, but to examine the reception chronologically, we must move to the United States, where Wang Chi-chen 王際真 (1899-2001), who had then begun teaching Chinese literature at Columbia University, mentioned them in his introduction to his war-time translations of Lu Xun's stories published under the title *Ab Q and Others* (1941). There he writes:

These essays were published in obscure student magazines. Not only did they meet with no response at the time, **it is doubtful that more than a handful of people have read them to this day, though they were included with others in *Tomb 墳* published in 1929. For one thing they were not only in the old literary style but also in rather archaic literary style; but the real reason is that even to this day they represent a dissenting minority view.**³¹

The contention that the essays were not widely read at the time of publication has been challenged in scholarly quarters recently, based on speculation about the circulation of the journal *Henan*, in which they were published, and the prominence to which it gave “Moluo shi li shuo,” etc. Zou Lu 鄒魯 credits it with “a wide distribution in the interior [of China]” 內地銷行亦廣, estimating

³⁰ See Kitaoka, ““Mara Shi Ryokusetsu’ zaigenkō nōto, sono yon” 「摩羅詩力説」材源考ノート（その四）（Notes on the Sources for “On the Power of Mara Poetry,” #4) in the Japanese journal *Yasō*, no.13 (December 1973), 78. This issue is on Shelley and Godwin, a topic continued from the previous issue; Kitaoka addresses Nakajima’s criticism at the end (starting on p. 74). She cites it on p. 74 above as having appeared in *Hyōfū*, no. 5 (June 1967). The year should be 1973.

³¹ Lu Xun, *Ab Q and Others*, trans. Wang Chi-chen, xiii. Bold-text emphasis is mine.

domestic sales of “up to and over 10,000 copies for each issue” 每期售至萬份以上。³² That statistic is supposed to be for sales alone -- it does not take into account the fact that copies must have been passed on and shared by other readers, giving the journal even greater influence. But what is more interesting is Wang Chi-chen’s observation that the real reason for their unpopularity was not their archaistic diction but rather that “even to this day they represent a dissenting minority view.” That is one with which I would concur, as I have experienced it in my own work on Lu Xun’s early essays. In just one example, I remember being shouted down at an introductory meeting with the Chairman of the Department of Chinese Literature at the Peking University, where I arrived as a foreign graduate student³³ in September 1981 when I said I was interested in studying Lu Xun’s early thought. “Early thought?” thundered the chairman,³⁴ “I think it is his *later* thought that is of interest.” At that time, of course, the orthodox opinion was that the young Lu Xun was embarrassingly bourgeois, so only his later thinking, after he allegedly adopted a Marxist worldview, was deemed to be worthy of serious inquiry. In fact it may have been in part because of my initial choice of this topic for research³⁵ that I almost did not get into the Peking University.³⁶ But it is in part this official disapproval of the young Lu Xun, like the young Marx, that intrigues Chinese scholars and readers today. For me, however, it is an attempt to trace back, locate and define concepts in Lu Xun’s early thought that became part of a deeper structure that shaped and molded

³² Zou, *Zhongguo Guomindang shigao*, 983.

³³ I was admitted as a *gaoji jinxiusheng* 高級進修生 (Senior Visiting Student) because I was working toward my PhD at Berkeley at the time.

³⁴ This was Ji Zhenhuai 季鎮淮, an expert on the neo-Confucian essayist Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824), whom Lu Xun had excoriated as an apologist for despotism.

³⁵ I later put the topic aside to do my dissertation on late-Qing poetry, in part due to pressure from the Department of Oriental Languages at Berkeley to write on creative works of *belles lettres* and not works of criticism, which Lu Xun’s early essays were deemed to be.

³⁶ My application was successful only with the recommendation of Hong Kong-based Lu Xun scholar Zhang Xiangtian 張向天, who was familiar with my work on Lu Xun’s poetry, and at the same time acquainted with Wang Yao 王瑤 (1914-1989), then senior Professor of modern Chinese literature at Peking University, who accepted me.

his life-long convictions. In other words, I have intended to challenge and overturn the theory of the periodization of Lu Xun's thought in which he is depicted as developing from a lad from a declining gentry family with the common touch, to a patriotic student of modern subjects in the last years of the Qing era 清 (1644-1911), to a bourgeois democrat, an evolutionist, a Marxist, a Marxist-Leninist, and then finally to a Maoist who sent congratulatory telegrams to Yan'an 延安, denounced the Trotskyists, and sent a canned ham to Chairman Mao.³⁷

After Wang Chi-chen's, the next treatment mentioning the early essays to come out of Western academia was by Pearl Hsia Chen in *The Social Thought of Lusin*, a PhD dissertation at the University of Chicago (1953). The dissertation includes a lengthy section on Lu Xun's early essays in which she divides late-Qing respondents to the Western impact into three groups: the anti-Western conservatives around Manchu prince Ronglu 榮祿(1836-1903); the moderate reformers, exemplified by Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837-1909);³⁸ and the radical reformers, of whom she states: "Lusin, as the most outspoken leader of the radical reformers, represents the real break from traditionalism and symbolizes the new China...he was one of the first intellectuals to question the basic soundness of

³⁷ Leninism is extremely doubtful: it was alien to his independent, questioning spirit; see Feng Xuefeng's 馮雪峰 (August 1967) account of a meeting between Lu Xun and the then CCP General Secretary Li Lisan 李立三 (1899-1967) on May 7, 1930, after which Lu Xun commented: "We talked at each other" 我們是各人講各人的. See Zhu, "Guanyu Lu Xun he Li Lisan de huijian" 關於魯迅和李立三的會見 (About the Meeting between Lu Xun and Li Lisan), in Zhu, *Lu Xun huiyilu zhengwen: zengdingben*, 81-90. His alleged support for Mao is based on one letter, the "Reply to a Letter from the Trotskyites" 答托洛斯基派的信 (Da Tuoluosiji pai de xin), which was in fact written for him during an illness by CCP member Feng Xuefeng. For the text, see *LXQJ* (1991) 6: 586-589; English translation in *LXSW* 4: 279-282.

³⁸ Famous for his dictum *Zhong xue wei ti, xi xue wei yong* 中學為體，西學為用 (Chinese studies as the substance [of learning], Western studies for their practical applications), in his *Quan xue pian* 勸學篇 (Exhortation to Study), Zhang argued that if the theory of people's rights were adopted, chaos would take the place of order. See de Bary, Chan, and Watson, comp. *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 745-746.

traditional Chinese institutions and ideas.”³⁹ Chen later modified these views in her book,⁴⁰ I think in part due to the criticism she encountered from William Rudolph Schultz in his dissertation, *Lu Hsün: The Creative Years* (University of Washington, 1955). Schultz writes:

Literally unknown before the publication in 1918 of “The Diary of a Madman,” he [Lu Xun] can hardly be considered ‘the most outspoken leader of the radical reformers.’ Also, it was his failure to speak out strongly, to employ fiery rebellious phraseology, which accounts in part for the almost complete disregard accorded his writings at the time. He was not in any sense of the word a leader during those years, and there is even much question as to whether he really questioned the ‘basic’ soundness of Chinese institutions and ideas, as is stated, during this period of his life. On p. 43 of this [Chen’s] thesis, he is referred to as a typification of ‘the Chinese convert to western ideology.’ This formulation can be useful if it is remembered that a convert normally interprets newly adopted ideas in terms of a traditional conceptual framework. These articles have been subjected to an even more extreme interpretation. Wang Yeh-ch’iu, p. 91-94, may be considered representative of the many who treat Lu Hsün’s life and ideas within the conceptual framework outlined by Mao Tse-tung. He concludes on the basis of these articles that Lu Hsün was not an empty-headed idealist, but, indeed, a true realist who foresaw the basic ideas of Mao Tse-tung’s *New Democracy*...in these articles.⁴¹

³⁹ Chen, “The Social Thought of Lusin, 1881-1936,” 41.

⁴⁰ The dissertation was revised and published as a book under the title *The Social Thought of Lu Hsün, 1881-1936*. The section dealing with his early thought in the book spans pp. 44-88.

⁴¹ Schultz, “Lu Hsün: The Creative Years,” 124-125, n. 119. All emphasis (bold) is my own (from here on).

In his own analysis of Lu Xun's early essays, ⁴² Schultz depicts Lu Xun's views as culturally conservative: "Insufficiently imbued with the burning revolutionary spirit the times required, and, in fact, **lending support to beliefs which tended to run counter to the general trend**, they brought him neither recognition nor following, and were soon all but forgotten in a hurriedly paced and volatile atmosphere."⁴³

But what were the "beliefs that tended to run counter to the general trend?" In Schultz's reading, which begins with the two articles on science, "Ren zhi lishi" and "Kexue Shi Jiaopian":

The theme is to equate science to human progress, and to illustrate that national survival is dependent on two basic factors – namely, the acquisition and diffusion of scientific knowledge, and, secondly, the development of an intense inner-spirit of patriotic nationalism. Darwinian evolutionary theory, with its ethical and social extensions, being a product of scientific enquiry, provided a firmer foundation for his exalted view of humanity than was possible within the framework of traditional metaphysical speculation. It offered more rational grounds for believing in the essential goodness and perfectibility of man.⁴⁴

In other words, Lu Xun's humanism is partly derived from the West, which the contemporary mainland scholar Gao Yuanbao 高元寶 might challenge.⁴⁵

⁴² Ibid., 86-97.

⁴³ Ibid., 86.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 87-88. Emphasis my own.

⁴⁵ See Gao Yuanbao, *Lu Xun lun jiang*. I will discuss this source below.

