

Anti-Confucian Themes in Language Reforms in Meiji Japan and Early Republican
China: Reexamining Shimazaki Tôson's *The Broken Commandment* and Lu Xun's
"Diary of a Madman"

By

Ping Guo
B.A., Nanjing University, 1999

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Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Cody Poulton (Department of Pacific and Asian Studies)

Supervisor

Dr. Tim Iles (Department of Pacific and Asian Studies)

Department Member

Dr. Richard King (Department of Pacific and Asian Studies)

Department Member

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Cody Poulton (Department of Pacific and Asian Studies)

Supervisor

Dr. Tim Iles (Department of Pacific and Asian Studies)

Department Member

Dr. Richard King (Department of Pacific and Asian Studies)

Department Member

Dr. Claire Carlin (Department of French)

External Examiner

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the anti-Confucian theme in Shimazaki Tôson's *The Broken Commandment* (1906) and Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman" (1918) as representative examples of the historical necessity of vernacular language. Applying a Marxist literary critique, I argue that the complex resistance against Confucian morality was the main ideological motivation of literary language reforms among literati in Meiji Japan and early Republican China. The choice of a new written language was inspired by a modern concern for individual sensation as opposed to the spiritual constraints of Confucian morality. The prevalence of nationalism and modernity during the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries contributed to the reforms. Integrating socio-historical, biographical and textual analysis, my thesis demonstrates that the vernacular language was both a necessary medium to express inner struggle and an act of rebellion whereby writers abandoned the intellectual world which had been perpetuated by the use of classical language.

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Introduction

An examination of the literary history of Japan and China between 1880 and 1920 reveals that both countries experienced similar reforms in their written languages. Westernized intellectuals in both countries proposed adopting colloquial writing to replace the traditional written language. Unifying the written and the spoken language, *Genbun-itchi*, was proposed to the Meiji government as a means of strengthening the nation. The literati of Japan did not start to experiment with colloquial writing until the end of the 1880s. In the case of Chinese language reform, the vernacular movement, *Baihua yundong*, was launched around the mid 1910s by elites who had studied abroad.

Why did similar movements take place in Japan and China respectively, and did they arise from the same motivation? To grasp the motivations, I choose to examine two works of fiction in the context of language reform. My approach to reading these texts is based on the Marxist view that literary works are the products of specific socio-economic ideologies. It is the ideological struggle that laid behind the creation of a new, vernacular, literary language that is of particular interest to me. Using a Marxist critique I will support my thesis that it was a conscious resistance against Confucian ideology that triggered the struggle over language and the rise of vernacular fiction.

Whereas the anti-Confucian thrust of reform in China was overt, the anti-Confucian sentiment in Japan's language reform was more indirect and has therefore not received due attention. My primary analysis will focus on two representative works in the context of their authors' ideologies. From an examination of these two texts I draw the larger conclusion that it was specifically anti-Confucian sentiments that fuelled the drive for linguistic reform in both Japan and China.

Shimazaki Tôson's *The Broken Commandment* (*Hakai*), published in 1906, and Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman" ("Kuangren riji"), published in 1918, are early examples of vernacular fiction in Japan and China respectively.¹ These two writers hold very important positions in the literary histories of their countries; Tôson is the pioneer of Japanese

¹ There is a controversy about *The Broken Commandment* being the first Japanese vernacular fiction. This clarification will be discussed in chapter 2.

Naturalism, and Lu Xun is regarded as the father of Modern Chinese literature. Works by Tôson were used in schools as examples of national literature,² and Lu Xun's works have been read by generations of Chinese students. Both Tôson and Lu Xun were educated in the system of the classics, and were among the first young writers to turn their backs on it. When Tôson published his novel, Lu Xun happened to be studying in Japan, but I have not found any evidence that shows any interaction between these two writers. However, China and Japan shared certain commonalities, especially in the area of culture. The vernacular literary movement in Japan had a significant influence on the vernacular movement in China.

It is widely agreed that as the pioneer work of *Baihua yundong*, Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman," unambiguously attacks the poisonous evil of the archaic Confucian system at the heart of Chinese civilization. The protagonist, a temporarily paranoid diarist, is a victim of his society and an outside observer of it at the same time. Under the cover of his psychosis the protagonist writes down the truth he has discovered after thirty years of mental illness. Upon its publication, "Diary of a Madman" became an iconic work of the vernacular movement in China, which was itself one aspect of the New Culture movement launched by intellectual elites, such as Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu, after their return from studies abroad. The New Culture movement, "with its attacks on the Confucian code of social behavior,"³ aimed at overthrowing the old ethos and establishing a modern society. Hu Shi, the leading advocate of vernacular language, "believed that a new language cannot be constructed by linguists but through literary practice."⁴ Therefore, literature was seen as a critical tool and "language was a harbinger" in the battle to reform society.⁵ The classical written language, as one aspect of the radical rejection of tradition, was criticized as responsible for the backward ideology of the people. Lu Xun claimed that the renewal of thought was the

² Michael K. Bourdaghs, *The Dawn That Never Comes: Shimazaki Tôson and Japanese Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 7.

³ Leo Ou-fan Lee, "Incomplete Modernity" in *The Appropriation of Culture Capital: China's May Fourth Project*, Milena Doleželová-Velingerová and Oldřich Král eds., (Harvard University Press, 2001), 79.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

primary determinant in his choice of writing styles,⁶ he uses his action to break away from outmoded thinking.

The *Genbun-itchi* movement in Japan was proposed more than once to the government to promote literacy and strengthen national unity. A few decades later this concept was adopted by the Japanese literati in their language reform movement. In addition to proposing the “new fiction,” as opposed to the stereotypical traditional fiction, Tsubouchi Shōyō’s book *Essence of the Novel* (*Shōsetsu shinzui*), a systematic guide to literary reform, lifts colloquial writing to an unprecedented height. Kōjin Karatani argues that a *genbun-itchi* system made possible the discovery of the interiority of writers. Tomi Suzuki points out that the adaptation of *genbun-itchi* in fiction was closely related to institutional promotion of a national language.⁷ While the environment was prepared historically, it was up to individual writers whether or not to apply it. Nagai Kafu, for example, stuck to the classical style even during the 1930’s when vernacular writing was widespread. My interest specifically is in the motivations that led Tōson and Lu Xun to choose the vernacular to express their inner struggles and voice their social protest as writers. In particular, the modern notion of “self” (such as privacy, individuality and subjectivity) was oppressed by or neglected in Confucian thought.

Tōson’s hero in *The Broken Commandment* is the first in modern Japanese fiction to become conscious of and take responsibility for his selfhood.⁸ It is the first novel in modern Japanese literature which narrates the interior life of its protagonist. But the “new life” yearned for by the protagonist is inevitably linked to ideals of modernity, which are antithetical to the deeply entrenched social institution of Confucianism. It is implicitly yet forcefully expressed that individual rights are oppressed by the dictates of Confucian loyalty and social responsibility, which prepared scholars for lives of official careerism in pursuit of profit and fame.

⁶ Lu Xun, “Voiceless China” a speech given in 1927 at Hong Kong Youth Association *Lu Xun: lun wenxue yu yishu*, Wu Zimin, et al., eds. (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1980), 232: ... “*dan shi wenxue gexin shi bugou de, yinwei fubai sixiang, neng yong guwen zuo, ye neng yong baihua zuo.*”

⁷ Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), 45.

⁸ Janet A. Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979), 193.

Theoretical Framework

The Marxist concept of historical materialism is a fundamental element in my analysis of the texts by Tôson and Lu Xun. When analyzing literature, whether focusing on formal structures, seeking out contradictions, digging for unconscious motivations, etc., we base our studies on material objects, such as linguistic conflicts, specific texts and their related social contexts.⁹ More often than not no one single analytical approach adequately addresses the complexities of reading a text in new ways. In my thesis socio-historical contexts and personal experiences are regarded as the main contributing factors in ideology formation.

Underpinning my thesis is the Marxist observation that literary works take “certain ‘raw materials’—language, other literary texts, ways of perceiving the world”—and transform them by certain techniques into products.¹⁰ These productions are carried out by various devices—literary forms.¹¹ Terry Eagleton states that “significant developments in literary form... result from significant changes in ideology.”¹² Written language as a medium is inseparable from form. “The language and devices a writer finds to hand are already saturated with certain ideological modes of perception, certain codified ways of interpreting reality.”¹³

The Marxist literary critique posits that authors are “constantly formed by their social contexts in ways which they themselves would usually not admit.”¹⁴ Their works are not mysteriously inspired, nor created groundlessly by genius and imagination; they are forms of perception, particular ways of seeing the world.¹⁵ Therefore, the works are not to be simply explained by their authors’ psychology alone.¹⁶ It is ideology—the totality of

⁹ Terry Eagleton in *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford ; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996) tends to distinguish the objects as political or personal. The prevalence of difference genres of literary criticism is usually accompanied by changes in the social order.

¹⁰ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford ; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), 157.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (London: Methuen Co Ltd, 1976), 24-25.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Peter Barry, *Beginning theory: an Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 158.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, 6.

background is a key to the study of the origin and formation of ideologies.

On one hand, social context is largely responsible for the formation of particular ideologies; on the other, those very ideological forces are the determinants behind literary products. The reverse direction of the process, shown by my diagram above, illustrates that works can be examined as a means of comprehending the writers' state of mind when they produced specific works of fiction. Taking advantage of this insight into the text reveals that an author's state of mind reflects the nature of his ideological environment —“thoughts reflect social situation.”²¹

E. Balibar and P. Macherey have stated that “the common language, i.e. the *national language*,” is “the historical outcome of particular class struggles.”²² Though class orientation is not so much of the focus of this thesis, this statement indicates that the rise of a common language is urged by people who share similar ideological interests and spiritual struggles. These struggles are the key in revealing the underlying dynamics of the language reform movements in Japan and China. As Leon Trotsky comments in his book *Literature and Revolution*, “the new form is discovered, proclaimed and evolved under the pressure of an inner need, of a collective psychological demand”; in other words, it has its social roots.²³ Unlike cultural materialism and new historicist criticism, whose focus is on specific *historical documents* and attempts “to recreate the ‘state of mind’ of a particular moment in history,”²⁴ cultural and historical contexts in my thesis are to provide reference for comprehension. Acknowledging connections between social context and ideology I am providing a basis to search for the causes of specific ideological formations.

Before being forced to open their countries by the Western powers, Japan and China were still under the rule of feudal regimes, whose economies were largely dependent on agriculture. Up until the early twentieth century, Confucian ideology was the force that sustained social cohesion and private relations, such as the authority of the imperial

²¹ Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-century Dialectical Theories of Literature*, xviii.

²² E. Balibar and P. Macherey, “Literature as an Ideological Form”, *Oxford Literary Review*, Vol. 3:1 1978: 6-8. Cited in *Modern Literary Theory: a Reader, Third Edition*, ed. Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh (New York: Distributed exclusively in the USA by St. Martin's Press, 1996).

²³ Cited in Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, 24.

²⁴ Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: an Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, 159.

administration and personal moral education. Because the social transformations in 19th and early twentieth century Japan and China yielded such different results, the difference has tended to be emphasized. Benjamin Schwartz notes that in spite of the differences between early modern China and Japan “when China did begin to react to the external situation, one is struck by how much similarity there is in ways of reasoning.”²⁵

The Western influx accelerated the collapse of the already tottering feudal administration. After the Meiji Restoration, Japan was able to maintain a level of social control and stability that allowed the government to quickly strengthen the nation’s defences. Despite debates over its political institutions, foreign policies and political movements, Japan’s fast rise demonstrated that it had effectively caught up with Western countries. It had advantages, especially in the scramble for power in Korea and in China. The Meiji government stressed “a mixture of Confucian and European elitism and moral emphasis that used texts ranging from the most ancient *Analects* to the latest Herbaritian example”²⁶ to educate the public, in the hope that “enlightenment” would spread as fast as possible. There was a nationwide campaign to create an industrialized state to challenge Western hegemony in East Asia. However, a correspondingly progressive social ideology failed to emerge.

Unlike Japan, which chose “a marriage between imperial court and modern Western technology,”²⁷ the last feudal power in China, the Manchu regime, held out to the bitter end. It must be kept in mind that China experienced much greater violence and chaos in its encounter with the West than did Japan. Prior to the fall of the Qing court, there were wars with the Western intruders and the Japanese, while domestic revolts, such as the Taiping Rebellion and the Boxer Uprising, further undermined the Qing state. Inspired by the Meiji Restoration in Japan, in 1898 the young Qing Emperor, Guangxu, initiated the “Hundred Day Restoration” which was intended to introduce Western political ideas to the Qing court administration. After 103 days his regime was overthrown in a coup d’etat. (Subsequent to

²⁵ Tu Weiming, Milan Hejtmanek and Alan Wachman eds., *The Confucian World Observed: a Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia* (Honolulu: Program for Cultural Studies, The East-West Center, distributed by University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 24.

²⁶ Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*, 19.

²⁷ Michael K. Bourdags, *The Dawn That Never Comes: Shimazaki Tôson and Japanese Nationalism*, 4.

the downfall of the Qing regime, there was the 1911 Republic revolution, a return to imperialism and several years of civil war in the fight for central power. Although none of these battles and revolutions lasted long, this turbulent social order continued for more than a hundred years, until 1949.)

