

Interpretation of the Modernity of Lu Xun's Literature in Voices from the Iron House: A Study of Lu Xun by Leo Ou-Fan Lee

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Keywords: modernity, psychological reading, metaphor trend, symbolism system, symbolic reversal

Abstract: Leo Ou-fan Lee, the scholar who combined his unique psychological methods with the theories of intellectual history under the joint influence of his teachers E. Erikson and Schwartz, had made artistic and spiritual research of Lu Xun's different types of works by focusing on the main feature of which is modernity as well as the exploration of Lu Xun's inherent spirits. By holding on the creative perspective of "modernity is the transformation based on tradition", Leo broke the idea of "binary opposition" between tradition and modernity in his *Voices from the Iron House* for interpreting Lu Xun's works, and organically completed the exploration of modernity features condensed in Lu Xun's three main literary styles, which are short stories, prose poetry and essays. The fictional irony in short stories, the symbolism and metaphor system in prose poetry, as well as the lyric metaphor tendency and symbolic reversal in essays found by Leo from Lu Xun's works show in the process of fusing modern elements to the tradition of Chinese literature, modernized skills have had a significant role to make a high degree of integration both in contents and forms. This essay further generalizes and discusses Leo's interpretation of the modernity contained in Lu Xun's literature and evaluates his pioneering innovation and guiding role in adding psychological way into research methods and perspectives of the Lu Xun Studies.

1. Introduction

Around 1917, under the background of literary revolution, Chinese literature had an obvious trend from tradition to modernity. The "modernity" of literature has become increasingly prominent and has become a strong support to define the concept of "modern literature" of China. Presently in the academics, "modern literature" is generally defined as a concept of time, and a concept that reminds of the modern nature of literature in this period. The so-called "modern literature" refers to "the literature that expresses the thoughts, feelings and minds of the modern Chinese people in modern

languages and literary forms.”[1] It can be seen that the “modernity” of literature, as a key factor, has been given a double interpretation---the dimension of time or literature itself.

The modernity of Chinese literature could firstly be interpreted as a concept of time. It came into being in the process of social modernization, and was given a clear period division and direction in the history of literature. That is the nature emerging in modern literature after the revolutions in literature in 1917, which is distinguished from traditional literature. As Geng Chuanming said, “Modern literature’s modern attribute is determined according to classical literature.”[2] It represents a kind of temporal relativity and continuity in the historical process of Chinese literature due to the time division.

Secondly, from the dimension of literature itself, the modernity of Chinese literature is more manifested as a literary concept in the cultural category, which is mainly represented by the consistency of spoken and written Chinese in expression form, the fusion of Chinese and Western modern artistic skills and the enlightenment in thought existing among the texts. Most of the new modern literature in the “May Forth” era, when is also the milieu of the creation of Lu Xun’s literature have these creative changes and modern characteristics. However, unlike the “May Forth” modern literature that uses “modern” to fight against the “traditional” in the general sense, literature actually has no distinction between “the modern” and “the traditional”. So Lu Xun’s literature is not like the early stage of modern literature, when the old and new elements presented under the modern literary view influenced by Darwinism were in “binary opposition”. The “modernity” of Lu Xun’s literature reflects the integration tendency of “binary juxtaposition” of the new and the old.

Therefore, with the help of the concept of “creative transformation” put forward by scholar Lin Yusheng in the field of ideology history, Leo defined the modernity characteristics of Lu Xun literature as “a creative transformation based on tradition” from the perspective of concentrating himself on the relationship between tradition and modernity”. Just as in the trend of using the modern to fight the traditional when the old was used to define the modern under the “May Fourth” literary background, “modernity” in Lu Xun literature is exposed by comparing the traditional elements presented in his works. It is precisely because of these so-called Chinese “traditional” literary elements that branded in Lu Xun’s works that the “modern nature” can be highlighted in comparison with the “traditional elements”.

In Lu Xun’s works, Leo also discovered a lot of similarities between traditional Chinese literature and Western modern literature. And this connection is precisely the combination of the “center of darkness” of Lu Xun’s inner world proposed by Xia Zian and the mythical stories that Leo summarized as the “aspect of ghost” of the Chinese cultural tradition. This preference of the sources of literature creating with an extremely subjective consciousness together with the artistic aesthetic feelings of Western characteristics caused by “darkness” itself, constitutes Lu Xun’s “spirit and inspiration of modern art.”