But Schulz thinks Lu Xun was “no more aware of the real nature of the cultural crisis then confronting the Chinese nation than the previous generation, he was walled in by a frame of reference which viewed national problems as being essentially external in origin.”⁴⁶ Under limitations similar to those of Zhang Zhidong,⁴⁷ in “Wenhua pianzhi lun” (Schultz translates the title: “A Discussion of Cultural Obliquity”), Lu Xun “takes no account of the decay in native social and economic institutions, [and] suggests that to regain her past glory China need only infuse herself with a new vitality and such elements of western material contribution as adaptable to peculiar Chinese needs and conditions.”⁴⁸ Lu Xun “explicitly attacks ‘those who make the training of soldiers their livelihood,’ seeming to imply the *Yang-wu p'ai* 洋務派 of which Chang Chih-tung was typical, and ‘those who talk of industry, trade, constitutions and parliaments,’ meaning the *Wei-hsin pien-fa* 維新變法 school of reform of which K’ang Yu-wei 康有為 and Liang Ch’i-ch’ao 梁啟超 were the acknowledged leaders. Both groups represented the moderate cultural approach, yet both are stigmatized as self-seekers after personal emolument and aggrandizement.”⁴⁹ Schultz continues:

It was not his intent to argue that a modern industrial structure and parliamentary rule necessarily were undesirable in themselves, rather that other factors were more essential to modernization than the outward symbols with which the above-mentioned individuals concerned themselves. In this respect his reasoning perhaps went deeper than his contemporaries.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Schultz, “Lu Hsün: The Creative Years,” 88.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

This was his skepticism toward outward manifestations of modernization, such as industrialization and parliaments. Moreover, “Materialism and majority rule, which he accuses the above two groups of seeking to import, did not represent the most advanced thought of the West.”⁵¹ In Lu Xun’s view, “neo-idealism” 神思宗之至新者⁵² represented the forefront of Western thought, and this just happened to coincide with his own beliefs. Here Schultz opines:

In this anti-materialist return to things of the spirit and its corollary distrust of the mob he was, whether he knew it or not, more traditional-minded than his own generation. Being distrustful of materialism, which he correctly contended could not alone preserve the national sovereignty, and of majority rule for which he had a deep and lasting abhorrence, he confidently proclaimed that these concepts had been superseded in the West by more recent philosophical developments.⁵³

That much being said, Schultz goes on to assert that Lu Xun’s humanism was a product of East-West intellectual cross-pollination which took place during these years. He first quotes “Wenhua pianzhi lun”:

Therefore, that which has been advanced above comes down to two matters: *the negation of materialism and the emphasis of individualism....*⁵⁴

⁵¹ Ibid., 90-91.

⁵² Lu Xun’s rendering means literally the “newest branch of the idealist school.” Here he was referring to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Stirner.

⁵³ Schultz, “Lu Hsün: The Creative Years,” 91. Emphasis my own.

⁵⁴ Translation and italics are both Schultz’s. Schultz, “Lu Hsün: The Creative Years,” 92.

故所述止于二事：曰非物質，曰重箇人。⁵⁵

If we truly seek to establish a program suitable to present conditions, *we should investigate the past and weigh the future, suppress the material and promote the spiritual, free the individual and repress the majority.* When man becomes conscientious and self-asserting, then the nation will flourish.

What sense is there in grasping at branches and picking up leaves, or in idly chatting of gold, iron, parliaments and constitutions?⁵⁶

若為今立計，所當稽求既往，相度方來，掙物質而張靈明，任箇人而排眾數。人既發揚踔厲矣，則邦國亦以興起。奚事抱枝拾葉，徒金鐵國會立憲之云乎？⁵⁷

Then Schultz elaborates:

This basically humanistic doctrine to which he lent full support was born out of an eclectic of traditional beliefs in the essential goodness of man and mid-nineteenth century bourgeois liberalism. It has been noted previously that Lu Hsün recommended the writings of John Stuart Mill to his younger brother, and it is not surprising therefore to discover in him some of the basic elements of this social philosophy. As individualism was the keystone in the liberalists' philosophical arch, so did this heritage of romanticism find full expression in him.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ *LXQJ* (1938), 1:45. Schultz consulted the 1938 edition of *LXQJ*. See *LXQJ* (1981) 1:50.

⁵⁶ Schultz, "Lu Hsün: The Creative Years," 92. Translation and italics are both Schultz's.

⁵⁷ *LXQJ* (1938), 1:41. See *LXQJ* (1981) 1:46.

⁵⁸ Schultz, "Lu Hsün: The Creative Years," 92-93.

Schultz next interrogates Lu Xun's notion of *li ren* 立人, which he translates as “the establishment of man.” He quotes Lu Xun again: “... all the powers of Europe and America dazzle the world with these qualities...because they have their roots in man.” 然歐、美之強，莫不以是炫天下者，則根柢在人。⁵⁹ In conclusion, Schultz writes:

Subscribing to the ‘law’ of organic evolution, and its Nietzschean extension of the perfectibility of man, he believed that, if given a society in which freedom of thought and action were allowed to prevail, through science and man’s innate genius social and political advancement would follow as a matter of course. As has been said of the aristocratic Byron, Lu Hsün, who also claimed upper-class origins, had an august conception of man and a contemptuous opinion of men. Man was an idea or ideal, men are what they are, **in his social philosophy he stood during these years close to nineteenth century European liberalism with its agnostic faith in science, progress and man, with its deep hatred of oppression and hypocrisy, and its abiding fear of majority rule and the mass mind.**⁶⁰

In other words, Lu Xun was influenced by the European books he was reading in Chinese, Japanese and German translation, but he tended toward a European-defined liberalism that fit comfortably in with his own [prior] inclinations. He was not a “convert” to a radically different ideology.

⁵⁹ Schultz, “Lu Hsün: The Creative Years,” 94. Citing *LXQJ* (1938) 1:54. See *LXQJ* (1981) 1:56-57.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 94-95. Emphasis mine.

Schultz did not examine “Po e’sheng lun”; he implies that this is simply because it was “unfinished” and Lu Xun did not include it in *Fen*. He discusses “Moluo shi li shuo,” but in far less detail than “Wenhua pianzhi lun,” commenting:

Lu Hsün takes a middle ground, arguing neither that the sole purpose of literature, as one subdivision of the arts, is to please the senses, nor that literature is exclusively didactic in function. It is at the same time both; its medium appeals to and excites pleasurable response, and its utility lies in its ability to instruct and move to action. So we observe Lu Hsün, in response to his avowed purpose to rouse the mind of China through the medium of literature, turning towards a literature critical in tone and embodying a clear social purpose, yet a literature ever mindful of its basic, underlying values.⁶¹

This is an accurate summation of Lu Xun’s stance on aestheticism versus didacticism, but “Moluo shi li shuo” clearly places Lu Xun in opposition to the status quo and in sympathy with the devil (the rebels) against the powers that be, which clearly takes him beyond nationalism to a spirit of internationalism, on which Schultz does not focus. I would suggest that this was not because Schultz failed to see it, but rather that it has to do with the Cold War atmosphere in which he was writing, either that or his own ideological predispositions. Needless to say, this is an impressive work, despite its omissions. It is a pity that Schultz never found time to revise his dissertation into the Twayne series book on Lu Xun, for which he was awarded the contract before the series folded.

Harriet Mills (1920-2016), a graduate student in Chinese at Columbia, would have been a contemporary of Schultz if it had not been for her arrest and imprisonment as an American spy in

⁶¹ Schultz, “Lu Hsün: The Creative Years,” 95-96. Here he is citing *LXQJ* (1938) 1:65, 65, 66; then 62-67 *passim*. See *LXQJ* (1981) 1: 71, 72; 69-73.

July 1951 at Peking University where she had chosen to stay on as a Fulbright scholar, along with Allyn and Adele Rickett,⁶² after the others had left in 1949. After her return to New York at the end of 1955, it took her two years to recover from tuberculosis, she then resumed work on her PhD, producing a substantial dissertation that was eventually accepted at Columbia in 1963, under the title “Lu Hsün: 1927-1936. The Years on the Left.” In it Mills made observations on the early essays that are worth noting. She begins by saying: “Between December 1907 and December 1908 Lu Xun published in *Honan* (Ho-nan), a student magazine, four essays probably intended for *Vita Nuova*. Couched in the difficult style of Chang Ping-lin, under whom he was then studying, these essays attracted no attention at the time.” She cites the introduction by Wang Chi-chen in *Ab Q and Others* as the authority for this, adding: “Lu Hsün’s writing in Japan, as he later remarked, was excessively elaborate and difficult, strongly under the influence of the styles of Chang Ping-lin and the famous early translator, Yen Fu (1853-1921).” She continues: “In retrospect, they are interesting for what they reveal of Lu Hsün’s knowledge and thinking three years before the Republican Revolution.”⁶³

Mills calls “Wenhua pianzhi lun” the “most arresting of the essays” and says it presents Lu Xun’s theory of cultural development:

Like the essay on the history of science, it argued for balanced development. According to Lu Hsün, cultures developed by modifying past practice to meet new needs. In the process deficiencies in the old were exaggerated and the pendulum swung to the opposite extreme. Progress lay in the resolution of opposing tendencies. Thus the French

⁶² The Ricketts wrote about their experience in the book *Prisoners of Liberation* (New York: Anchor Press, 1973), referring to their friendship with Harriet, but refraining from telling her story.

⁶³ Mills, “Lu Hsün: 1927-1936. The Years on the Left,” 16-17.

Revolution had shattered mediaeval theocracy and the concept of the divine right of kings and replaced them with the ideals of liberty and equality. In turn liberty and equality had been carried to such extremes that the tyranny of “millions of rascals” had replaced the tyranny of one. In the material sphere the unbounded faith in materialism and science generated by the Industrial Revolution, he argued, had in turn stifled the spiritual and creative instincts of man out of which the postulates of science had come....

Lu Hsün described how in reaction to these extremes of mass tyranny and insatiable materialism there had arisen in the nineteenth century thinkers who stressed the individual and things of the spirit. To him they appeared likely to form the main intellectual current of the twentieth century. He cited Hegel, whose idealism laid stress on the mind, Lord Shaftesbury, whose Tory humanitarianism revolted against the impersonal economic force of the Industrial Revolution, the powerful but uncoordinated revolt of Stirner, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Ibsen, and especially Nietzsche, who mocked convention and glorified the creative individual. In 1908, under the strong influence of Nietzsche, Lu Hsün put his faith in the superior few, the superman, not in the masses.⁶⁴

Mills then translates a passage from “Wenhua pianzhi lun”:

Right and wrong cannot be decided by the people; to let them decide would not accord with the truth. National affairs cannot be decided by the people. To do so would not achieve

⁶⁴ Ibid., 18-19. Here Mills adds that Zhang Zhidong “argued against people’s rights in much the same terms,” citing Teng and Fairbank, *China’s Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923*, 167. This further develops Schultz’ position.

peace and security. Only when a superman appears in the world will peace come. If not [a superman] then at least a genius.⁶⁵

故是非不可公于眾；公之則果不誠；政事不可公于眾，公之則治不鄧。惟超人出，世乃太平。苟不能然，則在英哲。

She follows on this with her analysis:

China, he argued, needed such superior men. China today was weak because for centuries she had never been challenged. There had been nothing to start the pendulum swinging in a new direction. Her salvation, he felt, lay in the full and untrammelled development of gifted individuals. Only such men could clearly comprehend world conditions, Only they could select what was applicable to China and lead her successfully to reform. By implication he was now rejecting both those who would adopt only western military and technical knowledge and those who supported the constitutional reformism of Liang Ch'i-ch'ao.⁶⁶

From here Mills goes on to discuss “Moluo shili shuo,” saying that in this essay Lu Xun “argued that the function of literature was to nurture intellectual and spiritual awakening. Literature has an emotional power to reveal the subtle mysteries of life that science could not describe. The rebellious spirit of the preceding work infuses this discussion, too. Mara is the Hindu God of Destruction and Lu Hsün applied the term ‘Mara poet’ to one who leads mankind forward through

⁶⁵ Ibid., 19. Mills cites *LXQJ* (1938) 1:48-49.