In the face of Western penetration, Japan and China encountered and absorbed the impact of this vital new force. Intellectuals had more access to studies of Western culture and literature, and some even had the opportunity to study in Western countries. In parallel to the struggle to build new nations, both countries were wracked by deep social changes. The recognition of modernity appeared in opposition to the native philosophies or religions of Japan and China. After reflection upon their own traditional culture, intellectuals rejected it for hindering their advance. To some extent, adherence to traditional formal language was seen as a threat to survival of the nation.

Marshall Berman explores the emergence of modernity and defines it from a Marxist point of view. Change and transformation of modes of production are the essential elements for modernity to appear. For example, “the birth of a new social division of labor in the West, and its new relationships between thought and political and social life” are significant in the origin of modernity.²⁸ The conflicts, brought on by modernity, consequently bring destruction, changes, and transformations. Berman explains that there are two categories of thought about modernity: economic and political modernization, and modernism in art, culture and sensibility; the “melting” process—change—occurs from three dimensions: community, society and the individual.²⁹

On the individual level, the longing for self-development, for breaking down the old to embrace the new, is precisely the search for modernity. Yet it is inner anguish that has often inspired revolutionary vision, action and creation.³⁰ Perhaps it can be explained that the new form of writing—the vernacular fiction—was initiated by writers living through the uncertain transformation from the pre-modern era to modern, the new regime of modernity.

²⁸ Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 43.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 20-22.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

The transformation is certainly apparent in the dramatic shift to the use of vernacular language in writing literature. This was not a gradual evolution of the language but a deliberate choice on the part of the young writers drawn to the vernacular literary movement. The use of the vernacular was an act of resistance against the traditional restraints of Confucian morality, which in the new society was considered harmful to people as individuals.

Literature as a work of art is created with subjectivity, and according to Jameson we cannot ever really get outside our own subjectivity.³¹ The novel, in particular, “is always the result of subjective will, subjective wilfulness.” A hero “can never succeed in his quest for ultimate meaning”³² without the novelist imposing success or failure onto him. Marston Anderson also argues that because of authorial subjectivity, literary works can never truly replace genuine reality.³³ It is precisely this subjectivity of authors that leads us to a comprehension of their visions of the world. As ideological products literary works present states of mind in different ways, and are sometimes distortions of realities. It would be an oversimplification to attempt to draw direct lines between writers’ ideologies and their works. As Eagleton asserts, a literary work as a form of art “has a more complex relationship to ideology than law and political theory.”³⁴ Frederick Engels also remarks that “art is far richer and more ‘opaque’ than political and economic theory.”³⁵

Given the nature of literature, which allows several structures to overlap and lends itself to being decoded in various ways, comprehension varies according to “our knowledge of the codes and the social context of author and reader.”³⁶ There will always be different ways of interpreting texts, especially the deeper layers of textual meaning. My study will provide just one angle of perception. When trying to explore the deep meaning of a text there is the possibility of digging so deeply that one becomes mired in irrelevancies. The

³¹ Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-century Dialectical Theories of Literature*, 372.

³² *Ibid.*, 173.

³³ Marston Anderson, *The Limits of Realism: Chinese Fiction in the Revolutionary Period* (University of California Press, 1990), 12.

³⁴ Cited in Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, 17.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁶ Douwe W. Fokkema, “Lu Xun: The Impact of Russian Literature” in *Modern Chinese literature in the May Fourth Era*, Merle Goldman ed., (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), 95

degree of moderate interpretation is somewhat subjective. The psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan argues that language itself is “composed less of *signs*—stable meanings—than of *signifiers*”; one object may have many contradictory meanings, may be just one of a whole chain of signifiers with equally multiple meanings.”³⁷ Despite his original theories on psychoanalytic interpretation, Freud said himself that sometimes a cigar is just a cigar, and sometimes a text is interpreted to be far more complicated than it may be. Eagleton also remarks that the unconscious which Lacan describes, “as a ‘sliding of the signified beneath the signifier’, as a constant fading and evaporation of meaning,” is “a bizarre ‘modernist’ text which is almost unreadable and which will certainly never yield up its final secrets to interpretation.”³⁸

Since colloquial language is the key that connects both literary reforms, the texts of the representative works in my thesis will be discussed in relation to the significance of their respective written languages. These forms of writing were not only an ideologically driven outcome; the need for unbounded self expression required them to adopt modern narrative techniques for rendering consciousness. Dorrit Cohn’s thoroughly illuminating work, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*, will assist me in demonstrating how colloquialism is necessary for integrating authorial and figural voices; it enables writers to bring out realistic and affective expressions of feelings and thoughts.

National Language

Language, particularly vernacular language, is one of the primary signifiers of social cohesion and social identity. It is, then, not hard to comprehend that in Japan and China, the appeal of a vernacular language was related to the rise of nationalism. Indeed, Western threats awoke the consciousness of selfhood and otherness which contributed to the consciousness of nations. Vernacular language was also desired because it was considered an important way of strengthening countries. Mastery of classical writing demanded years of study, something not available to the average peasant. Until the early twentieth century,

³⁷ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 146.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

therefore, literacy had been limited to a small group of intellectuals. During the period of enlightenment, new concepts and ideas, of necessity, required a language to spread swiftly among the uneducated majority. Consequently, the vernacular writing system was promoted by westernized elites in Japan and China.

In his book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on The Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Benedict Anderson explores the roots of nationalism and formation of the imagination of nation. Language, to use the case of Latin in Europe, played an important role in transforming the consciousness of religious communities in those nations. As Benedict Anderson points out, in Europe the “reading classes” meant people of wealth and power.³⁹ Despite the long history of East Asian civilization, literacy had also been limited to a small number of elites. By controlling literacy traditional social systems ensured the privilege of a certain class over the majority, most of whom were illiterate. Anderson argues that the old administrative languages were “used by and for officialdoms for their own inner convenience.”⁴⁰

In both Japan and China, literacy gained by self-cultivation was deemed an important quality needed for the collective good of society (the ruler)—a belief largely based on the Confucian ideas on harmony and social order. In East Asian countries like Japan and China where education was the key to political success and wealth, the mastery of literature was absolutely necessary. For instance, Itô Shinkichi’s remark on Tôson’s poetry reveals a popular view that literary works need to fulfil their historical task.⁴¹ As revealed by his diary of his days in America, Hu Shi “worked hard to prepare himself for a future mission.”⁴² Janet A. Walker also states that “formerly a writer spoke only as a representative of a social body or a literary or philosophical tradition,” not as a representative of oneself.⁴³

³⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London [England]: Verso, 1991), 76.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁴¹ Cited in Michael K. Bourdaghs, *The Dawn That Never Comes: Shimazaki Tôson and Japanese Nationalism*, 6.

⁴² Leo Ou-fan lee, “Incomplete Modernity” *The Appropriation of Culture Capital: China’s May Fourth Project*, Milena Doleželová-Velingerová and Oldřich Král eds., 45.

⁴³ Janet A. Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*, 147.

As Benedict Anderson has pointed out, newspapers and books are the major media that make possible the imagination of a type of simultaneity which results in a national consciousness—"an imagined community."⁴⁴ Literary works presented by books and magazines stand at the frontline of national advancement. By writing in the vernacular language authors were playing a role in the spread of nationalism. In addition, living in the midst of the mainstream of national advancement, individual writers were inevitably influenced by, if not closely involved in, concerns of the fate of their nations. Expressions of dissatisfaction and anxieties are not rare among literary works around this period. However, spiritual afflictions felt by the selfhood of individual writers should not be overlooked. It was the inner struggle of writers that was later expanded to a discontent towards the whole social environment. Therefore, it is important to study the ideological conflicts of writers to discern how those conflicts influenced their adaptations of language.

Nationalism in Japan and China during this particular period coincided with the reinvigoration of Confucian ideology. The stern Confucian principles of loyalty and moral probity were already being reclaimed by nationalism, especially after the end of Meiji in Japan. The emphasis once placed on loyalty to emperors was shifted to loyalty to the nation state. It is implied in *The Modernization of China* edited by Gilbert Rozman, especially in the case of China, that "to convert Confucian loyalties to modern patriotism" was difficult "in the absence of strong government leadership or a rapidly expanding economy."⁴⁵ In other words, nationalism in Japan and China was converted to some degree from Confucian concepts, though one was more successful than another.

As Anderson asserts, "it is the magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny."⁴⁶ Subjects were born to certain classes under feudal regimes; accordingly they carried certain duties and obeyed certain authorities; the emperor and the court (its administration) were the highest and the ultimate object of allegiance. Similarly, in modern nation states subjects happen to be born with certain nationalities, and the object of allegiance transferred from sovereign to a nation—an imagined political community. Now citizens are expected to be

⁴⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 6.

⁴⁵ Gilbert Rozman, ed., *The Modernization of China* (New York: The Free Press, 1981), 202.

⁴⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 12.

patriotic and willing to sacrifice themselves for the nation. Keeping this fact in mind, it is not hard to understand that the Japanese and Chinese were more ready to accommodate nationalism into their societies in the early modern state. On the other hand, the people did not escape from the ideological restraints of traditional morality simply because of the rise of nationalism. The idea of nation coincided with the inner need of vernacular language.

Anderson's account also helps to explain that personal experiences are the most direct means to envision the whole society. The comprehension of writers' ideologies will be accomplished through the study of writers' biographies. In the same book Anderson argues that a person can only meet a limited number of people and encounter a limited number of events in one's life; hence, one's perception of the whole society, in which one lives, is based on the accessible knowledge gained through the experiences in one's own life. This viewpoint explains writers' inference from his own family to the big family, which is his country. Essentially a Confucian concept, the relationship between a single family and the whole country is important in later discussions.

In short, my thesis concerns Confucianism and social ideologies in China and Japan during the vernacular literary movements, and how the literati's resistance to traditional Confucian morality shaped specific works of literature. Confucian ideology in China and Japan during this time period is crucial because of its influence on the origins of the writers' language revolution. By introducing the lives and works of Shimazaki Tôson and Lu Xun separately I will provide an objective and focused basis for a comparative reading. Finally, the similarities in ideologies between these two writers and their works will be drawn through comparison; at the same time, the cause of differences will also be addressed.

Chapter One Socio-historical Background

Accepting the general view of Marxist literary criticism that socio-historical environments are largely responsible for the formation of particular ideologies, I begin my thesis with an introduction to the social-historical moment which gave rise to such writers as Shimasaki Tôson and Lu Xun. Specifically, I am looking at the moment when the predominance of traditional Confucian ideology was challenged by the powerful new Western ideology of modernization, and how this complex moment shaped the works of the two writers referred to above. From the mid 19th century to the early twentieth century the European Powers, through military and cultural means, encroached upon Asian countries such as China and Japan. This encroachment aroused conflicts along with intellectual reflection on the value of the native philosophies of China and Japan. Confucianism is one of the representative forms of traditional culture in China and Japan. Confucian thought was still dominant in these two countries during the time period under discussion in this thesis. The dominant influence of Confucian ideology in both China and Japan was seen as a source of weakness in their confrontation with the Western Powers. In order to strengthen their countries, young intellectuals, influenced by Western culture through education, sought to overthrow their traditional cultures and adopt Western ideas. Consciously and unconsciously, many writers who were active in literary reforms displayed resistance against Confucian dogma. This chapter introduces the essential ideas of Confucianism, especially its moral philosophy, and attempts to explain the tension between modern Western rationalism and traditional Confucian logic. To young Chinese and Japanese intellectuals the two ideologies stood in diametrical opposition.

Clarification of Confucianism and its influence in China and Japan

Confucianism, an English term, is named after the early teacher/philosopher Kong Fuzi, whose ideas eventually came to form the foundational ideology of Chinese society. Confucianism has often been categorized as a religion. However, in China it has always been regarded as more of a sociopolitical ideology administered by a school of gentlemen/scholars (*ru jia si xiang*). Western scholars, such as George De Vos, tend to agree

that Confucianism is not a religion because it lacks the critical element of the sacred. Tu Weiming argues that “a system of thought can be considered a religion only if something is held sacred within that system,”⁴⁷ which is not the case with Confucianism. According to Tu Weiming, “Confucianism is not a religion limited to a particular culture, race or nationality”; rather, it is a dynamic force that “has the capacity to interact with other traditions in a pluralistic context.”⁴⁸

The Confucianism we have in mind today is a combination of theories of a number of scholars and schools developed over the period of several dynasties. Scholars or thinkers such as Meng Zi, Xun Zi, Cheng Hao, Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming made major contributions to the nature of Confucian ideology that is recognized as the dominant form over the past two centuries. The ideas of Cheng Yi and Cheng Hao, Zhu Xi,⁴⁹ and Wang Yangming largely constituted the intellectual foundations of Neo-Confucian thinking during the Song, Ming and Qing dynasties. In general, Neo-Confucianism emphasized the practice of personal cultivation in relation to pursuit of the ultimate goal—to serve the public. Neo-Confucian schools encouraged intellectuals to study in order to assist rulers in governing the country and maintaining the balance between heaven and earth. This more orthodox reinterpretation of classical Confucian philosophy was often welcomed and promoted by feudal governors in both China and Japan.