In the preface of the Chinese edition reprinted in 2016, Leo criticized the translator Yin Huimin for translating “modernity” into “现代化”(xian dai hua), believing that modernity in the generalized history of culture cannot be equated with the modernity process of literature itself. Therefore, when exploring the embodiment of modernity in Lu Xun’s works, Mr. Leo paid more attention to the artistic function, or the discovery and interpretation of some external expressions with modern nature embodied in the literature itself, rather than simply placed it in the entire process cultural development to discuss the various cultural imprints that were associated with social history or during the transition to modern times. In other words, Leo expressed that in the literary revolution’s radical modernization movement of using “the modern” to fight against “the traditional”, Lu Xun’s literature itself exhibited different characteristics from the “May Forth” new literature at that time, that is, focusing on the

interior attempt of literature itself, and the purpose of combining tradition and modernity is not for social reform or revolution in the sense of politics and religion. Its purpose is to carry out an innovation within literature that returns to the art itself, to raise problems rather than solve problems, and to reflect society artistically rather than to criticize the society and preach individuals. From the perspective of the creation of the art form in Lu Xun's works, Lu carried out an interpretation of the modernity of the artistic methods in Lu Xun Literary according to different styles such as short stories, prose poetry and essays.

2. Modernity Techniques in Short Stories: The Pluralistic Integration of Fictional Art

From *Looking Back to the Past*, the first attempt, to the mature work *Diary of Madman* that contains a variety of modern artistic skills in its forms and contents, Lu Xun's modernity attempts in the field of short stories has reflected its posture to face the classic modern literature in the world from the beginning, making him "close to this modernism tradition of Paul Heyse, André Gide, Virginia Woolf, and even James Joyce to some extent." [3] After *A Madman's Diary*, the other twenty-four short stories followed included in *Call to Arms* and *Wandering* are moving to Lu Xun's unique "ancestry of short stories" under a modern approach, that is the "categorization". That means Lu Xun's short stories can be divided into two major categories. One category is the attempt of laying a foundation, such as *Looking Back to the Past* and *A Madman's Diary*. The other is the twenty-four short stories embodied in *Call to Arms* and *Wandering* except *A Madman's Diary* which is always with a set of regular spirits and narrative structure, and gradually developed into a system of "categorization" both in forms and contents. This "categorization" comprised by a common pattern in forms and spirits which includes two main styles. The former is mainly embodied in the setting of the "narrator" or "bystander" in the first-person point of view in the narrative, and the latter is called a spiritual prototype of a pair of "the different one" and "the mediocre masses" in Lu Xun's philosophical thinking. The form and content are integrated at the level of narrative and spiritual structure, forming the unique discussion of the relationship between the "narrator", "the different one" and "the mediocre masses" in the short stories and the philosophical thinking about the theme of "nationality" and "soul" reflected in their respective interrelationships. The structural settings of the "separation of the narrator and protagonist", [3] the use of narrative methods such as symbols and metaphors in fictional art, and the description of the "typicality", including generality, of characters and other detailed features, reflect the modernity of Lu Xun's short stories in forms. And the integration of the connotation of a pair of prototype structures in the spirit of the allusive nature reflects the modernity in the contents of the short stories.

At the time when Lu Xun's short stories have not yet reached the mature trend of "categorization", their predecessor – not included in Lu Xun's collections – *Looking Back to the Past*, an early short story in classical Chinese written in 1911 has already contained "modernity". This story, which Jaroslav Průšek has hailed as "the pioneer of modern Chinese stories," [3] has begun to transform its contents from the objective depiction of traditional Chinese serial novels into highly subjective emotional expressions. And personal emotions are fully infused into various fictional images of the story, making it as witty and playful as it is told from the child's mouth. Although it is based on traditional classical Chinese, the story that has made modernized transformation of the traditional form and is full of fictional and subjective emotions "fills this antecedent chapter with such great charm". [3]

Diary of Madman, which belongs to the same category as *Looking Back to the Past*, is regarded as the first attempt of Chinese traditional literature after May Fourth due to the triple innovation of language, art skills and thoughts, and this opening moved towards the maturity of form and content