⁶⁶ Mills, “Lu Hsün: 1927-1936. The Years on the Left,” 19.

rebellion, no matter how much the world may disapprove...”⁶⁷ She then makes a general assessment which is valuable in that it compares him with his contemporaries:

Viewed in the context of their time, these essays reveal the intellectual gulf between Lu Hsün’s generation and that of the reformers led by K’ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch’i-ch’ao. As Sun’s nationalistic revolutionary drive to unseat the Manchus gained momentum, students were no longer concerned, as was Liang Ch’i-ch’ao, with justifying their demands for change in terms of the Confucian tradition. Lu Hsün never invoked the Confucian sanction. He belonged to the revolution.

At the same time there were elements in Lu Hsün reminiscent of Liang. Perhaps the most important was that in these essays nowhere was there any outright condemnation of Chinese tradition, any rejection of it as inhumane and cruel. That would come later. Implicit in Lu Hsün’s silence and in his plea for selective borrowing from the West was an acceptance of Chinese culture. He felt that China needed to be brought up to date, but that her adjustment to the modern world should be Chinese in spirit. Lu Hsün agreed with Liang that without a real change in the Chinese people, China was doomed. But where Liang invoked the wisdom, virtue, and power of the four hundred million, Lu Hsün at this time placed his emphasis on the superior few. Lu Hsün’s Hegelian concept of progress as the resolution of extremes was not unrelated to Liang’s argument that all phenomena in the world were governed by two great principles, one conservative and the other aggressive. Like Liang, Lu Hsün warned against superficial intoxication with Western customs.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 20.

Measured against the developments in Western thought, these essays show that Lu Hsün apparently had missed the whole tide of socialist thought, with which he identified himself twenty years later. This tide for some time had been attacking the very individualism he so praised. These essays, while neither original nor profound, do reveal that certain attitudes which were to characterize Lu Hsün through life were already fairly well formed. First, he exhibited a sympathy for the common people combined with a willingness to accept the necessity of entrusting responsibility for their welfare to a gifted minority. By instinct he was a humanitarian and even as a child had been moved by the plight of the underprivileged in his mother's rural town. Ideally he felt no one should suffer and everyone should have a full life. In practice, he seemed to feel, some guidance was required if the greatest good were to be realized. Second, Lu Hsün insisted on the complexity of life and culture, on the need to develop both mind and matter. Neither philosophy nor science could be ignored for progress depended on both. These attitudes were subsequently to affect his outlook on the Communists. On the one hand they kept him from accepting their dogma simply or mechanically. On the other they made it easy for him to justify measures the Party might feel it essential to take for the "common good," although these steps might temporarily violate humanitarian values. There was therefore for him no problem of ends and means.⁶⁸

The most important contribution that Mills has made here to the study of the early essays per se is in the historical re-contextualization of Lu Xun's ideas vis-à-vis Liang Qichao. Of course, there may be minor quibbles with what she writes – Mara is indeed the name of a divine trickster in Buddhist legend, but Lu Xun uses it as a "soft" translation of "satanic" in the epithet of "chief of the Satanic

⁶⁸ Ibid., 22-23.

school,” that Robert Southey hurled at Byron.⁶⁹ Within the context of the essay he is not so much a destroyer as an advocate of resistance for the sake of saving humanity. As for having missed out on the tide of socialist thought, that is largely irrelevant to the context and to what Lu Xun is arguing for, although it may be of interest to the historiographers of communism. Her conclusion that “for him no problem of ends and means” existed is rash.

In 1968 a substantial M. Phil. thesis was completed by Angela Shek-hing Castro titled “Four Early Essays of Lu Hsün” at the University of London under the supervision of D. E. Pollard, an expert on Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885-1967) and later himself a biographer of Lu Xun. The author sees the attraction of Western science and civilization as “conquering and transforming the Chinese mind.” To wit, she divides her attention between two essays on science: “Ren zhi lishi” and “Kexueshi jiaopian” and two essays on man: “Wenhua pianzhi lun” (which she translates as “On the Perverted Development of Culture”) and “Moluo shi li shuo.” Castro summarizes her views:

Lu Hsün saw Western science as a promoter of the physical well-being of man, but he was more anxious that his countrymen should have the correct perspective towards Western civilization as a whole in order to be truly benefitted by it. He therefore spoke out against the two extreme and antithetical tendencies of his age, that of complete obsession with materialism and utilitarianism, and of complacency about the illusionary Chinese superiority in spiritual civilization. He recommended a critical attitude towards both Western

⁶⁹ Robert Southey (1774-1843), the then Poet Laureate of England, in his preface to his poem “Vision of Judgement” (which describes the apotheosis of George III) characterized Byron’s “Don Juan” as “a monstrous combination of horror and mockery, lewdness and impiety” regretting that it had not been prosecuted, and called Byron the “chief of the Satanic school, inspired by the spirit of Moloch and Belial.” See Noel, *Life of Lord Byron*, 165.

and Chinese civilizations, but advocated idealism in place of materialism and individualism in place of democracy, which, he was convinced, were more urgently needed in the revitalization of China. He cited Haeckel, Stirner, Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Ibsen, Byron, Shelley and the Slav romantics like Pushkin, Lermontov, Mickiewicz, Slowacki and Petöfi as exponents of true subjective idealism. Literature he viewed as the best means to instill great thought and noble emotion into man to emancipate him from the pettiness of life and outdated conventions. The optimism and confidence of his beliefs were sustained by a faith in the evolutionary process which was interpreted as the inevitable progress of man. Lu Hsün later modified and discarded some of these beliefs, but on the whole, he never swerved from the most fundamental ones. These essays...were executed in a style very different from his later ones. Archaic in places and difficult on the whole, they nevertheless have a richness and a classical charm absent in his later essays.⁷⁰

In my view, Lu Xun did not intend Byron and Shelley as exemplars of subjective idealism -- that would have been Stirner, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. And the idea that Lu Xun opposed “democracy,” while being commonly shared among a number of these scholars, is an oversimplification. What he opposed was the use of the name of “majority” to trample the rights of the individual and to suppress genius. This is not to say that the thesis is greatly flawed: the first third (pp. 1-122) presents Castro’s summaries and analyses of each essay, which are logical and cogent, although they tend to be reliant on close reading and not historical re-contextualization, which was more favored by American scholars Schultz and Mills. The second two-thirds of the work (pp. 123-

⁷⁰ Castro, “Four Early Essays of Lu Hsün,” 5-6.

289) contains translations, which are choppy and questionable at times in terms of accuracy, but always done into correct English.

The next scholar to comment extensively on the early essays was William A. Lyell, who attained a PhD at the University of Chicago in 1971 with a dissertation titled: “The Short Story Theatre of Lu Hsün,” which was subsequently revised and published as a book under the title *Lu Hsün’s Vision of Reality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976). Lyell begins this discussion by saying that three of Lu Xun’s early essays “are especially interesting for the light they throw on Lu Hsün’s thought with regard to literature: ‘The Erratic Development of Culture (*Wen-hua p’ien-chih lun*),’ ‘The Power of Mara Poetry (*Mo-luo shih-li shuo*),’ and ‘On Breaking Through the Voices of Evil (*P’o e-sheng lun*).’”⁷¹ Having singled these three out, he observes: “‘The Erratic Development of Culture’ clearly reveals one of the characteristics of Lu Hsün’s thought that was to dominate both the stories and the essays of his mature period: his questioning of the motivation of people who espouse various kinds of programs.”⁷² Lyell then quotes Japanese scholar Imamura Yoshio 今村与志雄 (1925-2007), who writes that in “The Erratic Development of Culture” Lu Xun made a “scathing and cynical critique of the basic programs of that enlightenment movement which constituted the mainstream of contemporary thought – a movement that sloganized in favor of such things as enriching the country and strengthening the military, increasing productivity while fostering industry, and even establishing a constitutional monarchy.”⁷³ Lyell continues:

⁷¹ Lyell, *Lu Hsün’s Vision of Reality*, 88.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 89. Cited from Imamura Yoshio, *Rojin to dentō*, 199. This is Lyell’s English translation.

Lu Hsün felt that the dominant trends of thought in nineteenth-century Europe, materialism and social democracy, were the consequences of an overreaction to the spiritualism of the Catholic church and the despotism of the state. In its intensity, this overreaction led to a crude materialism that caused people to lose faith in the life of the intellect; it led to a false kind of democracy that bullied the individual in the sacred name of the majority. Lu Hsün invokes the names of Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, and Ibsen, all of whom, he assures us, were reacting against the nineteenth-century leveling process that stifled all individuality. The civilization of nineteenth-century Europe had arisen out of the Reformation and was based primarily on the concept of resistance to old, pre-Reformation ways: thus that civilization had gone to an extreme in its almost uncritical preference for materialism and social democracy. It was to correct this extremism, Lu Hsün feels, that the neo-idealists (for so he labels Nietzsche and the others) first began to speak out.⁷⁴

Lu Xun was not reacting against “spiritualism,” but rather the abuses of organized religion. He cautions against extremes. Those who advocate total Westernization are wrong. China “should be selectively influenced by the new culture of the West, but it is beyond all reason to think that the one can suddenly be replaced by the other.”⁷⁵ Lu Xun’s type of reasoning regarding the development of cultures here sounds almost Hegelian. Lyell elaborates:

It is important, he says, that China not be misled by the present ‘erratic’ development of European culture. China ought rather to move in the direction of Europe’s future, and it is likely that the trend of that future will be away from the narrow materialism and social

⁷⁴ Ibid., 90.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

democracy of the nineteenth century and toward the individualism and spirituality mapped out by the neo-idealists. Hence China ought now to honor the individual and expand the realm of the intellect, or spirit. Once the Chinese people, as individuals, are established and made strong, everything else will follow; any other course would be self-defeating. **Here we have the concrete expression of the intellectual framework that would inform most of Lu Hsün’s mature literature; the spiritual (psychological) liberation of the individual is a precondition for the liberation of the collective energy of the Chinese people and the eventual establishment of a new, strong and vigorous society.** In the short stories that Lu Hsün would write in later years, he would describe the fetters that bound the Chinese spirit, hoping that abler men would find some way to liberate it. Toward the end of the essay he affirms that the real strength of China and Europe lies in their people, a spiritual factor that is not so readily observable as are the fruits of their labor (heavy machinery, trains, ships, and the like). Therefore, if China is to achieve domestic tranquility and become powerful enough to drive its enemies away from its shores, it must first establish its people, for once the people are established everything else will follow.⁷⁶