China and Japan have had commonalities in culture for centuries, at least up until the early twentieth century. In China, *The Analects* of Confucius had been adopted by almost all feudal regimes. Although Confucian scholars made developments comprehending and interpreting Confucianism with different emphases, the essential ideas remained unchanging. Simply to avoid confusion, the term “Confucianism” will be used in the thesis to indicate a synthesis of the original Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism, unless specifically stated otherwise. It might be an exaggeration, as Tu Weiming argues, “to

⁴⁷ Tu Weiming, Milan Hejtmanek and Alan Wachman eds., *The Confucian World Observed: a Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia* (Honolulu: Program for Cultural Studies, The East-West Center; distributed by University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 12.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 6: “...for centuries, the educational system in East Asia has focused on a curriculum established by the neo-Confucian scholar Zhu Xi (1130-1200).”

characterize traditional Chinese life and culture as Confucian, [yet] in both theory and practice Confucianism left an indelible mark on the governments, societies, educational practices and family life” not only in China but throughout East Asia.⁵⁰ To Tu Weiming, both China and Japan were “distinctively ‘Confucian’ states.”⁵¹

Japan started to adopt Confucianism during the Tokugawa period—the 17th century or even earlier. Confucianism has occupied an influential position in Japan. It was predominant “in the art of governance, the form and conduct of elite education, and the moral discourse of the populace.”⁵² At the same time, it is also true that Shinto and Buddhism have also exerted strong influences on Japanese society. Shinto and Buddhism tend to stand aloof from worldly affairs, both being far less secular than Confucianism. According to Tu Weiming, Confucianism neither assumes a variety of cultural forms as does Buddhism, nor is it culturally specific like Shinto, which “cannot be transplanted beyond its indigenous civilization.”⁵³ In recent centuries, Confucianism has interacted with Shinto. Because of the difficulty of defining Confucianism as a religion, it is understandable that the majority of Japanese people rarely identify themselves as Confucianist, but rather as Shintoists or Buddhists.⁵⁴ Yet important Confucian thoughts, especially in the domain of familial responsibilities and social commitment, have informed many levels of their lives.

The orthodox Confucianists identified by the Tokugawa took a strong stand against Buddhism; yet they “saw in Shinto a traditional form of worship which did not directly challenge the social values of Confucianism.”⁵⁵ Shinto’s revival in 17th century was an act of raising nationalism. Unlike Confucianism, which is of Chinese origin, and Buddhism, which came from northern India, Shinto is indigenous to Japan. As argued in the book *Sources of Japanese Tradition II*, although many National Learning scholars intensely

⁵⁰ Tu Weiming, “The Confucian Tradition in Chinese History” in *Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization*, ed., Paul S. Ropp; contributors, T.H. Barrett... [et al.] (University of California Press, 1990), 112.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 113

⁵² *Ibid.* 112-113.

⁵³ Tu Weiming, Milan Hejtmanek and Alan Wachman eds., *The Confucian World Observed: a Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia*, 10.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁵⁵ Ryusaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore De Bary and Donald Keene eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition, II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 1-2.

rejected all things Chinese, the revival of Shinto owed much to Neo-Confucianism.

At its inception, especially, this movement was stimulated by the traditionalism, historicism, and reverence for high antiquity which was so characteristic of Neo-Confucianism, and the more Neo-Shintoism became a movement directed toward nationalistic goals, the more it unconsciously drew upon the ethical and political values which Confucianism had instilled in the Japanese. Thus, in the end, despite its vociferous repudiation of this foreign teaching, the Shinto revival contributed significantly to the naturalization of Confucian ethics in the land of its adoption.⁵⁶

Among the existing religions and philosophies Confucian ideology was adopted by imperial courts to ensure the stability of a centralized state. Since the 17th century, theories of Neo-Confucian scholars like Wang Yangming influenced Japanese society a great deal while their philosophy was in wide circulation in China. There was “great interest in self-cultivation” for the first time in the Tokugawa period (1600-1867); it is in the same period that one sees the fullest flowering of Confucian ethical discourse.⁵⁷ The Ancient Learning scholars such as Ogyū Sōrai “accepted the centrality of classical China, but argued that Tokugawa Japan was somehow closer to classical China than Qing China.” What was identified and encouraged as National Learning (*kokugaku*), for example, to a large extent involved Confucian beliefs.⁵⁸ While substituting a Japanese past for a Chinese past in the archaic theme—commitment of archaism, scholars of National Learning structurally used “the rhetoric of the Confucian ethical discourse.” “They also accepted the notion of a Chinese centrality but replaced China with Japan.”⁵⁹ In his essay *Ancient Japanese Ethics*, Hirata Atsutane, a well-known Japanese National Learning scholar following Motoori Norinaga, tried to establish Japan’s own ethics.⁶⁰ Despite his denial of the influence of

⁵⁶ Ryusaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore De Bary and Donald Keene eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, II, 2.

⁵⁷ Tu Weiming, Milan Hejtmanek and Alan Wachman eds., *The Confucian World Observed: a Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia*, 31.

⁵⁸ See Theodore Hutters, *Bringing the World Home: appropriating the West in late Qing and early Republican China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 89. National Learning is also related to the idea of identifying the nation and preserving *Kokusui* (essence of the nation). China borrowed this term, *Guocui*, to express the same idea.

⁵⁹ Tu Weiming, Milan Hejtmanek and Alan Wachman eds., *The Confucian World Observed: a Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia*, 32.

⁶⁰ *Hirata Atsutane zenshū*, I, 96-97, cited in Ryusaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore De Bary and Donald Keene eds., *Sources*

Confucianism on Japanese social customs, his argument “proved” that the “Five Constant Virtues” (humanness/*ren*, rightness/*yi*, being principled/*li*, wisdom/*zhi*, trustworthiness/*xin*) had existed in Japan since ancient times. According to Hirata, Japanese people already *had* these good qualities; thus it was unnecessary to address them and study them as Chinese people did.⁶¹

Another influential ethic, *bushidô*, permeated feudal Japan and ensured the authority of the ruling court. It is known as a unique Japanese phenomenon, yet it can be understood as an extreme form of Confucian loyalty; thus, it is not essentially distinguishable from Confucianism. Under the spirit of *bushidô*, the retainers (samurai) lived for their masters or for higher rulers such as *shôgun* (general) and *tennô* (emperor). They were ready to give up their lives at any time for the good of their masters or the emperor. According to H. Paul Varley, Wang Yangming’s emphasis on morality as an intuitive capacity of human beings was especially attractive to “samurai whose class background and outlook made them logically receptive to a doctrine of personal independence and direct action.”⁶² First created in 1748, the most famous play *The Treasury of Loyal Retainers* (*Chûshingura*) is a good example of this. The forty-seven samurais in the play were praised as “the immortal forty-seven” by Confucian philosophers.⁶³ It went without saying that their lives belonged to their masters.⁶⁴ Their vendetta for their master at all costs, including death, was declared by Confucian scholars as the perfect embodiment of “the highest ideals of the virtuous man.”⁶⁵

Not surprisingly, the spirit of loyalty similar to that of *bushidô* can be found throughout Chinese history and literary works, especially in texts used for moral education. It is well-known among Chinese people that in pre-modern China people were supposed to give up their lives if their parents or their masters wanted them to do so.⁶⁶ Similarly, one cannot

of Japanese Tradition, II, 42-43.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁶² H. Paul Varley, *Japanese Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984), 140.

⁶³ Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shôroku and Namiki Senryû eds, *Chûshingura (The Treasury of Loyal Retainers): A Puppet Play*, tr., Donald Keene (Columbia University Press, 1971), preface by Donald Keene.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 123: The samurais left their parents, separated from their children, and forced their wives to work as prostitutes, all out of the desire to avenge their master. For them, the virtue of social commitment is above domestic filial piety.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁶ Wm. Theodore De Bary, Wing-Tsit Chan and Chester Tan eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (New York: Columbia

choose to kill oneself or even cut off one's hair to become a monk or nun because the body does not belong to an individual alone, but to a great extent to their parents as well (*shenti fafu shou zhi fumu*). It might seem odd to Westerners that hair is such a big issue in Confucian states. Especially during the period of modernization, cutting off the queue for men was symbolic of revolution and modernity in China.⁶⁷ At the same time, it was seen by the conservatives as betraying one's ancestors.

There is another extreme example in the history of ancient China (BCE): an officer offered his children's flesh to the emperor, for a novel culinary experience, as the highest honour. In his short story "Diary of a Madman," Lu Xun attacked this type of cruel, inhuman behaviour.⁶⁸ The scenario in the short story reveals a kind of Confucian logic: children's lives belong to their parents and the parents can take their lives whenever they want to; compared to domestic relations the relation between an emperor or master and his subject is definitely superior. Confucianism stresses that the emperor is the son of heaven; therefore the emperor ranks above all other beings.

Essential Qualities of Confucianism

The fundamental aspect of Confucianism, emphasized by all derivative educational systems in East Asia, is "the holistic links between self, family, community, and state."⁶⁹ In general, loyalty is the core concept that makes the bonds stable. Loyalty itself is not exclusively a Confucian belief, yet the unity of loyalty to the family and the country is a unique phenomenon. For example, the word 'nation' or 'country' in Chinese and Japanese is called "national family" or "family state" (*kokka* in Japanese, *guojia* in Chinese). Confucianism emphasized the power of the emperor over his subjects, the authority of

University Press, 1964), 156. There is a saying in China: "One has to die if his father wants him to, and the minister has to perish if his ruler wants him to."

⁶⁷ Chinese people's perception of this symbolic meaning of long hair is also dealt in Lu Xun's novelle "The True Story of Ah Q,"

⁶⁸ In "Diary of a Madman" the protagonist exemplifies that the history of eating people started from the Chunqiu era (722 to 479 B.C). The misplaced name and time period are to show the madman's mental problem.

⁶⁹ Tu Weiming, Milan Hejtmanek and Alan Wachman eds., *The Confucian World Observed: a Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia*, 6.

the parents over their children and the authority of the husband over his wife.⁷⁰ “The nation is a family, the government the parents, the people the children.”⁷¹ The unification of the “big family”—the nation—and the “small family” formed an ideological base for social stability in both Japan and China. The big family took precedence; without the existence and protection of the big family small families would not be able to survive. This unification may also explain that nationalism in countries like China and Japan has a special Confucian flavour. The fundamental connection between the individual, the family and the nation in Confucian ideology also intensified the tie between individuals and early modern nation states. When their nations faced danger and difficulty many of the young elite in China and Japan showed very strong patriotism.

The inseparability of morality and politics, as Tu Weiming argues, is underlined especially by Confucian ethics. “Lessons one learns about one’s role and responsibility in the family have ramifications for the broader social and political contexts.”⁷² Tu Weiming explains that Confucius himself saw “taking care of family affairs as itself active participation in politics.” “Family ethics are not merely a private, personal concern,” but rather they “make possible the realization of the public good.” Confucian states are “fond of applying the family metaphor to the community, the country, and the universe.”⁷³ “Endurance, self-control, and the ability to put off [save] for the future are fostered within the family, as is the sense that one must subordinate one’s own preferences for the benefit of the family”;⁷⁴ the same can be said for the state. This unity creates an “iron cage” for the people; they could never escape from the restraints of loyalty and responsibilities. In the

⁷⁰ Pearl Hsia Chen, *The Social Thought of Lu Hsun 1881-1936 A Mirror of the Intellectual Current of Modern China* (New York: Vantage Press, Inc., 1976), 17.

⁷¹ See Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths* (Princeton University Press, 1985), 187. Gluck points out that from the 1870s through the 1890s “the traditional family (*ie*) had both retained its social centrality and also undergone considerable change.” “The family figured in ideology in the form of Confucian renderings of family and society.” “Metaphorical invocation of family was also standard in ideological usage.”

⁷² Tu Weiming, Milan Hejtmanek and Alan Wachman eds., *The Confucian World Observed: a Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia*, 8.

⁷³ Tu Wei-ming, “The Confucian Tradition in Chinese History” in *Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization*, ed., Paul S. Ropp, 117.

⁷⁴ Tu Weiming, Milan Hejtmanek and Alan Wachman eds., *The Confucian World Observed: a Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia*, 8.

Confucian world view filial piety and stern obedience to family and state are the cornerstone of the entire ideology. When the concept of “loyalty” is applied to a family unit, the father holds the power. The conflicted relations between father and son, and the influence a father exerts over his son, as we shall see in my comparative analysis of Tōson and Lu Xun, indicate the tension between obedience to the old influence and spiritual freedom rendered by modernity.

Carol Gluck points out that “all societies...produce ideologies which in turn help to reproduce the social order.”⁷⁵ Loyalty was the foremost element which galvanized imperial societies like China and Japan. Emperors represented Heaven, which was the East Asian counterpart to God. There was no mutual benefit between an emperor and his subjects; he was an absolute authority and his subjects were absolutely bound to their duty of service to him. The Confucian tradition maintains that “duty consciousness is more important than rights consciousness.”⁷⁶ People were supposed to offer their most valuable assets in service to the emperor; thus, intellectuals were duty bound to offer their knowledge to help the emperor rule his empire. This idea was extended to the duty of citizens in the emerging nation states of China and Japan. Before being able to serve society, intellectuals had to accumulate knowledge through education, and cultivate a strong sense of personal morality, then move on to holding official positions. Active involvement in government enabled intellectuals to exert more influence on (i.e., benefit to) society.

Unfortunately, as Ronald Dore points out, the original purpose of education (“a fulfillment of a god-given, family-given, cosmic-given potential”) gradually developed into a means used to generate fame and profit.⁷⁷ Since holding office was far more highly regarded than working in the fields, successful Confucian scholars gravitated to holding official positions and accumulating political power. This tendency has long formed the basis for discrimination against manual labour (*laoxin zhe zhiren, laolizh, zhiyuren*).⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 7.