of modern literature. In addition to the inheritance and deepening of the highly subjective narrative methods and fictional artistic techniques in *Looking Back to the Past*, it also pioneered the use of modern creative techniques such as metaphors and symbols. The inheritance and development of the subjective narrative is mainly reflected in the highly nervous psychological depiction of the protagonist “madman” in the story. In Leo’s opinion, *Diary of Madman* depicts a nervous “psychological story”, and the tension of this “psychology” is no less than that of Gogol’s original work with the same name, which Lu Xun imitated. In the world shaped by the short story, the judging scales of various concepts of individuals in it are completely determined by the subjective thinking of the “madman”. His discourse against logic that appears due to tension is also a manifestation of the highly subjective description. Therefore, in the short story, the reader can only spy on the whole world through the eyes of the “madman”, rather than judging the authenticity of the “madman” “mad” through the speeches and moods of the people around him. Therefore, the highly subjective diary style also provides a good support of this ingenious creation. The expression of the subjective emotions of the “madman” creates a subjective acceptance of trust and psychological intimacy for the readers, making his psychological discourse become a more reliable existence than the words and deeds from the people around. This series of artistic creations have subtly implied the reality of a not mad “madman”, so that it finally achieved an artistic effect of “fictional irony”.

The “fictional irony” art skill is also created by the structure of the work at the same time. Based on the combination of traditional Chinese literature with his work, a pseudo-prologue written in classical Chinese before the vernacular short story turns the structure of the novel into an ingenious irony, the effect of which is mainly reflected in several aspects. First of all, in addition to the setting of the preface itself expresses the subjective mocking of the traditional narrative way of classical Chinese and the form of the “preface”, text in text, that is, the comparison of the binary text framework of the combination of the prologue and the diary itself, also produces an ironic effect. The prologue is the psychological record of the “bystander”, which is here equivalent to “the different one”. This means that they stand the same of views to narrate the stories. The “bystander”’s righteousness and rhetoric, compared with the diary’s “mad” psychological discourse, also create an ironic effect. The more affirmation of the prologue and the denial of the words and deeds of the “madman”, the more sarcastic it is of the preface, the linguistic form it represents and the masses of people who use this language form to “eat people”. Secondly, the setting of the preface plays a vital role in establishing a gap between the author and the reader. According to Leo, “the voice of a madman may be regarded as the artistic expression of the author’s inner voice”. On this basis, the “author’s inner voice” and the voice of the majority of “bystanders” are separated from each other by the prologue. It also reflects the author’s suspicion and distrust of whether the work can be accepted by the readers at that time.

The symbols in the works generally recognized by most researchers are mainly reflected in the “moonlight” symbolizing the extent of the madness of the madman, while the “lion”, “fox”, “dog”, “wolf”, “rabbit” and other animal symbolizing the character of the “bystander”, which can also be seen as an analogy based on the connection between animal nature and human nature. What is metaphorized in the call to “save the child” in the work is the optimistic spirit of the “pioneer” about the future under Darwinism. It is in this evolutionary spirit that Lu Xun’s later short stories have gradually emerged with Nietzsche’s “overman” spirit of hope, and at the same time with “the lonely man” image with a painful and desperate spirit under the Cassandra-style warning. If there is a “lonely man”, there must be a hustle and bustle one opposite to it. So, Leo made a metaphorical analysis of this contrasting structure setting from the perspective of the typological theory of spiritual structure. Analyzing the spiritual level of Lu Xun’s short stories, he puts forward a pair of dualistic juxtaposition of “the different one” and “the mediocre masses”.

Leo believes that in one of the “non-realism” techniques in Lu Xun’s work, that is the “ ‘symbolistic narrative’ structure, the elements of the ‘real story’ can only be meaningful when combined with higher-level symbolic meanings.”[3] From the “madman” in *A Madman’s Diary* to the “revolutionary” in *Medicine* to Mr. N in *The Story of Hair*, and finally to Wei Lianshu in *Lonely Man*, “the different one” in Lu Xun’s writing has become a “categorization” with a development trend, which is gradually in depth. This trend is from the initial “fighter” and “madman” who cry for “save the child”, toward Mr. N, the “outraged” who is self-doubt and disappointed of the intricate revolution, and finally toward Wei Lianshu, a “misanthrope” with the spiritual despair and a degenerate life. The death of Wei Lianshu also implies the end of Lu Xun’s “the different one” system. After that, he had never written the “different one” character ever again. This also embodies the author’s enthusiasm of calling for improving the society in spite of the foreseeable failure, which eventually goes towards the end of the ideal and the pain of loss and wandering that no one understands. The end of the “different one” system and the rupture of the desire to improve the society and the national character also indicate that the “lonely man” has finally finished a complete life course in a special era, which has been described by Lu Xun in *Letters between Two* – “at present-and perhaps in the future-to save the masses, but persecuted by the masses, they eventually became isolated. Irritated, and turned to hate everything, regardless of shooting anyone, they also ended in destruction.” [4] This summary precisely shows that the fate of the “lonely man” is not a fragmented story that takes place in a single time, but a fusion of a complete and progressive image lineage. The images of each stage fuse together and constitute a complete life experience of the “lonely man”.