Lyell does not discuss the origins of Lu Xun’s idea of the necessity to “establish the people” (*li ren* 立人), for which Gao Yuanbao has recently posited native roots,⁷⁷ nor does Lyell ascribe it to the

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ See Gao, *Lu Xun liu jiang*. This book is a meditation on a number of topics, such as Lu Xun and national character, creative writing vs scholarship, his use of language, the transition from fiction to essays, the self-depiction of modern China. From a theoretical perspective, Gao searches for traditional ideas that informed Lu Xun’s thought, advancing the thesis that Lu Xun’s advocacy in his early essays of China’s need to *li ren* 立人 (establish a responsible citizenry) was derived more from the Song neo-Confucian concept of *lixin* 立心 (establishing the mind) than from Western ideas on the importance of role of the individual in society. This is at variance with what Lu Xun leads readers to believe in the course of the early essays, but is not necessarily wrong in terms of tracing his motivation in prioritizing *li ren* over other ways to “modernize” China, because, as Lu Xun wrote:

influence of Western-style liberalism, as does Schultz. He seems overly sensitive to Lu Xun's critical attitude toward China's past, which neither he nor Schultz discuss in detail, in fact Lyell adjusts Lu Xun's text when paraphrasing it as "the real strength of China and Europe lies in their people" -- what Lu Xun actually wrote was: "Yet, the strength of Europe and America, which dazzles the entire world, lies in its people" 然歐美之強，莫不以是炫天下者，則根柢在人。⁷⁸ Schultz sticks closer to the original text. Again, I would speculate that Lyell is influenced by the times -- writing in (or around) 1971, he tends to play down criticism of China and make recourse to subjective terms like "love" to describe Lu Xun's attitude toward his people, which do not normally come to mind in Western scholarly writing. In fact, his analysis of Ah Q's *jingshe shengli fa* 精神勝利法 (method of attaining spiritual victories) is that it provided an ingenious psychological tactic for the Chinese people to survive, which is highly problematic.⁷⁹

"lies in its people" 根柢在人. See also Gao, *Lu Xun liu jiang: zeng ding ben* 魯迅六講增訂本 (Six Lectures on Lu Xun: Expanded Edition) (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 2007) 295 pps., which reprints the original six lectures with a 136 page appendix of new material on Takeuchi Yoshimi's *Rojin*; treatments of the body in Lu Xun's works; *Yecao* 野草 (Wild Grass); problems defining what the idea of *kexue* 科學 (science) meant to Lu Xun; what Lu Xun meant by the terms *bengen* 本根, *bendi* 本柢 and *shensi* 神思 used in his early essays; Lu Xun, Hegel and Hu Feng; under the gaze of Xiang Lin Sao 祥林嫂; reading "Po e'sheng lun" and its position among Lu Xun's early essays, four of which (in agreement with Wang Dehou) he says "advance on each other's arguments, forming one integral work" 四篇論文，層層推進，自成一體。See Gao, *Lu Xun liu jiang: zeng ding ben*, 248; five essays on aspects of the story "Zhu Jian" 鑄劍 (Forging Swords); on the story "Shangshi" 傷逝 (Regret for the Past); on his classical-style poems: "Three Verses on Parting from My Brothers" 別諸弟三首 (Bie zhu di sanshou), "Three Stanzas in Mourning for Fan Ainong" 哀范君三章 (Ai Fan jun sanzhang), "Against Yu Dafu's Move to Hangzhou" 阻郁達夫移家杭州 (Zu Yu Dafu yijia Hangzhou), and the "Impromptu Written in the Autumn of 1935" 亥年殘秋偶作 (Hainian canqiu ouzuo).

⁷⁸ This is from the conclusion to "Wenhua pianzhi lun." See *LXQJ* (1991) 1:58.

⁷⁹ This was criticized in Lin Yu-sheng's review of Lyell's book *Lu Hsiün's Vision of Reality*. Lin seizes on Ah Q's eventual execution at the end of the story to challenge Lyell's assertion that Ah Q's method of self-delusion has helped the Chinese stay alive. See *Journal of Asian Studies* 38, no.2 (February 1979): 365-368.

Lyell views “Moluo shi li shuo” somewhat differently from Schultz, writing that **Lu Xun “is primarily interested in the satanic spirit of nonconformity** [again, a term from the West in the late 1960s] and revolt that he saw exemplified in Byron (he admired translations by Su Man-shu [1884-1918]) and Shelley. The word ‘Mara,’ which he glosses as equivalent to the devil, was first applied, he notes, to Byron; however, he proposes to apply it to all those poets who cried out in rebellion against heaven and man in order to stir their contemporaries to a more meaningful, free, and robust mode of being.”⁸⁰ In a footnote on the same page, Lyell quotes Soviet scholar V.I. Semanov (in the late Charles J. Alber’s translation) as saying: “The main purpose of the article” is to “celebrate the writer as a rebel who hurled challenges at society.”⁸¹ **So the Mara poets were rebels, but they were also revitalizers. Lyell tells us:**

All of these “Mara poets” were, in one way or another, associated with arms and bloodshed, for they were warriors – not ordinary fighters, but warriors of the spirit. China, says Lu Hsün, stands in need of just such warriors. These “warriors of the spirit” give a culture its voice. When a culture is silent it is nearing death. The works of these warriors constitute the “voices of the mind (*hsin-sheng*).” These voices articulate the feelings, hopes, and fears of an entire people, and they are voices that are often prophetic, either exhorting the culture to reform or stirring its people to resistance against oppression.⁸²

But Lyell was wont to compare Lu Xun to Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852), not Maxim Gorky (1868-1936). He writes that Lu Xun pays special attention to Gogol “for his was a voice that broke a

⁸⁰ Lyell, *Lu Hsün’s Vision of Reality*, 91.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, n. 49.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 91.

Russian silence of centuries. He made Russia, and the world at large, aware of the hitherto invisible traces of tears on the tragic faces of a suffering people. He brought nineteenth-century Russia to an awareness of the dark side of life. Lu Xun would remain a lifelong admirer of Gogol and would perform in twentieth-century China a function not entirely dissimilar to that of Gogol in nineteenth-century Russia.”⁸³ This is perhaps because Lyell valued Lu Xun as a creative writer, more than as a polemicist. Gogol and Gorky were very different writers. There is a dark side to Gogol, but also a humorous one. In that aspect he resembles Lu Xun more than Gorky. It is interesting to note that Lyell translated *xin sheng* 心聲 as “voices of the mind,” not “voices of the heart.” This gives a distinctly rationalist bent to Lyell’s perception of a term that is probably derived from a description of Shelley, which neither Lyell nor Schultz mention.

Regarding this term, Kitaoka Masako tells us that in chapter three (“Shelley as a Poet”) of Hamada Yoshizumi’s 濱田佳澄 book *Shierei* シエレー (Shelley):⁸⁴

Hamada points out that the source of Shelley’s idealistic and revolutionary spirit is in his “overly abundant sincerity” (*seki shin* 赤心 = one’s inmost heart, true heart, the faithful mind, sincerity).⁸⁵ And thus he called the voice of this sincere heart/mind the voice of a prophet. And he took this voice of a prophet to be the “voice of man” (*hito*

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Hamada Yoshizumi, *Shierei* シエレー (Shelley) (Tōkyō: Min’yūsha, 1900). A laudatory treatment in book form by a pioneering scholar of Western literature in Japan, this was the main source for Lu Xun’s section on Shelley in part six of “On the Power of Mara Poetry.”

⁸⁵ John Addington Symonds speaks of Shelley’s “vivid logical sincerity.” “His passionate love of liberty, his loathing for intolerance, his impatience of control for self and others, and his vivid logical sincerity combined to make him the Quixotic champion of extreme opinions.” See Symonds, *Shelley*, 39. Note that the first edition appeared in 1878.

no koe 人の声), citing the thinkers who lead the French Revolution and American War of Independence as examples of this type of “men”; the “voice of man” which issued forth from the sincere hearts/minds (*seki shin* 赤心). I wonder if it could not be the same thing as what Lu Xun, who saw in this the prospect of the life and death of a nation, called *xin sheng* 心聲?

浜田はこの章で、シェリーの理想的、革命的精神の根源に「餘りある赤心」をおく。そしてその「赤心」に発する声を予言者の声と呼ぶ。そしてその予言者の声を、「人の声」であるとする。(フランス革命やアメリカの独立を導いた思想家達をその「人」の例としてあげている) この「赤心」より発する「人の声」、これはその有無に民族の生死を見た魯迅の所謂「心聲」と同じものではないだろうか。⁸⁶

In his treatment of “German voices of the mind,” Lyell tells us Lu Xun singled out Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769-1860) and Karl Theodor Körner (1791-1813): “The voices of these men stirred the German people to heroic resistance when the fatherland faced possible extinction at the hands of Napoleon. Lu Hsün emphasizes their example to show his Chinese readers that countries are not preserved by weapons and technology alone.”⁸⁷ In fact, Lu Xun wrote something even more strongly democratic and anti-chauvinist: “Napoleon was defeated not by any nation, not by any emperor, nor by any weaponry, but by the people, and only the people” 敗拿坡侖者，不為國家，

⁸⁶ See Kitaoka, “‘Mara Shi Ryoku Setsu’ zaigenkō nōto, sono go” 「摩羅詩力説」材源考ノート (その五) (Notes on the Sources for “On the Power of Mara Poetry,” #5 [On Shelley]), *Yasō*, nos.14-5 (April 1974), 98.

⁸⁷ Lyell, *Lu Hsün's Vision of Reality*, 91-92.

不為皇帝，不為兵刃，國民而已。⁸⁸ Rather than driving this point home, however, Lyell segues to Lu Xun's reply to those critics who said literature had no practical value. Lyell summarizes Lu Xun, saying:

Perhaps the most important function of literature, however, is its ability to bring to light the hidden springs of human existence, to show life to the reader in a way that is denied to science and the academic disciplines...the academic disciplines, though able to describe human life in great detail, are not able to place it in their readers' hands; literature, on the other hand, gives the reader the cake of ice."⁸⁹

Lyell then moves on to discuss "On Breaking through the Voices of Evil" 破惡聲論 (Pò'esheng lun), the title of which he credits Soviet sinologist Vladislav Sorokin with helping him translate into English. Lyell sees this essay as continuing Lu Xun's "search for spiritual warriors who will sound a clarion blare to awaken their sleeping compatriots to a new and more meaningful mode of existence. In this third essay, too, he seriously questions the motivation of his various contemporaries with their sundry programs for curing China's ills."⁹⁰ But, Lyell continues, **"The central theme of 'On Breaking through the Voices of Evil,' however, lies in another direction, a direction that is in itself a gauge of the distance that now separates him from Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's position on the place of fiction in society."**⁹¹ He then again quotes Imamura Yoshio as summing up the content of this new theme:

⁸⁸ This is at the end of "On the Power of Mara Poetry," part II, see *LXQJ* (1991) 1:72-73.