⁷⁶ Tu Weiming, Milan Hejtmanek and Alan Wachman eds., *The Confucian World Observed: a Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia*, 6.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ For English translation see *Chinese Thoughts* (Hongkong: Union Insurance Society of Canton, Ltd., year of publication unknown): “those who labour with their minds govern others; those who labour with their strength are

Traditionally, training oneself well in order to excel in study and qualify for official positions was considered the most appropriate way to live during pre-modern China and Japan. Manual labourers as the lowest class (together with merchants) in feudal China and Japan were deemed to have no promising future.

Application of Confucianism in Moral Education

Confucian doctrines have long held a predominant position in moral education in China and Japan. Ruling powers in both countries deemed Confucianism a convenient means of cultivating loyal subjects and ensuring the longevity of their regimes. Especially in the last three centuries, moral education based on Confucian teaching was one of the mandatory requirements for intellectuals seeking positions in the imperial court. In China during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) the Wang Yangming school of Confucianism advocated “uniting knowledge and action,” which was understood as applying one’s knowledge in public service. This principle was welcomed by the Ming court; it in turn helped the court to encourage and recruit intellectuals in official positions. The “eight-legged” essay was used in examination for official recruitment in Ming and Qing China. With a rigid format that included matching paragraphs, creating complex rhyme schemes, and writing on narrowly defined topics, the examination system limited creativity as well as differing interpretations of dogma, which allowed the ruling elites to maintain ideological control. The emperors and nobility of the Qing court were Manchu not Han Chinese, but from the beginning of their reign they “consciously and ingeniously transformed Confucian teaching into a political ideology, indeed a mechanism of symbolic control.”⁷⁹ The Qing rulers overemphasized the mainstream Confucian classics in order to firmly establish their authority over the Han Chinese majority.

Japan, according to Tu Weiming, shares the same “Confucian values such as a paternalistic government, with an educational system based on competitive examinations,

governed by others.”

⁷⁹ Ryusaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore De Bary and Donald Keene eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition II*, 135.

and an emphasis on loyalty and cooperation in the family....”⁸⁰ In his book *Japanese Culture*, H. Paul Varley points out that the study of Wang Yangming’s interpretation of Confucianism was especially welcomed by the Tokugawa government. In the final years of the Tokugawa regime, the Confucian thinker Wang Yangming’s (Ô Yô-mei) ideas were applied “as a rationale for political activism.”⁸¹ Varley also notes that there was a similarity between “Wang Yangming’s emphasis on intuition and the spirit (practice) of Zen Buddhism.”⁸²

Moralists of the Meiji era felt comfortable using Confucian ideas to unite the people and ensure their commitment to a new social ideology.⁸³ In a debate in 1890 on whether or not the current moral education was sufficient, the minister of education, Enomoto Takeaki, stated:

I think that the teachings we have relied upon since the founding of the nation will have the easiest access to the hearts of the people. What is called the way of the five moral principles, that is, the teachings of Confucius and Mencius—these are suitable for our moral education.⁸⁴

In fact, from the Meiji Restoration, some major elements of Confucian thought “reached the population at large for the first time.”⁸⁵ The routes for such transmission were through the educational system, military and so on. In the two very important documents issued by the Meiji state—the 1880 Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors and the 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education—Confucian ethical rhetoric figures prominently; loyalty and filial piety to the emperor are highlighted.⁸⁶ The Imperial Rescript on Education, for example, reveals that moral and civic instruction was still based largely on Confucian principles.

⁸⁰ Tu Wei-ming, “The Confucian Tradition in Chinese History” in *Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization*, ed., Paul S. Ropp, 136.

⁸¹ H. Paul Varley, *Japanese Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984), 140.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*, 8.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 119-120.

⁸⁵ Tu Weiming, Milan Hejtmanek and Alan Wachman eds., *The Confucian World Observed: a Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia*, 33.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Our Imperial Ancestors have founded Our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting, and have deeply and firmly implanted virtue; Our Subjects ever united in loyalty and filial piety have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the glory of the fundamental character of Our Empire, and herein also lies the source of Our education. Ye, Our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; ... pursue learning and cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourself courageously to the State;... So shall ye not only be Our good faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers.⁸⁷

Janet A. Walker argues that the words “should emergency arise, offer yourself courageously to the state” were intended to urge “reactivation of a traditional attitude of loyalty.”⁸⁸ “Copies of this rescript were distributed to every school in Japan and hung alongside the Emperor’s portrait, where all made obeisance to them.”⁸⁹ It stressed again and again that all Japanese citizens were subjects of the Emperor and that serving the needs of the nation required personal sacrifice. In addition, people were taught “the virtues of self-sacrifice for long-range gratification and discouraged from seeking immediate gains”,⁹⁰ therefore, people tended to conform willingly to present suffering in the belief of future good—an unforeseen remote future.

The preceding ideas reveal that despite the awareness of and desire for a more advanced Western technology and civilization, traditional Confucian philosophy still held an influential position in Chinese and Japanese society. The proponents of change also believed that certain aspects of their traditional cultures were of fundamental importance to the survival of their identity as a people; thus, Confucian values were never completely negated. The entire social environment ensured a constant influence of Confucian ideology. Because of Confucianism’s deep roots, defeating its influence in the public sphere inevitably meant defeating its influence on a personal level.

⁸⁷ Ryusaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore De Bary and Donald Keene eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, , 139-140.

⁸⁸ Janet A. Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*, 24.

⁸⁹ Ryusaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore De Bary and Donald Keene eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, , 139.

⁹⁰ Tu Weiming, Milan Hejtmanek and Alan Wachman eds., *The Confucian World Observed: a Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia*, 8.

It is surprising that some twenty years after the Meiji Restoration, which marked the beginning of Japan's modernization, traditional Confucian morality was still used to promote ideal subjects of the emperor to reinforce the central administration of the state institutions. This fact clearly suggests an incomplete revolution of the Meiji.⁹¹ Understandably, Meiji writers felt the contradiction between rapid industrialization and social modernization on the one hand and that Confucianism lagged behind on the other. China, by comparison, had to develop a much stronger force to overcome the all-pervasive influences of traditional Confucian ideology, the roots of which went back more than two thousand years. In their search for ways to strengthen their "nation," a group of Chinese intellectuals advanced a compromise between seemingly contradictory ideologies: Chinese learning as the foundation, Western learning for practice (*zhong xue wei ti, xi xue wei yong*). They hoped to adopt Western technologies and science without changing the ideological foundation of their country, a development strategy that later proved to be unsuccessful. Struggling for some ten years after the failure of the 1898 Reform—which tried to copy the path of Meiji Restoration by preserving the emperor and changing only administrative institutions—the last of China's imperial regimes, the Qing, was eventually overthrown. Unlike Japan, China failed to establish a stable government to take over the old one; instead, there were chaotic civil wars among regional warlords scrambling for power. Years of anarchy resulted in Chinese intellectuals' resentment towards the chaotic society, weak nation and the indifference of the mostly uneducated peasants who formed the majority.

Complex Ideological Conflict with Modernity

Western nations, through their military power, opened the doors of China and Japan, demonstrating that Western civilization with its rational thought, empirical science and technology was superior. Intellectuals in both China and Japan realized for the first time that their own civilizations were defeated, and consequently started to reflect upon the disadvantages of their own cultures and the advantages of the West's. The Chinese and

⁹¹ The *Burakumin* issue dealt in Shimazaki Tōson's *The Broken Commandment*, for instance, is a remaining social problem left by the incomplete revolution. Although Meiji Restoration abolished the class system, the biases against classes marked as low by the feudal regime remained in the social ideology.

Japanese people, thus, gradually changed attitude from pure resistance to a desire to strengthen their nations by learning from the West. Not only were more Western publications (mostly translations) available, but more young students were also sent abroad to study Western science, technology and governance. The majority of people in both countries were influenced by Confucian culture and believed that every individual, even a peasant, was responsible for the fate of its “nation family” (*guojia xingwang pifu youze*). When “the big family” was in danger none of the individual small families were exempt from the same threat.

As young Chinese and Japanese intellectuals studied Western culture, they aspired to the modernity embodied in Western civilization. Most of them grew up in an environment full of Confucian influences. Many had studied the Confucian classics from childhood. Western culture endowed people with rights aside from duty, whereas duty was emphasized overwhelmingly by the Confucian ethos. One did not live for one’s self, but rather carried his parents’ expectations and fulfilled his responsibilities to support his family. Above all, as a subject, one also had to do his best to fulfill his social duty and live selflessly; individual needs and feelings were suppressed or eliminated. Living in a changing social order and experiencing modernization—rapid urbanization, industrialization, expansion of trade, commerce, education, contract employment—intellectuals in China and Japan realized that the outmoded concept of loyalty and blind belief in authority no longer fit the new society and lifestyle. Consequently, they developed a strong opposition to traditional Confucian morality.

Democracy vs. Confucianism in Japan

Influential politicians promoted democracy in Japan as means of opposing the Confucian administration. Itagaki Taisuke, “known as the foremost apostle of liberty in the Meiji Period,” made an address on liberty in 1882.⁹² In the address to members of his

⁹² Ryusaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore De Bary and Donald Keene eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition II*, 178: Itagaki is known as “a sort of Japanese Patrick Henry who is remembered especially for his dramatic declaration, just after being stabbed by an assassin, “Itagaki may die, but liberty will never die.” Also see pp.173-174 about Itagaki’s pioneer position in political movements.

Liberal Party, Itagaki emphasized “liberty as a means to achieving greater national unity.” He criticized Confucianism (in addition to Shintoism and Buddhism) as having “mixed politics and ethics.”⁹³ Janet A. Walker points out that Itagaki’s political society recruited a large number of its members during the People’s Rights movement (or Human Rights movement); thus, it testified “to the widespread concern for this issue of human rights in all corners and among all classes of Japan.”⁹⁴ For Itagaki, Confucianism “laid down a single path both for disciplining oneself and for governing the country, and set forth the doctrine that government was like a teacher or father and should instruct the people.”⁹⁵

He learned from political parties in Western nations and understood that his party was “newly organized and immature,” in the newly established modern Japan. He suggested an idea of a mutual control system between the rulers and the people; “public opinion can be made to control their rulers.”⁹⁶ However, despite his conscious attack on Confucianism as a religion intervening in sovereign administration, Itagaki’s main propositions in his “Address on Liberty” strongly reflected Confucian thinking. It emphasized “personal responsibilities and discipline in the promotion of the public interest.”⁹⁷

The progressive nature of Itagaki’s address to the Liberal Party was not truly grasped until much later, in 1918, when “the veteran progressive leader” Ozaki Yukio satirized the blind loyalty of some party members who would “change principles and views in accordance with” their headquarters:

That political faith should be kept not vis-à-vis its leaders or its officers but vis-à-vis its principles and views, is not understood. They foolishly think that the proverb “A faithful servant never serves two masters: a chaste wife never sees two husbands” is equally applicable to the members of a political party.⁹⁸

⁹³ Ryusaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore De Bary and Donald Keene eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition II*, 179.

⁹⁴ Janet A. Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*, 21.

⁹⁵ Ryusaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore De Bary and Donald Keene eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition II*, 179.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 178. His samurai origin is noteworthy (see p.174 of the same book: he was a Tosa samurai). The spirit of samurai is very similar to part of Confucianism, if not derived from it.

⁹⁸ Ryusaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore De Bary and Donald Keene eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition II*, 182-183.

Ôkuma Shigenobu, another successor of Itagaki, ironically concluded that “the Japanese now are all a loyal and patriotic (*chûkun aikoku*) people.”⁹⁹ “Aiming to develop a new type of citizen whose conception of service to the state would not be narrowly political or bureaucratic,” he established Waseda University.¹⁰⁰ “This represented a fundamental departure from the traditional Confucian ideal of the educated man whose success was chiefly to be found in government service.”¹⁰¹ Whereas Tokyo Imperial University “served as a training ground for government officials, Waseda was premised on a belief in educational pluralism, on the value of private institutions neither subject to government control nor conforming to a single pattern.”¹⁰²

Critical Voice within China

Questioning the validity of Confucianism in China became more explicit from the late Qing period. Tan Sitong, a follower of Kang Youwei’s¹⁰³ and a reformist of the 1898 Reform movement in China, criticized Confucian human relationships, especially the later applications by Confucianists (as well as Neo-Confucianists) as clinging “to its superficial form.” He attacked those who misapplied Confucianism in their attempt to control the country by allowing “the ruler supreme, and unlimited powers.”¹⁰⁴ Influenced mostly by the French Revolution, Tan called for equality in Chinese society. In his essay “On the Study of Humanity”, the three bonds (*san gang*) of Confucianism are described as “openly creating a system of inequality.” He asserted that reforms would not succeed unless the five relationships were changed and three bonds were broken in order to introduce new

⁹⁹ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*, 35.

¹⁰⁰ Ryusaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore De Bary and Donald Keene eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition II*, 173. Okuma was also influential in Japanese democracy movement. He had great knowledge of Dutch and English and thus was appointed for government position “handling foreign relations in Nagasaki” first and became “the government’s leading expert” later “in both financial matters and foreign affairs.”