When exploring the philosophical prototype of the spiritual structure, the unique “narrator” of the stories in the narrative structure makes the stories dramatic. The stories seem to become a drama of Lu Xun’s mind shown on the stage. The relationship between the “narrator” and the protagonist gets closer as the protagonist’s image approaches the “different one”, in other words, the “lonely man” image. And then drifts apart as the image approaches the “mediocre masses”. The relationship between their behaviors also represents the “stage way” that Lu Xun chooses when dealing with his emotions. The “narrator” is also a viewer of the drama. He stays in an undetected space, and makes an evaluation of the story with the author’s own value orientation and emotional tendency. As R. Freeman commented on Baudelaire’s prose poems, “The poet transcends himself from the scene, and a part of him plays the moral focus in a symbolic gesture. The other part acts as an observer, who stays aloof when he is drawn to the scene.”[3]

3. Modernity in Prose Poetry: Exploration of the Metaphorical Mind

In contrast to the simile, the “metaphor” in literature is originally originated from the need for expressing subjective feelings and hinted in poetry through the images. It means that pinning the creator’s misty mind to the special imagery in poems that is internally connected with emotions, and breaking the restrictions of language combination to achieve the freedom and the hazy artistic beauty of poetry. In the eyes of the new critics, are the original forms of metaphor. In prose poetry, Lu Xun’s new poetic style, there is also a metaphor with strong lyrical meaning, which adds a hazy color to the intention of his works. On the one hand, it makes the strong emotions become rational and tempered, so that they are hidden under the surface of the “image” without being violent. And at the same time, these poems are endowed with profound ideological connotations and meanings through this way. It is also precisely because of the profound and extensive nature of this allegory that its lyricism is even more tragic and heavy, which aggravates its emotional quality. This lyrical way of permeating from the surface to the depths is obviously more touching than direct venting from the inside.

The artistic talent and the ideological tendency of philosophy of metaphor are separately the new

modernization attempts in terms of artistic techniques and ideological contents of *Wild Grass*, which is the representatives of the new forms of Lu Xun's artistic work. In Leo's view, Lu Xun's prose poem *Wild Grass* is a unique historical innovation in the development of Chinese literature whether from the external form to the internal main idea. According to the form of *Wild Grass*, it is a kind of combination of the argument-based prose in premodern Chinese literature and the lyric-based poetry, but there is modernized innovative transformation on the basis of tradition, making it prose poetry – a new modern literature style that combines lyricism and description. As Leo sees, Lu Xun's prose poems combine the two functions of argument and lyricism of the traditional literature in premodern China. On this basis, modernized words and expressions are used to describe deeply and delicately the protagonist's internal changes of the mind. Its source and way of fusion are like the "lyrical novel" in the Western sense. Both of them make the poetry with strong lyricism get rid of the shackles of rhythm and rhyme, so as to express its strong subjective meaning more freely.

The strong subjective meaning is presented in prose poetry by means of metaphor. Li Oufan repeatedly cites Lu Xun's dark side and the description of "hell of the ghost" [5] in Professor Xia Ji'an's *Gate of Darkness* to prove his idea in interpreting the internalized spiritual impact on him of *Wild Grass*. He believes that *Wild Grass* not only expresses the spiritual crisis that Lu Xun once again fell into a wandering during the fall of the May 4th Movement and the "dark side" that he can't extricate or conceal, but also depicts Lu Xun's choice of future paths and the tragic of falling in a dilemma like that of Zarathustra. From this, he demonstrates that *Wild Grass* not only embodies Lu Xun's inner turbulence and fluctuations in its unique modern techniques, but also shows his inner dark abyss like a "bottomless hole", which is also seen as a modernization tendency in his works.

How to combine "formal experience" and "psychological analysis" to complete the great experiment of Lu Xun's new style of "prose poetry", and at the same time depict the spiritual "nihility" dilemma and the sources of pain in his subconscious mind, is a great challenge for Lu Xun. In the view of Leo, *Wild Grass* "especially obviously reflects the author's emptiness and disappointed emotions as well as the profound contradictions in his mind". He constructs a language suitable for his expression of this ideological and emotional tendency through the construction of a series of relevant images. Through the wonderful combination of the complex and fascinating images, a kind of "vocative function" of language is displayed. The "vocative function" of language provides the poet with a wider space for imagination when dealing with ordinary natural images, and puts oneself between the reality and fantasy interwoven with the real and imagined world, creating a surprising field of the "dream" and wandering between dreams and reality.