⁸⁹ Lyell, *Lu Hsün's Vision of Reality*, 92.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

The anti-superstition movement, part of the reform movement led by Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and his group, was then thriving. Political novels, taking anti-superstition as their theme, were being written in great numbers. These dedicated scholars of the anti-superstition cause (1) saw religion as an illusion, (2) would prohibit religious fairs, and (3) disdained mythology. In opposition to this, Lu Hsün...made the refutation [contained in this essay].⁹²

Lyell tells us Lu Xun's "refutation of these 'dedicated scholars (zhishi 志士) of the anti-superstition cause' is intimately related in his view of the gentry and the peasantry...the gentry, instead of accepting any responsibility for the contemporary plight of China, find it more convenient to lay the country's ills at the doorstep of the peasantry."⁹³ He continues with Lu Xun's comment that the idea of a dragon reflects the imaginative powers of the Chinese people, not their ignorance of science, as some members of the gentry contended, concluding:

The greatness of Lu Hsün lies, in part, in his fiercely independent and rather consistent point of view vis-à-vis Chinese culture and the West. It was a point of view that he developed through decades of coming-and-going fads in thought and politics. Here, in 1908, long before the writings of Karl Marx were much known in China (and, so far as I know, long before Lu Hsün knew much about Marxism), we find him undertaking something very close to a class analysis of society. Little wonder, then, that he was not to be an ardent enthusiast for 'science' and 'democracy' during the May Fourth period...students, too, get a bit of the lash of his writing brush. He says that there is a rather simple-minded movement afoot in China that

⁹² Imamura, *Rojin to dentoo*, op. cit., 214.

⁹³ Lyell, *Lu Hsün's Vision of Reality*, 93.

cavalierly takes over the holy places of the Buddhists and converts them into schools.

Schools for temples – it seems a poor exchange, for Buddhism is one of the world’s great religions, a religion of proven worth; the students turned out by the schools, on the other hand, are at best of a rather low level. And yet those students smugly consider themselves precious gifts to modern China.⁹⁴

Lyell spots a budding class-consciousness in Lu Xun well before Marxism took root among Chinese intellectuals. He also discerns a respect for religions (Lyell himself was a Roman Catholic and had great respect for Judaism), a reverence toward certain elements in the past, and a healthy suspicion of “science” and “democracy,” which were certainly also present among Western intellectuals after the First World War (and which Liang Qichao commented on in the 1920s). So, in Lyell’s view, Lu Xun was a forerunner among his generation (and, in my opinion as well). Lyell continues:

In this essay, for the first time, Lu Hsün takes a critical look at the uses to which the doctrine of social Darwinism had been put. In the West its high-sounding phrases are, he points out, used to justify the subjugation of weaker peoples. (If China has its hypocrisies, the West has its own, too.) He also notes with a trace of alarm that there are those Chinese who in resisting their Western oppressors are fully prepared to copy them in this respect.⁹⁵

Lyell concludes his discussion:

⁹⁴ Ibid., 94.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

In all three of these essays one is struck by the author's critical perceptiveness. Lu Hsün's view of China and the West was a reasoned one, achieved only after mature reflection and was the result of much study and love; it was reached through hard work and uniquely his own.⁹⁶

This verdict on the uniqueness and the value of Lu Xun's critical perspectives is one which I also share, but as mentioned above, Lyell does not elaborate on how "love" figures into the equation. From here he moves to introduce his next topic, Lu Xun as a translator, by observing:

In 'The Erratic Development of Culture,' Lu Xun saw China's weakness and strengths as proceeding from the same cause – isolation....China was never exposed to genuine stimuli from the outside and the result had been slow atrophy. For this reason, one might say, the function of the translator is as important in Lu Hsün's thought as that of the creative writer. **Just as the Mara poet breaks down the silence that shrouds the land, so the function of the translator is as important in Lu Hsün's thought as that of the creative writer....The twin enemies of his personal life – silence and loneliness – were also China's enemies. Mara poets would slay the first monster, and translators the second.**⁹⁷

In the conclusion of his book, Lyell talks about how seriously Lu Xun took the writing of his own short stories, quoting Feng Xuefeng 馮雪峰 (writing in 1937) as saying Lu Xun once remarked to

⁹⁶ Ibid., 95.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

him: “Even my fiction consists of dissertations; the only difference is that I adapted the short story form to express them.”⁹⁸ And Lyell adds:

Lu Hsün was a commentator on the classical ideas (if not the classics) of Chinese culture, albeit a very critical and even revolutionary one. No longer able to express himself in commentaries and subcommentaries, living in a transitional period, he used poetry, essays, and the short story to accomplish his ends. He was not just a story teller; he was a philosopher of culture who expressed himself, in part, in stories.⁹⁹

In other words, Lyell saw Lu Xun as a thinker as well as a writer. His creative writing and his translations were all part of his larger role as a “philosopher of culture”:

Lu Hsün, without retreating into certainties of the past or escaping into fantasies of the future, accepted his place in time. This acceptance of the ‘nowness’ of that period lent spiritual weight to his writings and thought. Lending his voice to the silent suffering of the Chinese people, he took his place in the long line of Mara poets that he had come to admire as a young man in Japan.¹⁰⁰

In this way Lyell draws heavily on these three early essays to establish Lu Xun’s role as a cosmopolitan critic and a thinker, a forerunner of the Marxist class-analysis of Chinese society, but also a defender of religion, of the imagination and a seasoned intellectual with a reasonable degree of

⁹⁸ Quoted by Lyell, *Lu Hsün’s Vision of Reality*, 307. Lyell cites [Feng] Xuefeng, *Guolai de shidai*, 22. (The original reads, 就是我的小說，也是論文；我不過採用了短篇小說的體裁罷了.)

⁹⁹ Lyell, *Lu Hsün’s Vision of Reality*, 307.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 312.

skepticism toward the fads for science, democracy (I would prefer to translate this as “majority rule”), and social Darwinism. He also posits the centrality of the Mara poets in Lu Xun’s own project and, indeed, places Lu Xun among their ranks.

After Lyell’s book there was a hiatus in publications on Lu Xun the US, yet Chinese scholars began to move forward on the early essays and in the wake of the publication of the *baihua* translation by Wang Shijing (1978), a lengthy MA thesis titled “Lu Hsün: the 1907 Essays” was completed in 1984 by Christine Pfeil, supervised by K.C. Liu and Donald Price in the Department of History, University of California at Davis. This thesis examines several key ideas and concepts in the essays, but pays little attention to the language or their broader historical context.

Leo Ou-fan Lee first became known in Lu Xun studies for his biographical approach to Lu Xun childhood and formative years which used the Eriksonian psychological model. This was first published in Chinese in *Mingbao Yuekan* 明报月刊 (Ming Pao Monthly),¹⁰¹ then as his chapter “Genesis of a Writer” and refined in his book *Voices from the Iron House*.¹⁰² In his chapter in *Lu Xun and His Legacy*, an edited collection of papers, Lee addresses the early essays, saying:

The roots of the “Lu Xun style” lie in traditional Chinese literature. The specific legacy Lu Xun inherited, according to Wang Yao 王瑤, is the classical prose (*gwen* 古文) of the Wei-Jin period 魏晉 (220-420) and earlier. It may be called *sanwen* 散文 as opposed to

¹⁰¹ See Li Oufan 李歐梵, “Lu Xun Neizhuan” 鲁迅内传 (Lu Xun: an Interior Biography) in *Mingbao Yuekan*, nos. 60-61; 63-64 (1970-1971). The earliest version of Leo Ou-fan Lee’s psychological analysis of Lu Xun, it influenced Pierre Ryckmans, who called it a “penetrating study,” see Simon Leys, *Broken Images: Essays on Chinese Culture and Politics*, 29. Also see Jon Eugene von Kowallis, “The Lu Xun of Western Sinologists? Pierre Ryckmans, Simon Leys, René Leys, and the ‘Aestheticization’ of Lu Xun.”

¹⁰² Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Voices from the Iron House*.

the more ornate and decorative *pianwen* (parallel prose). It was used often for exposition or argument, and Lu Xun admired its “clear and succinct” (*qingjun* 清俊) and “natural and untrammelled” (*tongtuo* 通脫) quality. Filtered through the scholarship of Zhang Taiyan, however, the *guwen* style was turned unequivocally against the two styles of prose writing prevalent in the late Qing – those associated with the Tongcheng 桐城 and Wenxuan 文選 schools. Zhang found both wanting in originality and rigor.

Lu Xun’s rejection of the Tongcheng style of Yan Fu 嚴復 (1854-1921) and Lin Shu 林紓 (1852-1924) in favor of the *guwen* style of Zhang Taiyan was a major step of intellectual reorientation as well. For the *guwen* of the Wei-Jin period was itself a distillation of the Han and pre-Han styles. Its use for exposition and argument can be traced to the pre-Qin philosophers. Its succinct verbal structure gives it intellectual density. A typical *guwen* essay by Zhang Taiyan or Lu Xun is difficult to read, because it compresses allusions into a seemingly disorganized whole. This somewhat contradictory combination of precision and chaos, conciseness and turgidity, was Zhang Taiyan’s stylistic riposte to the prevailing schools of his time. In style and thought Zhang Taiyan perhaps differed most sharply from the schools of Kang Youwei, whose disciple Liang Qichao continued to exert enormous impact at the time. That school was anchored in the “modern text” tradition and emphasized the unfolding of a single vision.

It may be that Zhang Taiyan’s unorthodox traditionalism appealed to Lu Xun precisely because of its potential radicalism – its profound distrust of established systems of thought and styles of composition. Zhang’s espousal of a more authentic ancient style, in contrast to recent vulgarizations, might also have prompted Lu Xun’s classical preferences for pre-Song literature and thought. The seemingly directionless quality of Lu Xun’s essays

could be an adaptation of Zhang's *guwen* mode of expression in a modern form. And the profusion of *wenyan* phrases and quotations – some of them very abstruse – could likewise be attributed to Zhang's influence.