¹⁰¹ Ryusaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore De Bary and Donald Keene eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition II*, 175.

¹⁰² Ibid. Tsubouchi Shōyō was the vice-principal and then the principal of Waseda Junior High School

¹⁰³ A Confucian Scholar in late Qing and Major leader in 1898 Reform. He reinterpreted Confucian classics in an attempt to preserve aspects of the old along with radical social reform.

¹⁰⁴ Wm. Theodore De Bary, Wing-Tsit Chan and Chester Tan eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition II*, 88.

principles and systems.¹⁰⁵

Tan's ideas about reform, however, were regarded by Kang Youwei as a dream that would only be possible in the distant future. Liang Qichao, on the other hand, preferred to change only the surface of Chinese society without changing its foundations. He was undoubtedly an advocate of "Chinese learning as the foundation, Western learning for practice." In his article "A People Made New," he likened the combination of Chinese tradition and Western ideas to a tree: the Chinese society is the tree and needs new buds which would be Western culture; "unless there is always some new spring bubbling, its exhaustion is not far away."¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately, the 1898 Reform applied a similar principle and proved unsuccessful. Liang and his allies did not realize that if a tree starts rotting from the roots, it will die sooner or later, even if new sprouts appear. Despite its failure, the 1898 "Hundred Days of Reform" was a meaningful attempt at change that significantly influenced later revolutionaries.

In 1912, following the collapse of the Qing in late 1911, Sun Yat-sen, the "father of the nation" (*guofu*), established the Republic of China. Sun Yat-sen's view of the success of the Meiji Restoration was based on his belief that the Japanese had chosen to abandon Wang Yangming's theory and had turned to the ways of the West.¹⁰⁷ Yet, he did not observe the full picture; later, there was a return to Confucian loyalty promoted by the Meiji government. The Republican government proved too weak and ineffectual to maintain centralized power, which quickly led to the rise of regional warlords battling one another for power throughout China.

It is understandable that China had to take a path different from that of Japan. China's traditional roots were very strong, having thrived for thousands of years. The book *The Modernization of China* points out that the high "unity of the intellectual world inhabited by the Chinese elite" limited "the debate between different schools of Confucianism rather than between Confucianism and any outside force."¹⁰⁸ Japan, on the other hand, had long been a

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 89. Three bonds: the ruled to the ruler, the son to the father, the wife to the husband.

¹⁰⁶ Ryusaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore De Bary and Donald Keene eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition II*, 94.

¹⁰⁷ Wm. Theodore De Bary, Wing-Tsit Chan and Chester Tan eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition II*, 121.

¹⁰⁸ Gilbert Kozman, ed., *The Modernization of China*, 202.

highly syncretic society, borrowing from the outside and adapting things both material and spiritual to serve Japanese needs.¹⁰⁹ Confucianism is a prime example of that borrowing. This is one of the important reasons why the Meiji Restoration succeeded in Japan where a similar approach failed in China.¹¹⁰ The combination of the imperial court and parliament could not apply in China. In order to accept a new sociocultural order which was utterly foreign, China had first to uproot traditional social ideology. Milena Doleželová-Velingerová and David Der-wei Wang state that “modernity cannot assert its legitimacy without first renegotiating history.” Elites in this period “affirm their positions as *the* moderns by rewriting their literary tradition.”¹¹¹

The New Culture movement emerged in response to this need. Beyond the topic of literary reform the leaders of the New Culture movement advocated democracy and human rights. In his essay “The True Meaning of Life,” Chen Duxiu questioned the Confucian ideal of selflessness for the good of others and the universe. He argued that “If we are totally to sacrifice ourselves to benefit others, then we exist for others and not for ourselves. This is definitely not the fundamental reason for man’s existence.” From Chen’s point of view, the meaning of life “seen by the modern man” should acknowledge human desires; therefore, the meaning of life is to first create and enjoy individual happiness.¹¹² Chen Duxiu studied in the United States and was influenced strongly by American democracy. As a proponent of “science” and “democracy” in China, he saw the obscurantism and authoritarianism of Confucian philosophy as harmful in the modern era.¹¹³

Literary Realms of Japan and China

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ The 1898 Reform was inspired by the Meiji Restoration. Similar to the Meiji Restoration, the 1898 Reform aimed at maintaining the regime by only changing the institution and administration.

¹¹¹ Introduction by Milena Doleželová-Velingerová and David Der-wei Wang in *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China’s May Fourth Project*, 10.

¹¹² Wm. Theodore De Bary, Wing-Tsit Chan and Chester Tan eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition II*, 168.

¹¹³ In a similar fashion as Waseda University in Japan, Peking University in China during the New Culture Movement functioned as a base for a group of young elites, such as Chen Duxiu, Lu Xun and Hu Shi, as well as their journal *New Youth*. Many Western ideas were discussed, debated and propagated during this period via the platform of Peking University and through the journal.

Literature in imperial China and Japan had been considered a medium to propagate the ideal of unfailing loyalty to the central power (the rulers). In China, literary works were supposed to carry the “way” (*wen yi zai dao*). There was only one right way existing in nature which was endowed by heaven and represented by the emperor, the Son of Heaven. Feudal regimes used this Confucian belief conveniently for their own purposes. They tried to control ideologies and indoctrinate the people with the idea that to obey the court was the only appropriate way of living. Literary works functioned as sources of moral education intended to promote self-cultivation in order for people to become ideal subjects.

Beginning in the Tokugawa era, Japan’s feudal rulers continued to use a similar concept to cultivate loyalty of the people to authorities through the moral education imbued with Confucian philosophy; Confucian ethical discourse, in fact, “came to have broader currency” during this period.¹¹⁴ Cultural and literary interactions made the spread and predominance of similar thoughts possible. In his book *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China*, Theodore Hutters points out that the Chinese term for literature, *wenxue*, was borrowed from *bungaku*, Japan’s translation of “literature.” When Mori Arinori, Japanese Minister of Education was posted in the States, he wrote letters to American educators to consult about ways of strengthening Japan through education.¹¹⁵ The term *bungaku* in Mori’s writing, sent home to Japan, functioned equivalently as “education.” There was no ready translation for “education” in China and Japan; *wenxue* seemed to translators the closest in meaning. Before *wenxue* or *bungaku* was actually used as literature separated from the political realm, it reflected “the Confucian sense of education as a personal process of self-cultivation that had profound social and statecraft implications.”¹¹⁶

The traditional meaning of ‘*wenxue*’ was “one of the four categories of learning,

¹¹⁴ Tu Weiming, Milan Hejtmanek and Alan Wachman eds., *The Confucian World Observed: a Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia*, 32. Samuel Yamashita points out that: “in a number of peasant protests that occurred later in the Tokugawa period one find peasants appealing in the name of Confucian virtues to their local lords in arguing for redress within the terms of the Confucian ethical discourse.”

¹¹⁵ Theodore Hutters, *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China*, 77

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 78.

according to Confucius (culture and learning).”¹¹⁷ Hutters illustrates that *wen yi zai dao* (writing should convey the way) first advanced by Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073) and later adopted by Zhu Xi “become the key neo-Confucian guide” of Ming and Qing writing. This guidance stressed the authority of an earlier conception of literature, which was “thought to embody the right combination of moral rectitude and practical direction that constituted the *dao*.”¹¹⁸ This statement echoes the goal of learning: to convince intellectuals to follow a certain path set by the central power; if the same *dao* can be carried out by all intellectuals and officials of a country, the stability of the regime will be ensured. Tu Weiming reminds us of the fact that the Qing court transformed Confucian moral philosophy into a political ideology in order to strengthen their imperial prerogatives in the Confucian world.¹¹⁹

It is also noteworthy that *wen* or *wenxue* was limited specifically to educated men for further advancement at the imperial court. Ordinary people were not expected or encouraged to be involved in learning. In pre-modern China and Japan there was no real public education; the literati obtained their education mainly through rote learning of Confucian classics, whether by self-education or by being pupils of famous scholars. Keeping this in mind, it becomes clear why classical texts excluded low class people, whereas fiction (often in the form of storytelling) was seen as an entertainment and enjoyed by majority of low classes such as peasants and merchants.

The term *shōsetsu* (fiction or novel in Japanese) is another example of interactions in literature between late imperial China and Japan. In her book *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity*, Tomi Suzuki reveals that Chinese Ming and Qing fiction had influenced Japanese fiction a great deal. The term “*shōsetsu*” came to Japan after the late 17th century along with Japanese Confucian scholars’ studying Ming period Chinese phonology and linguistics, as well as Ming vernacular fiction (*xiao shuo*). Until the 1880s, “*shōsetsu* primarily referred to Ming and Qing Chinese vernacular *xiao shuo*” or “popular

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 77

¹¹⁸ Theodore Hutters, *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China*, 96.

¹¹⁹ Tu Weiming, “The Confucian Tradition in Chinese History”, in *Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization*, 135. Tu suggests that Qing court is ruled by a conquest (Manchu). The emperors emphasized Confucian studies as a means of creating an authoritative image and rule the massive *han* people.

Japanese historical narratives” which were mostly adaptations and imitations of Ming and Qing vernacular fiction.¹²⁰

Imperial China and Japan held similar attitudes toward fiction: it was considered unofficial and unorthodox. Yet its function as the carrier of moral lessons was generally acknowledged, as it was seen to be “a more effective vehicle for popularizing and transmitting Confucian moral values than the ‘official histories’ themselves.”¹²¹ We are not sure whether this claim was enunciated as a means of avoiding the ban by the government, but apparently keeping within the bounds of stated orthodoxy helped to protect writers from political persecution. The promotion of orthodox moral values was strongly emphasized by both governments, and only approved literary works were encouraged and allowed to be published. For instance, the Qing regime used literary inquisitions in order to maintain the “mechanism of symbolic control” of the central power.¹²² Understandably, writers could not directly and freely express themselves. Moreover, they had to suppress ideas in favor of strict formats of classical writings such as poetry and archaic prose (*guwen*), which hindered writers from conveying their thoughts and feelings.

Recognition of the “Self”

Exposed to the influence of Western culture, elites from both China and Japan also started to contemplate their own literary worlds. Japanese literati from late 19th century to early twentieth century, and early twentieth century Chinese literati held negative attitudes towards Confucian dogma. For instance, what was criticized the most by the Chinese May Fourth intellectuals was the three bonds: father-son, husband-wife, and ruler-ruled.¹²³ Janet Walker also reveals the spiritual conflict of Meiji writers in Japan, even though she does not acknowledge that the essence of the samurai ethic was derived from Confucian morality.

¹²⁰ Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity*, 16.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹²² Tu Weiming, “The Confucian Tradition in Chinese History” in *Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization*, 135.

¹²³ Tu Weiming, Milan Hejtmanek and Alan Wachman eds., *The Confucian World Observed: a Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia*, 7.

“The continued dominance during the Meiji period of a morality derived from Tokugawa samurai ethic—a morality that stressed loyalty and obedience, and made service to the country an important priority—weighed heavily on a person whose education in Western-style higher schools had encouraged the development of independent thought and self-reliance.”¹²⁴

Alongside the emergence of modern lifestyle, social relations also changed. In the traditional Confucian system everyone was bound by the five relations; everyone belonged to everyone else.¹²⁵ The lower one's class, the more passive one was expected to be. In contrast, in the modern society individuals had or felt they should have a certain degree of freedom; they had rights as well as duties. An emerging awareness of an independent “self” began to appear. A new type of relationship, for example, was established between “employers” and “employees.” Employees had a certain freedom to decide their occupations and employers had the freedom to hire and fire employees at will. This relationship did not exist previously in these two imperial regimes. Many writers started to work as wage earners teaching at schools or writing for magazines, whereas their fathers' generation still held hereditary posts. The emergence of the individual sense of “self” was an event of historical significance because, among other things, it triggered an increasingly intense criticism of traditional culture.

Yet the resistance might be more complex than intellectuals were aware. In spite of ignorance and sometimes conscious disavowal, Confucian traditions existed on many levels (reasoning, attitudes, beliefs and commitments) of their lives.¹²⁶ At the deep level of Confucian belief the very idea of modernization was antithetical. For young intellectuals like Lu Xun, the more deeply they were imbued with “old thought”, the more intensely they strove to break free of its constraints. Lu Xun explicitly refers to the affliction of not being

¹²⁴ Janet A. Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*, 27-28.

¹²⁵ Wives belong to their husbands, children belong to their parents, older brothers over younger, retainers belonged to their masters, and all subjects belonged to the emperor.