Take the opening chapter *Autumn Night* in *Wild Grass* as an example, from the reality of the "two jujube trees" at the beginning to the "night sky, stars, moon, pink flowers and little green worm" that weave into the dream, an "illusory" image is given to the natural scenery, and the poet also entered the dark garden of his own fantasy. Finally, the dream poet wakes up in his own self-obsessed laughter and returns to the cruelty of reality. Walking in the dual space of dream and reality, showing the double predicament of wandering between the two poles, during the natural expression of feelings, it also covers the description of the natural scene with fantasy and metaphor, bringing symbolism to Lu Xun's works. Taking the *Lost Great Hell* as an example, the irony of the poet to humanity is shown by the dual value exchange between the devil and human beings, that is, "the devil mourns human's conquest of hell which makes the hell worse". He sighs the dark side of humanity under the identity exchange of the human and the devil. This main method of Lu Xun's fantasy poems was interpreted by Leo as the realization of "Nietzsche's reappraisal of value" advocated by Kuriyagawa Hakuson, and the creation of the devil or a series of "evil" images in *Wild Grass* is also regarded as "the anthropomorphism of Lu Xun's inner pain" and thus reflects the powerful "metaphor" in his works.

As a technique in *Wild Grass* of creation with modernity, "metaphor" is an important way to

express Lu Xun's inner world. It not only uses the shaping and concatenation of images to reflect his inner depression, hesitation and hypocrisy, but more importantly, it implies "Lu Xun's personal philosophy" in the process of revealing the poet's soul. Alber Charles pointed out in *Wild Grass: Symmetry and Parallelism in Lu Hsün's Prose Poems* that there are two opposite poles in Lu Xun's spiritual world, [6] so he always uses opposite images and concepts such as "life and death, light and dark, past and future, hope and disappointment" [3] to describe the inner contradictions and struggles. In Leo's view, this strict opposition is "a psychological desperation between hope and disappointment, metaphorically reflecting Lu Xun's inner emotions at this critical moment in his life". As an example, he abstractly explained the spatial metaphor that represents the "dilemma of time" in the work *Haunted Ghost*, and *Dead Fire* more clearly expressed Lu Xun's difficulties and struggles in certitude of choosing a direction. The future of "dead fire" is to make a difficult choice between self-extinction and self-sacrifice, but no matter which path is chosen, it will lead to destruction. This symbolizes the dilemmatic spiritual state of Lu Xun at this time – whether to be dormant and finally resolved and destroyed in silence, or to rise up in difficulties and struggle through the thorns to call for a "life with action". No matter what path is chosen, according to the contradictory logic in the poem, this action will inevitably lead him to the path of extinction. In any case, Lu Xun's inner troubles and struggles are no less than the anxiety of "dead fire", and when he has repeatedly poured out his gloomy mood and incomprehensible tension in many chapters of *Wild Grass*, Lu Xun's personal philosophy is vividly portrayed.

In the view of Leo, *Wild Grass* is not merely a collection of "symbolism" and "metaphoric imagery" with modernized techniques or a great experiment and pioneering work of new forms of modern literature. It is not only the self-expression and presentation of Lu Xun's rather modernized dark mind. More importantly, Lu Xun with his personal philosophy and the final choices he made echoed his "iron house metaphor" and the images of "the different one" and "the mediocre masses" that he created in his works.

4. Modernity in Essays: The Value Reversal of Cultural Symbols

Lu Xun's essays have an obvious characteristic of "modernity", which is highlighted on the basis of Chinese literary tradition. In addition to the complex feature of embracing all kinds of literary forms in style, Lu Xun's essays are also transformed into modernity on the basis of tradition by the integration of free expression of mood and modern techniques of "lyrical metaphor". As Leo puts it, "According to the background of Chinese literary tradition to measure Lu Xun's originality as a modern writer, essays should be a very important part among these"[3].

Similar to his vision of the modernity of Lu Xun's prose poetry, when looking for the modernity of Lu Xun's essays, Leo also started from the exploring of this kind of literary form. He recognized the unique style of free, humorous, and concise without losing criticism of the darkness of times under the influence of the "complex" nature of traditional Chinese essays, and the special charm of the notebook style which Lu Xun paid much attention to, as well as the integration with the modern style of letting loose and free lyricism of the popular works after the May Fourth Movement. From another point of view, he gave an affirmation to Lu Xun's essays by exploring the artistic elements exclusively among them, and tried to fade the aspects that even have a fighting and sharp feature under the influence of ideology. Starting from Lu Xun's different stages of creation, Leo made a detailed analysis of the influence of traditional prose style on Lu Xun's essays' artistic continuity.