However, the *guwen* influence on Lu Xun's *zawen* should not be overstressed, for Lu Xun also imitated in them, often satirically, several other styles, including the stilted “eight-legged” essay. Ultimately the crucial issue is how Lu Xun, steeped as he was in so pervasive a legacy of prose writing, nevertheless transcended its limitations and evolved something uniquely his own. When we examine his earliest *baihua* essays – the *suiganlu* 隨感錄 [Random Thoughts] pieces written in 1918 – we are struck by a mixture of elements.¹⁰³

Lee's contribution to this discussion is valuable in that he looks at the style and the language of the essays per se. However, I would not characterize the style of Lu Xun's essays from the 1907-8 period as “directionless.” “Moluo shi li shuo” has a clear structure and direction. The others also move along in an expansive but coherent fashion. Nor are they overly reliant on allusions. If anything, they are the opposite. As Itō Toramaru 伊藤虎丸 (1927-2003) has noted in the addendum to his Japanese translation of “Po e'sheng lun,” regarding the frequent use of terms from Zhuangzi, these are employed by Lu Xun as words and phrases, but seldom if ever hark back to their original context within *Zhuangzi*.¹⁰⁴ Lee might have taken the enquiry into the influence of Zhang Taiyan one

¹⁰³ Lee, *Lu Xun and His Legacy*, 26-27.

¹⁰⁴ Itō Toramaru comments: “‘Po e'sheng lun’ is written in literary language...the greatest distinguishing characteristic of his employment of phrases from the classics is that, for the most part they are drawn from *Zhuangzi* and secondly from the *Huainanzi* and *Chu ci*. In addition, phrases from *Mencius*, *Zuo Zhuan*, *Yijing*, *Shijing*, etc. are prominent. I do not think that this is without connection to Lu Xun's literary preferences at the time as indicated, for example, by his affection for the ‘common people’ – looking at how he distinguished [other] traditions from within Chinese culture from Confucianism, it is possible to see an indication of the way he thought ‘cultural nationalism’ should be. Secondly, however, I do not think that this means he was expressing affinities toward Zhuangzi or Taoist thought by using these terms” 「破惡声論」は文

step further by examining the archaic forms of the characters themselves that Lu Xun insisted on using in the original version of “Moluo shili shuo” published in *Henan* magazine in 1907 in order to be more philologically correct and, as I have argued elsewhere, to sound and, perhaps we should say “look” more authentically pre-Manchu/pre-Mongolian/pre-Xiongnu “Chinese.”¹⁰⁵ When he republished the essays in *Fen* in 1927, Lu Xun changed a number of these deviant characters into their modern equivalents, but in a telling way, left a few unchanged.

Next we have the last chapter in Theodore Hutters’ book *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006). The chapter is titled “Lu Xun and the Crisis of Figuration.”¹⁰⁶ Hutters begins by calling them a “remarkable series of four early essays.”¹⁰⁷ He includes “Kexueshi jiaopian” as the fourth in his discussion. Hutters begins by telling the reader that **the early essays “already give voice to an exceedingly pessimistic mood.”**¹⁰⁸ Elsewhere I have argued that melancholy was in fact a natural reaction to those times by serious Chinese intellectuals,¹⁰⁹ and this holds true even more so for the

語文で書かれており…その古典語句の使われ方の最も大きな特徴は、第一に、『莊子』から取られた語句乃至は言い廻しが甚だ多く、『淮南子』、『楚辭』がそれに次ぐことである（そのほかにも『孟子』、『左伝』、『易経』、『詩経』などの語句が目立つ）。これは当時の魯迅の“文学的”な好尚を示すとともに、たとえば「朴素の民」への愛情などとも無関係なこととは思われず、中国文化の伝統を儒家思想とは別のところに見ていた、彼における“文化上の民族主義”のあり方を示しているやに見える。第二に、しかし、それは決して思想家としての莊子乃至はいわゆる老莊思想などへの共感を示すものではないと思われる。See Rojin, *Rojin zenshū*, 10:77.

¹⁰⁵ Again, see my chapter titled “Lu Xun’s Han Linguistic Project: the use of *wenyan* to create an ‘authentic’ Han vocabulary for literary terminology in his early essays.”

¹⁰⁶ Hutters, *Bringing the World Home*, 252-278. Note that Hutters himself has remarked that he considers this chapter a failure. Nevertheless, I think he makes a number of points about the early essays that are worth considering.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 254.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ See my chapter “Melancholy in Late Qing and Early Republican Era Verse,” in Wolfgang Kubin, ed., *Symbols of Anguish: In Search of Melancholy in China*, 289-314.

young Lu Xun, who was sensitive (and it was in fact this sensitivity that gave rise to his “subjectivity” [zǐtǐ xìng 主體性]). Hutters sums up Mara by saying: “Although Lu Xun has announced the power of heroic literature over the course of his essay, he concludes by lamenting the virtual absence of such a literature from China, at least since the demise of Qu Yuan 屈原(c. 343 BCE-278 BCE) two thousand years before”¹¹⁰ He then moves on to “Wenhua pianzhi lun,” observing: “There can be little doubt that Wang Hui is correct about this essay when he writes, ‘Lu Xun takes the structure of subjectivity as the only basis for his historical critique of society; he thereby takes the individual subjective consciousness as the foundation for the blueprints of his plans for national and social liberation.’”¹¹¹

The scholarly cross-pollination between Wang and Hutters has been going on for some time. Hutters edited and translated two books of Wang Hui’s essays in English¹¹² and also translated (with Yangyang Zong) Wang Hui’s essay “The Voices of Good and Evil: What Is Enlightenment? Rereading Lu Xun’s ‘Toward a Refutation of Malevolent Voices’,”¹¹³ Hutters elaborates that:

For all the rhetorical flourish that Lu Xun brings to bear in this essay, however, **a number of obvious contradictions protrude from the deceptively smooth surface of the**

¹¹⁰ Hutters, *Bringing the World Home*, 254. Actually, Lu Xun criticizes Qu Yuan rather strongly in the essay when he writes: “Though his works reverberate with poignant notes, both of beauty and of pathos, the aggregate lack of any will to fight back has cost Qu Yuan dearly in terms of his ability to move posterity” 然中亦多芳菲淒惻之音，而反抗挑戰，則終其篇未能見，感動後世，為力非強。 *LXQJ* (1991) 1:69.

¹¹¹ Hutters, *Bringing the World Home*, 255-256.

¹¹² Wang Hui and Theodore Hutters, *The Politics of Imagining Asia*; and *China’s New Order: Society, Politics, and Economy in Transition*.

¹¹³ In *boundary2: an international journal of literature and culture* 38, no. 2 (summer 2011): 63-123. The same issue also carried my revised translation of Lu Xun’s original 1908 essay “Po e’sheng lun” (pp. 39-62).

discourse. The most glaring reveals itself in his conclusion that, should the reformist attitudes he advocates be adopted in China, “the people of our nation will attain self-awareness, their individuality will flourish, and this country that is now a heap of loose sand will become a nation of human beings.”¹¹⁴ What could have been the source of this sudden ability of the entire population to gain the sort of awareness that Lu Xun had previously viewed as the exclusive property of the discerning few? There seems to be a slippage here between what Wang Hui has identified as two quite distinct strains of individualism: that which regards all individuals as equal and that which stresses the rights of particular persons. At the end of his essay Lu Xun appears to conflate the two, evidently generalizing the Nietzschean notion of rights pertaining to the superior individual to the whole population of a reimagined China. **In the final analysis, perhaps, Lu Xun seems unable to bring himself to limit possession of the liberated subjectivities he describes in such fine detail to a specific subset of Uebermensch.**¹¹⁵

In other words, although Lu Xun suspected the public could be easily misled to trample the rights of the individual, he nevertheless hoped that a small number of dedicated writers could bring about their enlightenment and thus transform China from a plate of loose sand into a nation of real people. I don't see that as a contradiction, nor do I see the style of the essay as presenting a deceptively smooth surface: the style is a challenge, as is the language, as are the ideas. Hutters argues that:

¹¹⁴ The original reads 則國人之自覺至，個性張，沙聚之邦，由是轉為人國。LXQJ (1991) 1: 56.

¹¹⁵ Hutters, *Bringing the World Home*, 256.

The constant resort to the voice of Western authority here lends a certain irony and distance to what otherwise seems intended as not just a powerful statement of opinion but as a call for resolute action as well. **Is there not more than a little irony lodged in the fact that this series of affirmations of the power of the subjective voice is almost never presented as issuing from the consciousness of the writing subject himself?** In other words, there is inscribed here more than a little of the reserve and doubts about expressing strong views that come to be such prominent features of a number of Lu Xun's writings from the May Fourth period. Perhaps we can also see here, represented as clearly as we are likely ever to find it, the imbedded anxiety about adopting the voices of another historical tradition as one's own... He clearly believes these voices speak to what the times demand, but he also seems determined to keep them at a distance... In thus keeping the European at arm's length, he is perhaps also on guard against the possibility of becoming locked up in a new totalism of subjectivity as potentially dangerous as the one he is speaking against.¹¹⁶

Lu Xun, as I see it is simply making an attempt at sounding more objective by avoiding making statements "presented as issuing from the consciousness of the writing subject [i.e. Lu Xun] himself." He lines up, summarizes, rearranges and quotes from Western authorities to bolster the argument he is fashioning. In part, that is what makes the early essays treatises and not *sanwen* 散文 (prose) or *dubou gan* 讀後感 (ruminations after reading) type. It is the voice he wanted to affect and the "distance" he preserves that is there to convince the reader of his objectivity. As Hutters reminds us: "The sense that the late Qing advocates of material reform had become possessed and emboldened by the ideas they sought to emulate runs strongly throughout Lu Xun's essay."¹¹⁷ He is

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 258.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

a man with a cause, but never a man possessed. As Hutters reminds us: “Naoki Sakai has summarized Takeuchi Yoshimi’s fundamental realization about Lu Xun: ‘[R]esistance has to be likened to a negativity, as distinct from a negation, which continues to disturb a putative stasis in which the subject is made to be adequate to himself.’”¹¹⁸

Of Hutters’ position on the absence of the “I” in “Wenhua pianzhi lun,” Kirk Denton has observed:

I do not agree with Hutters that the absence of a subjective voice in Lu Xun's 1908 essay "On Cultural Extremities" ("Wenhua pianzhi lun") was done self-consciously as a way of problematizing the very subjectivism promoted in the essay. Rather, and more simply, it is a product of the medium in which the essay was written -- classical Chinese, which suppresses the subjective voice -- as well as of a need, in a time of "semicolonialism," to seek the voice of authority from Western masters.¹¹⁹ In deconstructing the early Lu Xun in this way, Hutters seems to want to forge a consistent skepticism toward subjectivity that runs throughout Lu Xun's writing from the late Qing period to May Fourth period. Rather, I would suggest seeing Lu Xun's late Qing writing as fundamentally torn between an extreme subjectivism, on the one hand, and a determinist scientism, on the other.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Sakai, “Modernity and Its Critique,” 501. As quoted in Hutters, *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China*, 258. Note that Sakai writes in English.