¹²⁶ Tu Wei-ming, “The Confucian Tradition in Chinese History” in *Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization*, 136. Tu Weiming argues in *The Confucian World Observed: a Contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia* (102-103), for example, that before the outward attack on Confucianism during the May Fourth period, “there was no need to term one's self an adherent of Confucianism,” because everyone would have been “assumed that you were one.”

able to shake off the influence of the old thinking taught in classics.¹²⁷ Perhaps, without the internal force of resistance needed by Chinese intellectuals to break free of the old social order, their total rejection of Confucian culture might not have been so extreme. However, this same force of anti-Confucianism became a key feature of the May Fourth period.¹²⁸ Not surprisingly, the works of many writers during the late 19th and early twentieth centuries expressed feelings of alienation and anxiety, reflecting the writer's need to find a suitable context and orientation in which to situate the "new self." "Questions of what to write and how to express one's insights quickly came to occupy a key position in the intellectual life of the time."¹²⁹

One of the early genres promoting individual rights was political fiction (*seiji shōsetsu*), which appeared in Japan during the People's Rights movement. Tomi Suzuki explains that "the advocates of this movement, who were educated in the Chinese tradition and later in Western languages," attempted to use fiction as a vehicle for popularizing "their political ideals of equality, universal suffrage, and representational governments." The activists attacked "evil customs" as "a product of traditional society"; which was imbued with Confucian moral doctrines, such as filiality and obedience.¹³⁰ Unfortunately, literature was once again put to the service of politics. This political fiction, as Tomi Suzuki points out, followed the stereotypical "*cai zi jia ren*" / "*saishi kajin*" (young talented hero and beautiful young maiden) stories from Ming and Qing fiction.¹³¹

Reexamining the status and function of fiction in China and Japan, new genres emerged to meet the demands of the new historical moment. The book *The Essence of the Novel* (*Shōsetsu Shinzui*) by Shōyō Tsubouchi (1859-1935),¹³² published in 1885, attempted to

¹²⁷ This topic will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

¹²⁸ Milena Doleželová-Velingerová and David Der-wei Wang, "Introduction" to *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China's May Fourth Project*, 9: Leo Ou-fan Lee argues that in hindsight it was only "incomplete modernity" during the May Fourth era; the modern project was motivated by "a desire to seize hegemonic power in the field of culture," "a battle for 'positions'."

¹²⁹ Theodore Hutners, *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China*, 76.

¹³⁰ Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity*, 18.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Shōyō Tsubouchi: a Japanese literary critic, translator of Western literature and novelist, who made great contribution to modern Japanese theatre and drama. Shimei Futabatei was influenced by him. *The Essence of the Novel* presented

establish fiction as a recognized art form, and separated it from tools for the promotion of morality and political privilege. In his book Tsubouchi first “placed all existing Japanese prose fiction within the category of *shōsetsu*” which he saw as resembling the Western novel. For Tsubouchi and many of his contemporaries the Western novel was the most advanced literary form. Tsubouchi argued that “*shōsetsu* must not be a slave of didacticism, whether it be the traditional Confucian morality” or “the new political ideals of the *seiji shōsetsu*.”¹³³

There were many literary works (novels and plays) which expressed the conflicts between *giri* and *ninjō* (duties and feelings) in Japan. Tsubouchi and his student and friend Shimei Futabatei (1864-1909) held that Western novels revealed true human feelings (*ninjō*) which exist among human beings as universal truths (*shinri*).¹³⁴ The works of the two important writers and critics clearly show the considerable influence of Western literature. After contemplating the differences in literature between their native tradition and Western literary works, young intellectuals like Tsubouchi and Futabatei concluded that the depiction of individual feelings and true thoughts were lost in literary works amidst the didacticism of Confucian morals. Another significance of *The Essence of the Novel* is that the author calls for the application of a colloquial style which brings out the best in each other with fiction. The merits of colloquial language in fiction are described as using “the everyday language” and naturally possessing “those qualities of simplicity and lucidity so essential to good writing, in addition to being extremely vigorous and passionate.”¹³⁵

Similar voices were also heard in China. By the end of the 19th century, Japan’s influence on China became more obvious. Western ideas and technologies often came to China via Japan. Because of its swift rise, Japan was considered by Chinese intellectuals as a successful model from which to learn. Liang Qichao, one of the reformers of the “Hundred Days of Reform” in 1898, adopting Tsubouchi’s advocacy of political fiction

the first systematic theory of fiction in Japan.

¹³³ Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity*, 20.

¹³⁴ This “truth” may also be seen as something similar to the Confucian *dao* (the “way”), which was believed existing in the universe. To Futabatei, the truth is to be revealed by realist writers.

¹³⁵ Tsubouchi, Shōyō, *The Essence of the Novel*, tr. Nanette Twine (University of Queensland, 1981), 55.

(*seiji shōsetsu*) in Japan, wrote “On the Relationship Between Fiction and the Government of the People” (*xiao-shuo yu qunzhi zhi guanxi*) during his stay in Japan after the failure of the Reform. He endowed fiction with an extremely potent function: “If one wants to renew a nation’s people, one must first renew that nation’s fiction.”¹³⁶ Nonetheless, he did not attach any importance to individual feelings. The recognition of “self” was absent. It was very likely that under the crisis of national survival, any personal desire would be ignored or discouraged. Because of this tendency, perhaps, the May Fourth writers’ resistance had to erupt even more forcefully later.

Although the dream of using fiction to save his nation did not succeed, Liang brought new insights into prose style. In opposition to the conventional moral, philosophical and mechanical writing, he called for “an equally (if not more) didactic writing, but without the built-in limits mandated by the need to appeal to precedent.”¹³⁷ Towards the end of his life, Liang commented on his own writing style: “Liang never liked the ancient-style writing.” He “would often interlard his writing with colloquialisms, rhymes, and foreign expressions, letting his pen flow freely and without restraint,” and “with a special charm over the readers.”¹³⁸ Hu Shi and other scholars noted that almost all contemporary scholars were influenced by Liang’s new style.¹³⁹

The Rise of Vernacular Language: *Genbun-itchi* and *Baihua Yundong*

Along with the awareness of and desire for the new fiction inspired by a consciousness of the self, a direct linguistic vehicle was required to express the feelings and thoughts of the self. Literary reforms like *Genbun-itchi* in Japan and the *Baihua yundong* in China—aiming at modernizing the written language—provided the socio-historical soil for the growth of new forms; yet, it was an inner necessity that drove writers to apply the new language. It is understandable that in countries predominated by Confucianism, like China

¹³⁶ Quoted in Theodore Hutters, *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in late Qing and Early Republican China*, 112.

¹³⁷ Theodore Hutters, *Bringing the World Home: appropriating the West in late Qing and early Republican China*, 96.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 93-94.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

and Japan, reforms of literature coincided with the growing awareness of countries as nation states. The Confucian elite culture's emphasis on social commitment determined that young literati from China and Japan were often involved in political movements. But I am not interested in politics, *per se*; rather, I am much more interested in how writers chose particular styles of vernacular language to express their resistance to traditionalism, and how those choices are reflected in their literary works. What is it they had to say? Why did they have to say it in a colloquial written language? Why was Western fiction adopted as a model?

Genbun-itchi and *Baihua yundong* first appeared out of national concern. Defeated by the Western powers, the Chinese and Japanese believed that Western civilization was more advanced;¹⁴⁰ accordingly, Western learning prevailed. Intellectuals in China and Japan called for a national language—a more flexible language to spread information and concepts swiftly. This new language also needed to be easier for the less educated majority to understand so that they could be enlightened and the country strengthened. For example, one significance of Mori's letters of inquiry and the responses they elicited from American editors, which influenced the education of Japan deeply, is that he expressed a strong concern about the language. He saw that "Japanese was too weak a language for a modern country and that it should be abandoned in favor of English." The Japanese language, at the time, seemed to him not to match "modern civilization," as Japanese was too dependent on Chinese characters, and lacked universal "commercial power."¹⁴¹

Genbun-itchi was proposed twice to the Japanese government by Maejima Hisoka and Kanda Kohei successively,¹⁴² as a necessary means to enlighten the majority of people and

¹⁴⁰ See Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity*, 21. Tsubouchi held that Western fiction represents a higher stage of human minds and human feelings; and people in more advanced and civilized countries held more complex and refined feelings. Of course, these complex and refined human feelings could only be presented by the "true *shōsetsu*" with "a more suitable new written style." There was also a voice among Chinese elites calling for "whole westernization," as they saw all Western things as more advanced than their native ones.

¹⁴¹ Marleigh Grayer Ryan, trans., *Japan's First Modern Novel: Ukigumo* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 65.

¹⁴² Kōjin Karatani, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, Brett de Bary trans. and ed. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 45-46: This petition was submitted to the Tokugawa government and was eventually ignored; yet, in the second decade of Meiji, the concept of establishing a modern nation was getting underway.

establish a modern nation. Writers started to apply a colloquial writing style three decades after the Meiji Restoration. Tsubouchi Shōyō encouraged colloquial literary language in his *The Essence of Novel*. He believed that “the writing styles used at the time were too conventional and archaic to allow the new *shōsetsu* to depict contemporary life and society vividly”; therefore, a new *impartial and objective spoken* literary language was urgently required.¹⁴³ Futabatei Shimei is considered the first to experiment with the new written language in his novel *Drifting Clouds (Ukigumo)*. He emphasized “the notions of national independence and individual independence— notions thought to be two complementary sides of the same modern ideal.” However, Futabatei’s concern for social-political conditions still reflected a Confucian concern for society.¹⁴⁴ In fact, the aspiration for an immediate and transparent written language was inextricably related to the ideology of *genbun-itchi*.¹⁴⁵ It was naturalist writers, such as Shimazaki Tōson, Kunikida Doppo, Tayama Katai and so on, who sought to discover “reality” and the “real self” by “gradually breaking away from the traditional rhetorical fabric and by creating a language containing what they believed to be the essential characteristics of the Western language they admired as the source of truth and power.”¹⁴⁶

In his book *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, Kōjin Karatani demonstrated that a new colloquial written language was established along with the process of discovering the modern self and interiority of the writers. It seems that the chief difference between the classic and vernacular literary language was the verb ending, which indicates class difference. According to Kōjin Karatani, however, *genbun itchi* was not purely a question of suffixes—the preference of colloquial suffixes to the honorific ones (*keigo*). Instead, it was a new ideology of writing—whether or not it is “realistic.”¹⁴⁷ If we comprehend the essence of *genbun-itchi* as a unification of form and content—unification of thoughts and feelings and words, then a genuine vernacular fiction should not only involve a colloquial verb

¹⁴³ Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity*, 31.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁴⁷ Kōjin Karatani, *Origins of Modern Japanese literature* Brett de Bary trans. and ed., 47-50.

ending, but also direct expressions of real feelings and thoughts.¹⁴⁸ It was the inner need which urged the application of a “spontaneous” and “living language” that “directly transmits one’s thoughts and feelings.”¹⁴⁹ In addition, Tomi Suzuki points out that the *Genbun-itchi* movement “was not simply an attempt to turn the spoken language into a written form; it was a conceptual transformation of the written language.” A mature vernacular written language did not exist in Japan when Futababei composed the novel *Ukigumo*.¹⁵⁰

Unlike *Genbun-itchi*, *Baihua yundong* in China was first advanced by reformers (Huang Zunxian and Qiu Tingliang) instead of government officers. They saw the necessity of using a living national language. The *Baihua yundong* is often mistaken as paralleling the political movement of May Fourth; in fact, writing in a vernacular living language as part of the advocacy of literary reform started as early as the late Qing period. China’s vernacular writing is related to the abandonment of the form of “eight-legged” essays.¹⁵¹ Writers were hindered from freely expressing their ideas and feelings. According to Milena Doleželová-Velingerová, classical writings such as poetry and the eight-legged essay in Ming and Qing, “had been assigned the highest positions because they were the only conveyors of the doctrines and moral principles of the Confucian sages.”¹⁵²

Late Qing authors had practiced writing the vernacular and paved the way for the May Fourth writers. As Milena Doleželová-Velingerová argues, the late Qing period was important to “the evolutionary motivation force in Chinese vernacular fiction,” for that period, and “should be seen as the culmination of the long and complex interaction between

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. Karatani asserts that although Mori Ôgai’s *The Dancing Girl* is written in the classic language with the classic suffix form, it is still more “vernacular” than *Ukigumo*, for that it is realistic. I would add that the former writes about common people, the latter is still a story of an ex-samurai, just as Ôgai’s hero, which would have been considered a stereotyped work in the feudal time.

¹⁴⁹ Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity*, 43.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 44.

¹⁵¹ Imperial examination system. Candidates are requested to express their ideas only in this type of form. The written language used was called *wenyan* (literally, “literary language”) which required strict adherence to traditional formats with the use of certain particles and auxiliary words.

¹⁵² Milena Doleželová-Velingerová, “The Origins of Modern Chinese Literature” in *Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era* ed., Merle Goldman, 25.

*Wenyan*¹⁵³ and *Baihua* fiction.”¹⁵⁴ In her article “The Origin of Modern Chinese Literature,” Doleželová-Velingerová points out that the rise of *baihua* in China was to some extent inspired by the West and Japan, the latter being seen as equivalent to the West at that time. She states that the sudden revolutionary change in the hierarchy of literary genres is “a perfect parallel to the social struggle going on in the country at the same time.”¹⁵⁵ Fiction did not become a major literary genre until late Qing and it was still considered mainly entertainment. Encouraged by Liang Qichao and Hu Shi, it was the May Fourth writers who endowed fiction with a forceful voice using living language.

When Hu Shi, who launched the literary revolution of China in 1917, advocated a new written language for China, he advanced the policy of “*ba bu zhu yi*” (“the eight don’ts”) of the traditional writing style. Among the eight points in his “A Preliminary Discussion of Literary Reform, he exhorted “do not imitate the ancients, ” “eliminate old clichés,” “speak only when you have something to say, say it in the way you want to say it, and speak in the language of the time in which you live.” He explained that the functions of language and literature lay in expressing ideas and showing feelings. The classical language is rhetorical, without substance, and incapable of producing a living literature. “If China wants to have a living literature, we must use the plain speech that is the natural speech.”¹⁵⁶

Opposition to Confucianism had been building, and it finally erupted quite powerfully. Intellectuals in both countries experienced a period of extremism. In Maejima’s proposal, he appealed for the abandonment of *kanji* (Chinese characters) and the exclusive use of the native phonetic syllabary (*kana*) for that would give “priority to the spoken language.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ The Literary language mentioned in the Chinese literary world, usually in contrast to vernacular, should be more accurately understood as the orthodox written language rather than a general term indicating the language applied in all literature.