Chinese premodern prose is well accepted by Lu Xun because of its unique simple and clear style and profound and straightforward expression of spirits. It's a kind of literary form with extreme literary density, which means it could display full expressions in limited length of writing. Whether it

is a literary style with great ideological density carried by a concise text structure for the creator to be writing unrestrained without directed expressions, or a rather rebellious and combative spirit of freedom could be made in it, these features all have a profound impact on Lu Xun's essays. The definition of Lu Xun's essays is related to the numerous categories of traditional Chinese prose and a fanatical personal preference reflected in his own compilation of unofficial history stories. Therefore, as for Leo's understanding of Lu Xun's essays, it cannot be regarded as a genre, but "the collection of all prose categories written at a certain time and place".[3] On this basis, Lu Xun began to write a large number of essays because of the characteristics of "sublime words with deep meaning" and free and unrestrained spirit that could be revealed in prose. The first opportunity offered to him was the "Random Thoughts" and "By-Talk" in the column of "Impressions Record" of *New Youth*.

In the early stage, the "Causerie" with space limitation but no regulatory requirements for the literary style motivated Lu Xun to express his own thoughts and feelings with short essays, which was close to the notebook style, and thus began the unique style of his early essays. Under the spreading of the traditional prose style, Lu Xun began the exploration of modernity of the essays, whether from the external form or the internal spirits, which is mainly reflected in the use of a large number of quotations in his early essays, the construction of epigrams and allegories, and the "lyricism of metaphor".

Lu Xun tried to achieve the figurativeness and profoundness of his modern essays through citations, epigrams, and even allegories and metaphors, making it an allegorical essay. The use of a large number of citations reflect his excellence in writing traditional essays and rich ideological connotation, which is intended to make his modern essays have an eclectic and free-spirited posture. Its main idea lies in the enlightening significance of implementing the May Fourth spirit and anti-tradition. The use of epigrams and allegories reveals the factors of classical literature under the modernized form, that is, the unique influence of Chuang-tzu's prose which resorts to imagination and imagery on his essays. Regardless of the ready use of quotation or the setting of allegories, Lu Xun used the improved short and sophisticated style of "Random Thoughts" to merge traditional prose techniques and historical allusions with modern language styles, expanding the inner tension of his essays.

While trying to shape "the meaningful essays", Lu Xun made more modernization explorations and attempts in his essays. The more modern techniques he used were lyrical metaphors influenced by Nietzsche. More figurative abstract images were fetched in the metaphorical approach, and filled with strong and profound emotions, which burst out in a moment. This became the typical characteristics of Lu Xun's "metaphorical lyricism". Putting Lu Xun's *Random Thoughts* as an example, through a series of profound image groups such as "the old", "the outstanding", "the brave", "the coward", "hero" and "child", Leo thinks that Lu Xun have made deep interpretation and painful calling of Chinese society at that time and the consistent theme of "eating people" and "being eaten" in his early works. Through the "calling of the image", Lu Xun's essays have "the poetic meaning of the preaching of the *Bible*".[3] As Leo said, forms and styles cannot limit his sensibilities and his strong creativity under such intense emotional impact. These lyrical metaphors also exist precisely in his moments of excitement or philosophical thoughts.

As a common technique in Lu Xun's essays, "metaphor" is a very convenient way to express deep and strong emotions of himself. In the essays, some metaphors that are not "lyrical", have the meaning of cultural symbolism and irony, on the basis of traditional metaphors. In Leo's view, some of the techniques of cultural criticism in Lu Xun's essays are another application of the metaphorical discourse. In other words, the cultural malady criticized in his essays and the use of cultural symbols and images for this purpose can still achieve the criticism of nationality on the perspective of May Fourth Movement through the use of cultural symbols and imagery such as "beards", "teeth",