¹¹⁹ I would question the use of this term. Brandes was not a “master,” nor Byron, nor Shelley nor Lermontov, nor Petofi. The brothers Zhou chose Brandes because of his sympathy for the rebel poets and the fact that he was an outsider to the “establishment,” according to Zhou Zuoren who wrote: “Brandes, it seems, was a Dane of Jewish descent, so he was a bit unconventional / subversive in his approach and sympathized with those revolutionary poets, but this made him even more useful to us” 勃蘭兌斯大概是猶太系的丹麥人，所以有點離經畔道，同情那些革命的詩人，但這於我們卻是很有用的。See Zhou, *Zhitang Huixianglu*, 1:210.

¹²⁰ See Denton’s review of *Bringing the World Home*. In *The Journal of Asian Studies* 65, no. 1 (Feb. 2006): 166-168.

In my own reading, I don't find "determinist scientism" in any of the four essays I have translated and annotated.¹²¹ It might be thought to exist in "Ren zhi lishi" and "Kexueshi jiaopian," but those are, after all, essays that champion science; but I would argue they give primacy to the scientific *spirit* and therefore also more than just a nod to subjectivism.

This point has been driven home by David Der-wei Wang 王德威 in his keynote address to the ACCL conference at Fudan University on 20 June 2015 on using the concept of *wenlun* 文論 (literary thought) as a term to describe the interaction of traditional Chinese literary theory with modernity and the need to break through the hegemonic domination of global literary discourse by Western literary theory. He proposed the need to develop Chinese literary theory on the basis of the foundation which has been laid, in part, by Lu Xun in his early essays, one example being their attention to the primacy of the human *xin* 心 (heart/mind/psyche), be it in the thought of the "neo-idealist school" (*xin shensi zong* 新神思宗) that Lu Xun championed in "Wenhua pianzhi lun" or in the idea of poets as the "provokers of the human heart" (*ying ren xin zhe* 櫻人心者) in "Moluo shi li shuo." He then follows this idea into the ghastly image Lu Xun creates of a corpse tearing out its own heart to eat it in order to find out its true taste in "Mujie wen" 墓碣文 (The Epitaph) in *Yecao* 野草 (Wild Grass) and thence to Lu Xun's convergent take on Freud.¹²² From his enthusiasm for

¹²¹ My forthcoming volume on this subject will include: "Wenhua pianzhi lun," "Moluo shi li shuo," "Po e'sheng lun," and "Ni bobu meishu yijian shu" 擬播布美術意見書 (A Draft Proposal for the Dissemination of Aesthetic Knowledge).

¹²² Here I am translating from a Chinese news report on the speech. See Xu Xiao, "Wang Dewei: wenzue yanjiu yiru sishui, jixu dapo xifang lilun de huayu baquan," http://www.the-paper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1343644, accessed May 20, 2016.

the ideas presented in the essays, it is clear that David Wang has discerned the potential of their ideas for contributing to a new poetics for China.

Turning back to Japan, Kitaoka Masako first published her “*Mara Shiryoku setsu*” 摩羅詩力説 *zai genkō nōto* 「摩羅詩力説」 材源考ノト (Notes on the sources for “On the Power of Mara Poetry”) as a series of 18 articles in Japanese which trace the sources for Lu Xun’s lengthy 1907 classical-style treatise on Chinese and Western literature “*Moluo shi li shuo*.” She completed her graduate study in Chinese language and literature at Tokyo University and eventually became Professor in the Faculty of Literature at Kansai University. As a leading member of what Zhao Jinghua 趙京華 has called the “empiricist school” (*shizheng pai* 實證派) of Lu Xun research in Japan,¹²³ she compiled this valuable series of articles run originally in the Japanese journal *Yasō*, nos. 9-30 from October 1972 to August 1982.¹²⁴ These modestly-termed “notes” were translated as a single volume into Chinese by Professor He Naiying,¹²⁵ producing an excellent but partial translation of the more extensive Japanese series. It omits numerous quotations from Japanese and Western language sources that were included in the original Japanese *Nōto* ノト (Notes) -- these are given by He Naiying in Chinese translation only. Kitaoka also re-wrote what amounts to an abbreviated version of these *Nōto* as the useful translator’s endnotes to the Japanese translation of “*Moluo shi li shuo*” in *Rojin Zenshū* 魯迅全集 (The Complete Works of Lu Xun [in Japanese translation]) (1985), vol. I. She does not, however, cite Western language quotations in those endnotes.

¹²³ Zhao Jinghua, *Zhou shi xiongdì yu Riben*, 70-84.

¹²⁴ The journal is still published by the Chūgoku bungei kenkyūkai 中国文芸研究会 (Association for Research on Chinese Literature and Art).

¹²⁵ See Beigang Zhengzi (i.e. Kitaoka Masako), *Moluo shi li shuo caiyuan kao*, trans. He Naiying and Chen Qiufan 陳秋帆 (Beijing: Beijing Shifan Daxue chubanshe, 1983).

Kitaoka has recently (2015) published a monograph on this same subject, with substantially new and revised content from the earlier *Nōto*.¹²⁶ This new monograph also contains numerous quotations in Western languages and Meiji-era Japanese, enhancing its value. It contains an eight-page bibliography and a useful nine-page index of personal names, titles of works, terms and events. Kitaoka first examines the process by which Lu Xun and Zhou Zuoren conducted the research¹²⁷ that led to the writing of “Moluo shi li shuo”:

From the bibliographies of English and German literary histories and guidebooks such as Ernest A. Baker: *A Descriptive Guide to the Best Fiction British and American* / Gustav Karpeles: *Allgemeine Geschichte der Literatur von ihren Anfängen auf die Gegenwart* / Scherr Johannes: *Illustrierte Geschichte der Weltliteratur*, etc. the [Zhou brothers] searched out the necessary things from the bookshops in Kanda and Hongō; moreover with the detailed titles, through Maruzen and other bookstores they placed orders for books which were shipped in and picked up. They also read through introductions and translations that were published in magazines, clipping out the required items. The publications they gathered were mostly from the series published by Gesshin and Reclam. Their content was substantive and the price was low, so they could be said to have been rightly suited to poor students. Thus the two brothers devoted themselves diligently to obtaining works from “marginalized” nations such

¹²⁶ Kitaoka, *Rojin bungaku no engen wo saguru: “Mara Shi Ryoku Setsu” zaigen kō* 魯迅文学の淵源を探る：「摩羅詩力説」材源考 (An Enquiry into the Origins of Lu Xun[s] Literature: A Study of the Sources for “On the Power of Mara Poetry”) (Tōkyō: Kyūko Shoin, 2015) xxi, total 650 pps.

¹²⁷ Zhou Zuoren recalled, many years later, that he orally translated the portions on Mickiewicz and Slowacki from the English translation of Brandes’ *Impressions of Poland* for Lu Xun when he was writing “On the Power of Mara Poetry.” This is in chapter 78 “Fanyi Xiaoshuo (xia)” 翻譯小說 (下) (Translating Fiction, #2) in vol. 1 of *Zhitang Huixianglu*, 1:210.

as Poland, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Finland, Hungary, modern Greece, Denmark, Russia, Czechia, Serbia, Rumania, Norway, Sweden, Holland, etc. Zhou Zuoren relates that for the works of those various countries, few translations existed in English, most of the translations were into German. Because there were few English translations in the bookstores, collecting them was extremely difficult. Aside from the Russian and French fiction they were able to get ahold of, it was even more difficult to find things from eastern and northern Europe, he recalled. Such works were those [they] translated in *Yumai xiaoshuo ji* 域外小説集 (Tales from Abroad). In addition, Zhou Zuoren has said that Lu Xun's thought at this time could be included under the rough rubric of nationalism. The literature he introduced was also mainly that of oppressed peoples, and, as far as Russia was concerned, the first consideration was resistance to oppression.

彼らは、英獨の文学通史や文学案内書（Ernest A. Baker: *A Descriptive Guide to the Best Fiction British and American* / Gustav Karpeles: *Allgemeine Geschichte der Literatur von ihren Anfängen auf die Gegenwart* / Scherr Johannes: *Illustrierte Geschichte der Weltliteratur* 等）や英獨の書目により、必要なものを神田や本郷の古本屋をさがして手に入れ、また、細々と書名を書き出して丸善等の本屋に注文し取り寄せた。雑誌に掲載された紹介や翻譯にも目を通し、必要なものは切り抜いた。「ゲッセン」や「レクラム」の文庫には収録されている書物が多く、内容も立派で廉價であったので、貧乏學生には恰好なものであったという。こうして、二人は苦心して、「邊鄙な國」—ポーランド、ブルガリア、ボスニア、フィンランド、ハンガリー、近代ギリシア、デンマーク、ロシヤ、チェコ、セルビア、ルーマニア、ノルウェー、スウェーデン、オランダ等々の作品を手に入れた。これら諸國の作品には、英

譯は少なく、獨譯が多かったと周作人は述べている。英譯本は本屋には少なく集めるのは極めて難しかった、いくつかの露佛の小説が手に入る他は、東欧北歐のものは見ることもさへ困難であった、と回想している。『域外小説集』は、こうした作品の中から翻譯されたものである。また、魯迅の當時の思想は、おおよそ民族主義で包括できるもので、紹介した文學も被壓迫民族のものを主とし、ロシアについては、壓制に對する反抗を主眼とした、と周作人は語っている。¹²⁸

Lu Xun's sources were numerous but principally derived from several works on the literature of Russia and Poland by the Danish critic Georg Brandes and John Addington Symonds' *Shelley* as well as Japanese works on Byron and Shelley. The latter included: Kimura Takatarō's 木村鷹太郎 (1870-1931) *Bunkai no dai maoo: Bairon* 文界之大魔王：バイロン (The Satan of the Literary World: Byron) (Tōkyō: Daigakukan 大学館, 1902);¹²⁹ and Kimura Takatarō's translation of Byron's poem

¹²⁸ Kitaoka, *Rojin bungaku no engen wo saguru: "Mara Shi Ryoku Setsu" zaigen kō*, ix-x.