¹⁵⁴ Henry Y.H. Zhao, *The Uneasy Narrator: Chinese Fiction from the Traditional to the Modern* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 244.

¹⁵⁵ Milena Doleželová-Velingerová, “The Origins of Modern Chinese Literature” in *Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era* ed., Merle Goldman, 25.

¹⁵⁶ Theodore De Bary, Wing-Tsit Chan and Chester Tan eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition II*, 158-163.

¹⁵⁷ Kôjin Karatani, *Origins of Modern Japanese literature*, Brett de Bary trans. and ed., 46-47. I would further argue that it is possible that after the defeat of China during the Opium War I, the Japanese realized that the Chinese civilization was falling behind and intended to separate themselves from that heritage. See also Marius B Jansen’s *China in the*

Lu Xun's advice to aspiring young writers was 'Do not read Chinese books.' Qian Xuantong, a torchbearer for Lu Xun, also called for "putting away all Chinese books," because most of them were written "to propagate Confucian doctrines and Taoist nonsense... None of them is useful to the new era of the twentieth century." He further concluded that "Chinese characters could now be done away with since there was no more use for Chinese written texts."¹⁵⁸

The deeply rooted hold of Confucianism served as a counterforce: the more eager the intellectuals were to strengthen their country in order to match the West, the stronger their voices were in calling for the elimination of traditional Confucian didacticism, which they believed was responsible for the defeat of their countries in their confrontation with the West. This complexity of mixed internal forces troubled writers in both Japan and China. The inner struggles, therefore, spurred young writers like Shimazaki Tôson and Lu Xun to seek new literary forms and a new language to best express themselves. They chose vernacular fiction to fulfill this mission.

Tokugawa world (p.109) even though this appeal appears during the Meiji period.

¹⁵⁸ Henry Y.H. Zhao, *The Uneasy Narrator: Chinese Fiction from the Traditional to the Modern*, 246.

Chapter Two Shimazaki Tôson and *The Broken Commandment*

In this chapter I will analyze the novel *The Broken Commandment* to demonstrate that the inner need for liberation was the catalyst for creating a more direct and free literary language. Liberation was closely related to the desire to shake off the spiritual burdens exerted by Confucian notions of morality.

When the Japanese writer Shimazaki Tôson reflected on his life, he wrote:

I grew up in an unfortunate era during which all I knew was to fight against the old morality, yet could not see the light of a new ethics. I did not see any real love among the people around me, and the awful voices of abstract moral didacticism surrounded me. My fellow students constantly fought against it. The experiences of struggling during this period of my sentimental youth exerted a profound influence in my life.¹⁵⁹

Tôson lived in the transitional society that followed the watershed event of the Meiji Restoration. The new leaders of Japanese society were still in the process of choosing which aspects of the old system should be retained for social cohesion and which aspects should be discarded so that Japan could establish itself as a modern, industrialized nation state. However, changes in social ideology did not keep pace with other aspects of development such as industrialization and militarization. The “old morality” (*furui dôtoku*) Tôson had been fighting against was deeply embedded, and while Confucianism was never specifically mentioned, the moral lessons families taught their children were essentially Confucian.¹⁶⁰

Tôson’s growing sense of resistance was largely a response to the rigid constraints of Confucian morality. The validity of ideas that had been pressed upon him in his youth began to crumble when challenged by the idea of modernization introduced by the Western powers. Caught between these two radically different ideologies it is not surprising that

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in Shizuka Yamamuro, *Shimazaki Tôson* (Tokyo: Fujimori Shoten, 1977), 144. All English translations are my own, unless otherwise cited.

¹⁶⁰ Masanobu Sasaki, *Shimazaki Tôson: haru zengo* (Tokyo: Shinbisha, 1997), 24. Sasaki argues that the “commandment” in Tôson’s novel reflects not only the minority status of the *Burakumin*, but also reflects the old moral notion of the father’s authority. It is based on a lesson on familial responsibilities and worldly success that millions of Japanese families have delivered to their children (“...tan ni burakumin ni tokuyûna ‘imashime’ dewanai. Nihon no ikuhyakuman no katei no naka de, kurikaeshi kurikaeshi ko ni katararete kita ‘imashime’ no genkei deatta ni chigai ga nai”).

Tôson experienced a high degree of internal conflict. On one hand he was attracted to the ideas of modernity, which promised him spiritual freedom; on the other hand, traditional thinking forced him to question his desire to break free. Having witnessed the tragic death of his own father, Tôson's longing for a different life was understandable. However, he could not easily eliminate the influences of traditional conventions. The growing tension between tradition and modernity intensified his need for spiritual resolution. When it came to expressing this world of internal struggle Tôson chose vernacular language as the most direct vehicle for articulating his experience.

Shimazaki Tôson first established his reputation as a romantic poet in his early twenties by creating a fresh, new style of poetry (*shintaiishi*), but it was his pioneering work as a Naturalist novelist that is considered to be his highest literary achievement. While Japanese Naturalism, as Donald Keene and other critics argue, was influenced by European Naturalism, the two forms are quite distinct: European Naturalism "arose largely as a reaction to the *excessive emphasis on the individual* in Romantic literature; Japanese Naturalist writing was '*the search for the individual*'."¹⁶¹ Tôson and many other Naturalist writers later turned to the autobiographical novel (I-novel), but his first novel *The Broken Commandment* (*Hakai*) is not yet defined as a genuine I-novel. The novel was inspired by a real story, and before starting to write, Tôson spent a great deal of time visiting sites several times to collect materials. Insisting that his work was "fictional," Tôson claimed that there was no direct model for his protagonist.¹⁶² Moreover, he was not content with the development of the autobiographical novel in Japanese literature following the publication of *The Broken Commandment*.¹⁶³ My thesis studies *The Broken Commandment* as a non-autobiographical novel, yet one with autobiographical elements that express the author's personal inner struggle.

Ambitious Youth

¹⁶¹ Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1984), 221.

¹⁶² Takeshi Tamiya, *Bungaku ni miru sabetsu hyôgen ron* (Tokyo: Meiseki shoten, 1984), 76.

¹⁶³ Hajime Shinoda, "Bungaku nyûmon: Shimazaki Tôson" in *Nihon Bugaku Zenshu 3: Shimazaki Tôson* (Tokyo: Kawadeshobôshinsha, 1974), 404.

A glance at Shimazaki Tôson's life and literary career prior to his writing the novel may help to understand the changes in ideology and spiritual struggle represented in the work. According to Janet Walker's introduction to Shimazaki Tôson in her book *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*, Tôson was born in the poor mountain village of Magome, where his father held an inheritable post as village head prior to the Meiji Restoration.¹⁶⁴ Although Tôson's family was not of samurai origins it enjoyed a certain prosperity in the Nagano mountain area, and therefore the Shimazaki clan considered themselves as comparable to the samurai class (culturally superior) in terms of culture and prestige.

Tôson's father was a self-educated scholar of the Confucian classics,¹⁶⁵ who believed that public service and social duty were ideals to be upheld by samurai. Unfortunately, in the social upheaval that accompanied the Meiji Restoration, his father lost his rank and his family lost its privileged status. Tôson's father could not accept the transition and wrote memorials to the emperor to protest the policies of the new government. His protest did not bring him the desired result; instead, he was arrested for offending the emperor. He was released soon afterwards because his "crime" was regarded as minor, but he had lost his hope for Japanese society, and that same year he died insane.

Tôson's father opened a school in the village of Magome and taught Confucian classics to the village children and his own sons, including Tôson. What Tôson wrote about his father in *Osanaki hi* (My Childhood Days) reveals that in the young Tôson's eyes, his father "was a stern and unapproachable figure." "He tried to avoid contact with him as much as he could, only coming before him to recite from memory passages from the Confucian classics."¹⁶⁶ Since the family's quality of life remained pretty much the same until Tôson was nine years old, he did not really understand the extent of his father's misfortunes until he was in his forties. His last lengthy novel, *Before the Dawn* (*Yoakemai*), is generally

¹⁶⁴ Janet A. Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*, 125: "Magome was located in one of the poorest and most isolated areas of Japan..."

¹⁶⁵ Walker in her book *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism* does not specify which school Tôson's father belonged to. It might be helpful to refer to the father character portrayed in Tôson's lengthy novel *Before the Dawn*, who is fond of the National Learning of the Hirata School.

¹⁶⁶ Janet A. Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*, 126.

considered a respectful and thoughtful reflection on the time of Tôson's father and grandfather. In *The Broken Commandment (Hakai)*, however, the depiction of the father figure reminds us of the intellectual rigidity of Tôson's father in real life.

As Tôson himself admitted, "I am an ambitious young man" (*yashinbukai shônen*). Tôson, like so many of his contemporaries, nurtured strong political ambitions during his youth.¹⁶⁷ While Tôson's repeated indoctrination to the Confucian principles of the "Three Bonds and Five Classics" might have seemed somewhat dogmatic,¹⁶⁸ the classical texts he was made to study inevitably exerted influence on him both in familial relationships and political advancement. According to Ryôichi Seki, between the ages of fourteen and seventeen, Tôson viewed politics, literature and the establishment of an independent self as elements of integrity. For Tôson, literature was a means to establish himself in politics.¹⁶⁹ However, his door to a political career was shut after a number of failed entrance examinations (twice for the high school that prepared students for University of Tokyo, and once for the University of Tokyo). As Walker suggests, these failures also "effectively destroyed the image Tôson had of himself."¹⁷⁰ Being depressed, Tôson immersed himself in the world of literature, both Japanese and Western. He did poorly in his school work and graduated in second to last place in his class. Seki Ryôichi argues that as Tôson's dreams—to become a politician or an intellectual leader—were broken one after another, he decided to shift direction to pursue "literary success."¹⁷¹

Tôson entered Meiji Gakuin in Tokyo around the age of fifteen, and in that same year, 1888, he was baptized by an influential Japanese Christian by the name of Yûji Kimura. The college was founded by American and Scottish Presbyterians and was known for Western-style learning and English instruction. Aside from the atmosphere of strict Presbyterian self-discipline, the school was also preparing students to be national leaders of

¹⁶⁷ Ryôichi Seki states that Tôson was one of the young people (like Kitamura Tôkoku, Kunikida Doppo and Tayama Katai), who carried the burden of two roles. They needed to restore family fortunes and gain Western knowledge. The latter was critical to fulfilling the former. At heart Tôson was ambitious.

¹⁶⁸ Ryôichi Seki. *Kôshô to Shiron: Shimazaki Tôson* (Tokyo: Kyôiku shuppan senta, 1984), 366. After his father died, Tôson continued to study Chinese classics, but his interests were in literature, such as poetry (*kanshi*).

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 407.

¹⁷⁰ Janet A Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*, 130.

¹⁷¹ Ryôichi Seki, *Kôshô to Shiron: Shimazaki Tôson*, 408-409.

the future. One may find it odd that an ambitious Japanese boy would turn to Christianity, a religion fundamentally different from Confucianism or Shinto. Walker is right in arguing that Tôson's motivation for conversion to Christianity is due in part to loneliness rather than "an intellectual acceptance of its ideas or ethics."¹⁷² For Tôson, conversion was a voluntary acceptance of a certain atmosphere of free fellowship that was especially appealing to a boy away from his parents, of a spiritual, poetic mood induced by the daily singing of hymns, and above all, of the love and concern offered him by Yûji Kimura, a man whom Tôson later described as like a father.¹⁷³

As Kôjin Karatani, Donald Keene and Tomi Suzuki all have pointed out, those who converted to Christianity right after the Meiji Restoration were mostly sons of former samurai. In other words, most of them were victims of the Restoration and sought spiritual solace from a Christian God. Donald Keene states that many of the Naturalist novelists, who "were reared in the country and were the sons of lower-ranking samurai," studied at mission schools and became Christians for a time to break with tradition.¹⁷⁴ Confucianism demanded full, involved service to an unchanging collective. Buddhism advocated negation of self and passive surrender to fate. However, Christianity "emphasized the necessity for individual spiritual selfhood."¹⁷⁵ Christian beliefs, which "were sometimes transformed into social concern," enabled Tôson to participate in social activities and also provided temporary solace during his school years at Meiji Gakuin.¹⁷⁶

It is not surprising that Tôson later renounced Christianity.¹⁷⁷ The strict regime in this college instilled in him a sense of self-discipline and restraint but not much more. What he

¹⁷² Janet A. Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*, 128.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 129

¹⁷⁴ Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era*, 222. Tôson's biography informs us that although Tôson's family was not from a strict samurai origin, the prestige his family enjoyed and the education he received in his childhood placed his origin not so much different from a lower-ranking samurai.

¹⁷⁵ Janet A. Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*, 96-97.

¹⁷⁶ Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era*, 223.