“photographs”, “mirrors” and other “cultural codes”, as well as through the way of “reverse values”. For example, in the essay of discussing the “Great Wall”, the Great Wall is the symbol of the huge project which wastes numerous labors and money in the feudal culture. He criticized the person who were still “building” it to hint and satire the decadent feudal culture were still alive through the reversal of the cultural image of the Great Wall. The use of the value reversal of more representative symbols has moved to a more profound direction in the two essays of discussing the collapse of Leifeng Pagoda. From the affirmation of the love story between the White Snake and Xu Xian and the desire of the collapse of the Leifeng Pagoda since childhood, the instinct affirmation of bold love and the criticism of moral regulations which serve as the restraint and repressive power is reflected. Lu Xun made a total value reversal of the inner connotation of the Leifeng Pagoda, which in the orthodox concept was the just symbol of killing the devil with sense of justice. He put the allegory of repressing the freedom in the image of the pagoda as a symbol. In views of Leo, under the joint influence of Freud and Kuriyagawa Hakuson, Lu Xun regarded the Leifeng Pagoda as a “symbol of the ‘super-ego’ oppressed desires and the ‘id’ that meant the inner self “. [3] The reversal of the value of the symbol actually leads the readers to a deeper level of thinking at the level of allegory. Here, the traditional concept is overturned, and the traditional cultural image is crowned with the value of a cultural symbol and has a reversal of the value, making each time of reading of the readers become a “recognition” process of profound reflection and criticism of the cultural tradition.

The value reversal of cultural symbols brings Lu Xun’s essays to the metaphorical level with allegorical nature. In many of Lu Xun’s essays, the direct use of symbols in a large section of metaphors is the technical tradition established by Lu Xun in the creation of process of short stories and prose poetry. Even the fruitless problems metaphorized in his short stories can be continued in the creation of essays, and are finally answered with another metaphorical forms. In this way, Lu Xun actually forms a series of metaphorical process from short stories to essays, and makes essay and novel echo ideologically beyond time and style. In Lu Xun’s essay *Answers to Mr. Youheng*, Lu Xun used “drunk shrimp” as a metaphor to respond ironically to the metaphor of “iron house” put before in the preface of *Call to Arms*, which confirms the tragic ending predicted in the metaphor of “iron house”. This metaphor undoubtedly held Lu Xun’s hope for “the awakened people” to create the future. And when they finally become “drunk shrimps” who are “eaten raw and peeled alive” and regained their consciousness, this not only gave tragic answers to the end of the awakened, but also made Lu Xun realize the guilt of waking up the “drunk shrimps” which made them more painful. As a result, the slogan of “save the child” corresponding to the metaphor of “iron house” in his early years became vain, and Lu Xun himself realized that he had become an accomplice who made the “drunken shrimp” to experience the pain of the world more sensitively, and therefore appeared desperate. The metaphor of “drunk shrimp” undoubtedly became a way for Lu Xun to express his melancholy feelings in the turbulent times, and it was also a powerful response to the metaphor of “iron house”.

Metaphorical tendency is not only the most modernized technique in Lu Xun’s early essays, but also the most hidden lyrical way in the essays whose styles were sharp as the spears and daggers seemingly. This lyrical metaphor could be seen for the first time in the collection of prose poems *Wild Grass*, and its use in essays displayed the flexibility of Lu Xun’s literature and the diversified characteristics shown in breaking the stylistic limitations. These were all innovative attempts during the transformation of Lu Xun Literature from tradition to modern. It reflected his strong sense of responsibility for art, literature and society, and the hidden personality and highly insightful personal consciousness of himself in his own works.

After 1927, Lu Xun’s essay style was mostly changed into the strong sense of confusions caused by the impact of ideology, and the sharpness of the style of writing after he had determined his own

composition position. In his later essays, which were typically satire styles, although the subjectivity and openness of his essays were still presented through citations and replied to letters or even public publication. However, in Leo's view, even during this period, his spiritual distress did not completely cover up the shining point of the literary and modernity in his essays. The strong emotions occasionally appeared in some of his essays, and the metaphors of imagery used in the written polemics, that is, "the expression of the personal strong emotion mastered by artistic restraint" and "the occasional imagination and metaphors in the long sections of irony and scold", [3] were still the motivation that directed him to move towards gentleness and lyricism in the end of his life. All these were like the light and fire that warmed his soul through the final darkness time of his life.