¹²⁹ Kitaoka shares credit with other scholars throughout, telling us, for instance: "Firstly, it was Mr Nakajima Osafumi who ascertained through comparing them one by one against the original text of Mara that the following works were sources [for it]: Kimura Takatarō, *Bairon Bunkai no Dai Maoo* [Byron: The Satan of the Literary World]; Yasugi Sadotoshi, *Shishuu Puushikin* [The Great Poet Pushkin]; Nobori Shomu, *Reirumontofu no Yiboku* [Lermontov's Legacy] and "Rokoku Shijin to Sono Shi" (Russian Poets and their Poetry), part 6, Lermontov). At that time I wrote a piece that became part of my "Notes on the Sources for 'On the Power of Mara Poetry'" in *Yasō* (Wild Grass), a journal of the Chūgoku Bungei Kenkyū Kai 中国文芸研究会 (Association for Research on Chinese Literature and Art). In the first [instalment] about the sections [in "On the Power of Mara Poetry"] on Byron, I wrote correctly that one of the sources had been [the Japanese translation of his poem as] 'Kaizoku' 海賊 [The Corsair] but the other things I cited as sources were wrong. Mr Nakajima Osafumi voiced disagreement with [what I had said] in his article "Sections 4 and 5 in the Original Version of "On the Power of Mara Poetry"—in Response to Ms Kitaoka Masako's Work 'Notes on the Sources for Mara,'" making it clear that the sources for the sections on Byron in *Mara* were Kimura Takatarō's translation of *Kaizoku* [The Corsair] and Kimura Takatarō's *Bairon Bunkai no Dai Moo* [Byron: The Satan of the Literary World]" まず、木村鷹太郎『バイロン 文界之大魔王』、八杉貞利『詩宗プーシキン』、昇曙夢「レールモントフの遺墨」「露國詩人と其詩 六 レールモントフ」について、「摩羅詩力説」の原文といちいち照合し

“The Corsair” under the title “Kaizoku” 海賊 (The Pirate); Yoneda Minoru 米田実 (1878-1948)’s *Bairon* バイロン (Byron) (Tōkyō: Min'yūsha 民友社, 1900), a laudatory biography written in an archaistic style of Japanese; Hamada Yoshizumi’s 濱田佳澄 *Shiere* シエレー (Shelley) (Tōkyō: Min'yūsha, 1900), a sympathetic treatment in book form by a pioneering scholar of Western literature in Japan, this was the main source for Lu Xun’s section on Shelley in part six of “On the Power of Mara Poetry.” The Zhou brothers also used: Emil Reich, *Hungarian Literature* (London: Jarrold & Sons, 1898); Frederick Riedl, trans. by C.H. Ginever, *A History of Hungarian Literature* (London: William Heinemann, 1906); Georg Brandes, *Poland: A Study of the Land, People and Literature* (London: William Heinemann, 1903); Georg Brandes, *Impression of Russia*, trans. S.C. Eastman (London: Walter Scott, 1889); Petr Kropotkin, *Russian Literature: Ideals and Realities* (London: Duckworth Co., 1905); Petöfi Sándor, *Gedichte von A. Petöfi* (Poems of A. Petöfi), trans. by J. Goledschmidt (Leipzig: Reclam, 1883); Petöfi Sándor, *Der Strick des Henkers* (The Hangman’s Rope), trans. by J. Kömödy (Leipzig: Reclam, n.d.), etc. Kitaoka also observes that Lu Xun worked mostly from single volumes, rather than journal articles.¹³⁰ This may have been because he purchased his sources from second-hand bookstores, which tended to deal in single volumes. This point aside, it is

て材源であることを突き止めたのは、中島長文氏である。当時私は、中國文藝研究會の雑誌『野草』に「摩羅詩力説材源考ノート」なる文章を書いており、初めのバイロンについての章で『海賊』を材源の一つと記したのはかったのだが、他に材源としたものが間違っていた。中島氏はそれに對して異議を唱えられ（「藍本『摩羅詩力の説』第四、五章——北岡正子氏作るところの『摩羅詩力説材源考ノート』によせて」『颯風』第五號 1973.6）、「摩羅詩力説」のバイロンの章の材源は、木村鷹太郎譯『海賊』と木村鷹太郎『バイロン 文界之大魔王』とであることを明らかにされた。See Kitaoka, *Rojin bungaku no engen wo saguru: “Mara Shi Ryoku Setsu” zaigen kō*, xii.

¹³⁰ One exception would perhaps have been Kanomata Kaorikin 鹿又香琴, “Shijin Peitechi (Hangari bundan no kisai)” 詩人ペイテヒ（匈牙利文壇の奇才）(The Poet Petöfi: a remarkable talent from the Hungarian literary world), in *Taiyō* 太陽 (The Sun) 12, no. 11 (August 1, 1906): 145-152.

obvious that Lu Xun and Zhou Zuoren devoted tremendous amount of time and substantial financial resources to the project of doing this research and writing.

Kitaoka Masako has always emphasized that Lu Xun had his own agenda in compiling “Moluo shi li shuo”:

What I would like to point out here is that Lu Xun, in tracing the line of “satanic poets” that began with Byron in England, did not look for them among the various other countries of Western Europe, but rather in fact he sought them from among the peoples of central and eastern Europe per se. In the meantime, it could be predicted that the question that would invariably come forth in the course of events was of that of the desire for national independence of those people who had suffered from backwardness and oppressive rule.

ここで指摘しておきたいことはイギリスのバイロンに始まった「悪魔派」詩人の系譜を、魯迅が、他の西欧諸国にではなくこれらの中・東欧諸民族の中に求めたことそれ自体に、すでに後進性と圧制に苦しみ民族独立を願う人々の問題を引き出さざるを得ない成行きが予想されるということである。¹³¹

Some scholars in China have come too hastily to the conclusion that the point of Kitaoka’s scholarship is to demonstrate that Lu Xun was plagiarizing. Li Zhen 李震, in an otherwise inspirational article, plainly states:

¹³¹ Kitaoka, “‘Mara Shi Ryoku Setsu’ zaigenkō nōto, sono nana” 「摩羅詩力説」材源考ノート（その七） (Notes on the Sources for “On the Power of Mara Poetry,” #7 [On Petöfi]), in *Yasō*, no. 17 (June 1975), 75.

[Such a position] is to view “On the Power of Mara Poetry” as a translation or even as a plagiarized work. This view originates from Japanese scholar Kitaoka Masako. She considers “On the Power of Mara Poetry” to be something he translated from other people’s work while he was in Japan: of the nine sections that comprise “On the Power of Mara Poetry,” [she holds that] section four to the end of the first half of section nine can be considered translated text, the first three sections are an introduction to the translation and the second half of the ninth section is an afterword to the translation. This sort of misreading is obviously biased.

……將《摩羅詩力說》當做一部翻譯，甚至剽竊之作。此見出自日本學者北岡正子。她認為《摩羅詩力說》是魯迅在日本期間轉譯別人的文字，全文的九個部分中，第四部分到第九部分的前半部分可以算譯文，而前三部分是譯序，第九部分的後半部分是譯跋。這種誤讀顯然是偏狹的。¹³²

But Kitaoka clearly addressed the question of plagiarism in her *Nōto* in 1975, writing:

...I would like to add that as for “On the Power of Mara Poetry,” in following the lineage of the poets of the “Satanic School,” we now have the sources that nearly every section is based on. [But *Mara*] is not the type of thing the essence of which can be summarized by telling how its sources are used, etc. If I explain this in language that is *au courant*, these are

¹³² See Li Zhen 李震, “Moluo shi li shuo yu Zhongguo shixue de xiandai zhuanxing” 摩羅詩力說與中國詩學的現代轉型 (On the Power of Mara Poetry and the modern transformation of Chinese poetics) in *Yan shuo bu jin de Lu Xun yu Wusi*, 181. Li Zhen cites He Naiying’s 1983 Chinese translation of *Nōto*, but does not give a page number. Kitaoka’s position is that “the sources used” in that segment of “On the Power of Mara Poetry” can now be determined, not that it is a translation. See Kitaoka, *Rojin bungaku no engen wo saguru: “Mara Shi Ryoku Setsu” zaigen kō*, xiii-ix.

circumstances in which the question of plagiarism might also arise; [but I think] the examples [I have] cited so far will clarify this. However, **as for the way Lu Xun traced the lineage of the “Satanic School” among the Slavic and Magyar peoples and the things he constructed, I would decisively and unequivocally emphasize that it was not “plagiarism.”** To understand Lu Xun’s true intention in writing *Mara*, I think one must interpret it precisely on the very basis of its structure. An additional point is that **one must differentiate the way Lu Xun selected materials and used them to address his own questions from the way other people’s contributions are relied upon to elucidate the matters that are under discussion.**

ついでながら、「摩羅詩力説」は、「悪魔派」詩人の系譜を辿ったほとんどの部分に根拠とした材源がある。その材源の用の方が趣旨を要約して述べるなどという種類のものではなく、当世風に解釈すれば盗用問題も起りかねないような態のものであることは、これまでに述べて来た用例によって明らかであろう。だが、魯迅が「悪魔派」の系譜をスラヴ民族、マジヤール民族の中に探ろうと構想したことは断じて如何なる「盗用」でもないことを強調したい。魯迅が「摩羅詩力説」を書こうとした真の意図は正にこのような構想の中にこそ読みとられねばならないと私は考える。駄目押しあくが、魯迅は自分の問題に即して材料を選びそれを使ったのであって、語るべきものを明瞭にし得ぬが為に他人の力に凭るのとは区別されなければならない。¹³³

¹³³ Kitaoka, “‘Mara Shi Ryoku Setsu’ zaigenkō nōto, sono nana,” 75-76. To be fair to Li Zhen, I have not been able to locate this important passage in the 1981 translation into Chinese by He Naiying.

With this article I intend to give an indication of how seriously Lu Xun's early essays have come to be taken by scholars both within and outside China. This is in part, as I have argued, because these essays constitute a blueprint for Lu Xun's future career. It is also because they give an indication of the formative influences on the young Lu Xun. As such, they are a key to understanding the development of his thought, even if they are considered a product of his immature period. Elsewhere I have speculated on the reasons for their neglect in China up until the late 1970s (and actually a good deal later). This had in part to do with their arcane language, but more with subversive ideas in the texts and controversial sources, such as Nietzsche, who until recently was regarded as a proto-fascist (not just in China), and Lu Xun's condemnation of the suppression of the rights of the individual and the minority by the majority or, still worse, those who claim to rule on behalf of the majority. In term of literature and thought, they strike out in a bold, new direction that is critical of elements in China's literary, cultural and political past without being iconoclastic, and while they champion intellectual freedom, they decline to posit the West as the penultimate model. As such, they make a mature attempt at mapping a path for China then and now: internationalism, self-reflection, and precedence of ideals over materialism.

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