5. Conclusions

Leo Ou-fan Lee's research on Lu Xun began from the 1960s. After the edifying of traditional Chinese culture and ideological research in Taiwan University, and under the cultivation of psychological education and research methods of intellectual history in the United States, Leo put his interest and inspiration in Lu Xun's literature into practice. *Voices from the Iron House* written in the 1980s experienced repeated consideration and revision, including the combination of most Chinese scholar's ideas of Lu Xun Studies and the application of theories around the world. Finally, he took a new approach. Among various mature research methods and interpretation perspectives, he chose to return to the original text and eliminated all distractions. He only read up from the text itself, and as if had a cross era mental dialogue with Lu Xun. At the same time of using the method of "close reading of the text" under the influence of American New Criticism, he put psychological reading into Lu Xun's work, which was impacted by his teacher E. Erikson, and made this method become his original creation. At the same time, different from the Chinese scholar's research and exploration that focused on Lu Xun's ideology at that time, Leo insisted on and vigorously explored the profound artistry in Lu Xun's works and interpreted the main characteristics of its artistry, that is, the outstanding modernity embodied in the works, both implied in form and content, which presented a new appearance of Lu Xun's literature in front of the readers. And this made readers to recognize Lu Xun as a professional writer and artist, who naturally integrated "tradition" and "modernity" together into his works and successfully made modernized transformation of literature based on the tradition of Chinese literature. Therefore, Leo's unprecedented originality in analysis methods and reading perspectives is mainly reflected in the integration of multiple research methods around the world and his open and inclusive research vision.

The most prominent method of Leo Ou-fan Lee's interpretation of the modernity of Lu Xun's works in *Voices from the Iron House* is to incorporate the psychoanalysis into the close reading, which has been interpreted and well known as a "personality reading" [7] by Chinese modern scholars. It shows that Leo's ideology and conception based on the "close reading of the context" and "text independence" of "New Criticism" have been refined and a writer-level correction has been made. While studying the text carefully, Leo respected the existence of the writer's psychological reality. He abandoned the concept of "The writer is dead" and conducted a "personality reading" that combined the writer's internal thoughts.

This is embodied in his deep exploration of Lu Xun's mind. He placed the ups and downs behind Lu Xun's words on the paper, which made this interpretation not only the capture, appreciation and excavation of the artistic quality of Lu Xun's works, but also a window to talk with him. From this window, what we can see is not only Lu Xun's never stopped thinking about the depression and the excited or depressed fluctuation of mood, or the stubborn feelings from impassioned to vain and helpless and to desperate struggles and the thoughts of the literati who always keep the nation, society

and people in their minds, but also the 1920s and 1930s, when the tradition and the modernity were intertwined and turbulent but the literature and art were repeatedly winning new achievements. In the peak period of Lu Xun's creation, the external world was hidden behind his deep thoughts and gave him voiceless instructions. Just like Leo's views of Lu Xun, he internalized the external phenomena into the inner feelings step by step. Also he nurtured strong and deep emotions, which burst into deep and thorough sentences written down. Lu Xun's literary works are viewed by combining the social phenomena with his most secret mind, and the ultimate goal is to explain the unique literary features in his works. This is Leo's original creation based on the perspective of culturology, adhering to the art-based principle, and well integrating psychology into literary works and writers' research. According to the perspective of Leo, we have to admit that we can't only see Lu Xun's writing from this person, but also see this person from his writing. according to the perspective of Leo. With the integration of Leo 's psychological analysis and art appreciation, we seem to stand in Lu Xun's psychological perspective to see the world at that time from the inside out, and we can also capture his own feelings from the world presented in his essays.

In addition to the original creation of the research method which combines the psychological research method of psychoanalysis with the interpretation theory of Western modern literature, the opinion that Leo inherited in his Lu Xun Studies is the same as his attitude towards Chinese modern literature, which is emphasizing on the literary artistry and the aesthetic value of literature itself. Therefore, when exploring the modernity of Lu Xun's works, he focused on the combination of the lyric tradition of Chinese literature and the techniques of Western modernity to explore the aesthetic value and modern artistic beauty of Lu Xun's literature which appeal to the emotional factors, so as to highlight the modernity characteristics of Lu Xun's literature and become a treasure of modern art. This is unique during the time when Lu Xun Study tended to be ideological and revolutionary, and thus showed Leo's art-based perspectives and objectivity as a literary researcher, as well as his distinctive innovation and independent consciousness.

Even if he insisted on the art-based principle and tried to develop the modern artistic features of Lu Xun's works, Leo did not deny the part of his works that showed the struggles of ideology, and he discussed and explained it for several chapters also in this monograph, the length of which can be equivalent to the part of analysis of modernity captured in Lu Xun's works. This fully reflects the openness and tolerance his research perspective.

Even in nowadays when Lu Xun's literature research has been fruitful and the research vision and methods have been continuously developed and innovated, the research methods of multiple fusion and the broad and inclusive artistic perspective that Leo used in the modernity interpretation of Lu Xun's literature still have far-reaching guiding significance for today's Lu Xun Studies.

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