¹⁷⁷ Janet A. Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*, 140. In addition to his failure to achieve his political ambitions Tôson fell in love with a teacher, with whom he was not yet prepared to deal. The Christian attitude toward sin only worked as a counterforce—he could not help but condemn himself as a sinner. The Confucian classics he had studied previously taught nothing about individual love, and among samurai only death could wipe away dishonour.

needed at that time was not of a spiritual nature. Rather, the cure for his internal conflict had to do with the sensual “self.” Partly encouraged by Tōkoku Kitamura,¹⁷⁸ a contemporary writer and progressive intellectual, Tōson came to see the need to make a break with his past conceptions of morality—“both the Confucianism of his childhood and the narrow Presbyterian morality of his adolescence—and find his own self and his own path in life.”¹⁷⁹ Tōson’s renunciation of Christianity brought him one step further along the road to spiritual freedom and independence.¹⁸⁰

Tomi Suzuki argues that young intellectuals like Doppo Kunikida (1871-1908), Tōkoku Kitamura (1868-1894) and Shimazaki Tōson, who converted during the late 1880’s and the early 1890’s, saw Christianity as being “inextricably linked to the Enlightenment, liberal political ideals of freedom and independence—both individual and national—and to Western romanticism.”¹⁸¹ This very notion of romanticism played an important role in Tōson’s early literary activities as a romantic poet. Byron’s passionate poetry first brought the young Tōson an insight into being free from conventional notions of good and evil.

It was Rousseau’s *Confessions* that resonated most strongly in Tōson, helping him to find him[-]“self.” In an essay written in 1909 titled “The Self That I Discovered in Rousseau’s *Confessions*,” Tōson recalled the tormented feelings of his youthful years:

In those days I was suffering various difficulties, and I was depressed when I encountered Rousseau. As I became involved in the book, I felt as if it brought out a self (*jibun*) that I had not been hitherto aware of.... I felt that through this book I was beginning to understand, though vaguely, modern man’s way of thinking and how to view nature directly.¹⁸²

Tōson did not realize that this “self” had long existed; it was partly responsible for his spiritual conflict, which could not be reconciled with conventional moral philosophy.

¹⁷⁸ A Japanese poet and one of the founders of Bungakukai (Literary World) and leader of modern Japanese romantic literary movement. He was a close associate of Shimazaki Tōson, whom he strongly influenced with his romantic notions. He committed suicide at the age of 26.

¹⁷⁹ Janet A. Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*, 135.

¹⁸⁰ Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity*, 37.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 41.

Tôson's recognition of "self," as Tomi Suzuki points out, is "made possible and knowable through the 'authentic' language of Rousseau." The language used in Rousseau's *Confessions* was crucial in inspiring Tôson to discover his "modern self."¹⁸³ Furthermore, the language may also be responsible for spurring Tôson's practice of romantic poetry in a new style. Walker is partly right when she tries to explain Tôson's spiritual affliction as the reason that drew Tôson to Rousseau's *Confessions*. According to Walker, Tôson and other elites in the same group were consciously "against restrictions on individual development posed first of all by the family, then by the morality of self-submission enforced by the Meiji government."¹⁸⁴

A conflict between individual development and the expectation of the family and the society is not always inevitable; instead, according to Confucian philosophy, individual development is the foremost condition to achieve a harmony between personal virtue, family affairs and public service. The problem that Tôson faced was that he no longer desired to pursue an outmoded lifestyle; he wanted to slip off the leash of restraint, responsibility, obedience, and career advancement. For instance, he accepted a teaching position in Komoro (close to his birthplace Magome), which was far enough away from Tokyo, where his mother and one older brother lived, to help create the illusion that he was escaping from family control over his future. Any such illusions evaporated after his older brother was imprisoned for a business scandal, and he was expected to become the main support for the whole family.¹⁸⁵ This conflict between traditional domestic responsibilities and the desire for self expression reflects the fundamental conflict brought on by modernization. Obtaining independence in this particular situation meant abandoning his family, which presented Tôson with a very troubling conflict of loyalty. The old family system sacrificed young people to their elders. Young people were encouraged to pursue *risshin shusse* (worldly success) and take over the responsibilities of a family.¹⁸⁶ Sons who

¹⁸³ Ibid., 41.

¹⁸⁴ Janet A. Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*, 147-148. Walker demonstrates that Tôson found himself in a situation similar to that of Rousseau vis-à-vis Confucian morality and the Calvinist morality of the Meiji Gakuin.

¹⁸⁵ Janet A. Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*, 144, 189.

¹⁸⁶ The notion of *risshin shusse*—to well establish yourself is in Confucianism also an important step before the final goal

have promising futures are supposed to choose the road their families expect, because they will become the backbone of the family.

Japan's First Truly Modern Novel: *The Broken Commandment*

It is a pity that Shimazaki Tôson and his novel *The Broken Commandment* have not received due attention outside of Japan.¹⁸⁷ Hakuchô Masamune (1879-1962) asserts that modern Japanese literature starts from *The Broken Commandment*.¹⁸⁸ In his book *The Dawn That Never Comes: Shimazaki Tôson and Japanese Nationalism*, Michael Bourdaghs describes *The Broken Commandment* as follows:

The Broken Commandment has been celebrated alternately as Japan's first truly modern novel; as the first masterpiece of Japanese naturalism; and as the last glimmering hope for a modern Japanese novel that would include a consideration of public concerns, a hope soon extinguished by the rise of the I-novel with its obsessive fixation on private life.¹⁸⁹

However, it still remains controversial as Japan's first modern novel. Marleigh Grayer Ryan named *Drifting Clouds* (her translation of *Ukigumo*) by Futabatei Shimei as "Japan's first modern novel." Yet, in terms of subject matter, *Ukigumo* did not break the frame of the conventional Confucian canon—stories about samurai—even though it took a negative attitude towards Confucian morals. Tôson's *The Broken Commandment*, on the other hand, writes about a new commoner (*shinheimin*) after the Meiji Restoration. In terms of language, despite the vernacular verb endings used, according to Kôjin Karatani, the writing in *Drifting Clouds* was still very rhetorical and unrealistic. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that Futabatei's literary language, developed both in *Ukigumo* and in his translations of Russian literature, contributed to the formation of the vernacular writing style and the spoken language as they exist today.

The kind of fiction Tsubouchi Shôyô advocated in his *Essence of Novel*—to portray

of social commitment.

¹⁸⁷ This is evidenced by how few translations there are available in other languages. See Michael K. Bourdaghs, *The Dawn That Never Comes: Shimazaki Tôson and Japanese Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 20.

¹⁸⁸ Shôzô Nagano, *Shimazaki Tôson Ron: Meiji no Seishun* (Tokyo: Doyô bijutsusha, 1998), 206.

¹⁸⁹ Michael K. Bourdaghs, *The Dawn That Never Comes: Shimazaki Tôson and Japanese Nationalism*, 48.

people who live in the realistic world—did not appear until the end of 19th century (around Meiji 30).¹⁹⁰ Tomi Suzuki rightly asserts that “the aspiration for an immediate and transparent written language was inextricably related to the ideology of *genbun-itchi*” related intimately to the self, a key concern of Meiji writers.¹⁹¹ Starting with Kunikida Doppo, Shimazaki Tôson and Tayama Katai, Naturalist writers “began to write *shôsetsu* in the belief that it was the ultimate form for directly representing ‘true reality’, and out of a desire to realize a new language free from traditional rhetoric that could directly transcribe this true reality.”¹⁹² Yamada Yûsaku asserted that among celebrated Naturalist writers, Tôson was one step ahead of both Doppo and Katai in the attempt to develop and use a colloquial writing style.¹⁹³

The Essential Theme

The Broken Commandment recounts the spiritual struggle of an elementary school teacher who breaks his father’s stern injunction never to reveal the family’s secret minority origin. The intense pressure to maintain the family secret is not only coming from his father, there is also a voice deep within his heart that echoes his father’s commandment. The young teacher/hero struggles to survive the battle between two oppositional world views taking place in his psyche. The protagonist, Segawa Ushimatsu, is from a family of *burakumin* (literally tribe people, i.e., primitive). In terms of consanguinity, *burakumin* are no different from the majority of Japanese people. Nevertheless, because they have long held “dirty” occupations that require handling dead animals, such as butchers and shoemakers, there is a conventional discrimination against them. People from this caste are called *eta*, literally “much dirt.” As illustrated in the novel, sometimes they are even described as four-footed (*yotsu ashi or shisoku*). The metaphor reflects that *Burakumin* are marked as less civilized,

¹⁹⁰ Yûsaku Yamada, *Seido no kindai: Tôson, Ôgai, Sôsukei* (Tokyo : Ôfû, 2003), 12.

¹⁹¹ Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity*, 32.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁹³ Yûsaku Yamada, *Seido no kindai: Tôson, Ôgai, Sôseki*, 24-25. Also see Shinoda Hajime, “Bugaku nyûmon: Shimazaki Tôson” in *Nihon bungaku senshû 3: Shimazaki Tôson* (Tokyo: Kawadeshobôshinsha, 1974), 412. Both Yamada and Shinoda point out that Tôson’s short stories published before *The Broken Commandment* were one indispensable practice and literary preparation for the novel.

because their occupations make their hands as dirty as their feet, or the association with animals. Discrimination against the *burakumin*, including the term *eta*, was supposed to cease with the abolition of the feudal caste system. Unfortunately, several decades after the Meiji Restoration this bias against them still existed (as it does even today).

Disclosing the *burakumin* identity draws the reader's attention to the subject of their unfair treatment. Yada Junji points out that it was a popular issue at the time.¹⁹⁴ But, the vividly depicted inner struggle of the protagonist reveals a more significant theme: it exposes the spiritual suffering of early modern Japanese intellectuals caused by the shackles of traditional morality. It involves two dimensions—between son and father and between individual and society. They both fall into Confucian domains within which their interests should unite rather than conflict with each other. Education, as a means of self-cultivation as discussed in Chapter One, was mechanically used as a means to pursue fame and profit (or fame and virtue, *kômyô*). The young carry the expectation of their elders and society; thus they are burdened by the concept of worldly success (*risshin shusseï*). Some Japanese critics, such as Sasaki Masanobu, Watanabe Hiroshi and Takahashi Masako, have touched upon the issue of spiritual suffering exerted by the pursuit of fame and profit, but they failed to explore the Confucian philosophy which informs their intellectual pursuits.

Very little attention and study has so far been paid to the anti-Confucian theme of *The Broken Commandment*. The reason that many critics tend to neglect this phenomenon is probably that Confucianism was interacting with other religions. Confucian thought may even be identified as traditional Japanese philosophy on occasions. It is possible that the “commandment” in the title is from a Buddhist term for *dharma*. “Commandment” in Japanese also means stern restriction. Both interpretations reveal the plot as a torturous course of breaking-through restraints.

A Complexity of Fathers

There are three main father figures portrayed in the novel, and they represent two

¹⁹⁴ Junji Yada, *Hyôden: Aru Shijin no Shôgai* (Ymaguchi: Gendaishi Kenkyûkai, 1995), 73: “*tôji no buraku mondai no suijun kara sureba, aru teido yamu wo enai dearou.*”

opposing forces. Inoko Rentarô represents the freedom and modernity for which Ushimatsu yearns. Kazama Keinoshin and Ushimatsu's biological father, on the other hand, signify the old influences that are in a state of pathetic decline. It is within the context of this intense conflict that Ushimatsu makes his painstaking decision to reveal his secret. All of these characters are, to some degree, grounded in the sociopolitical realities of their time.

Ushimatsu's biological father is figuratively buried alive in a mountain area. He is isolated from society and holds a stern belief in *kômyô* (fame and virtue). The unassailable power of the father represented in the father-son relationship is the foremost relation in Confucianism. Given that the "Classic of Filial Piety" (*kôkyô*) was one of the first texts taught to Tôson by his father, it was perhaps inevitable that his hero, Ushimatsu, cannot easily challenge his father. The father's commandment is the thread that ties the novel together. The authority of Ushimatsu's father coupled with his solemn commandment exerts tremendous pressure on the young man. Kazama Keinoshin (father of the girl Ushimatsu is in love with), is a father of five children and struggling to survive. Kazama lost his privileges as the son of a samurai and cannot find himself in the new society. These two fathers reflect Tôson's complex feelings about his own father. On one hand, he is afraid of his father's stern rigidity, yet on the other, he sympathizes with the hardship his father went through during the transition of the social order. But to Tôson, one is responsible for one's own life after all, even if a tragic death is the price one has to pay for the inability to merge into the new society. Similarly, one can only be saved by oneself ("*jibun de jibun wo sukuu*"); unlike these father characters, the young hero Ushimatsu is the successful example of self survival.

The third father figure, Inoko Rentarô, an *eta* thinker and critic who Ushimatsu considers an inspirational teacher, is a revolutionist fighting against a backward society and for the rights of the poor and lower classes. Rentarô possesses "beautiful thoughts" which Ushimatsu also has, but "the flaw" of Ushimatsu (and probably Tôson himself) was a lack of courage which hindered him from opening his heart. Therefore, at times Rentarô becomes his spokesman, standing in the front line. The relationship reflects that of Tôson and Kitamura Tôkoku. Tôson was a shy boy when he was young; when they worked together at *Bungakukai* (Literary World), Tôkoku was more passionate than Tôson. Just as

Tôkoku's suicide shocked Tôson; Inoko's death awoke Ushimatsu.

Biological Father as a Victim

In *The Broken Commandment* the reader finds a typical Confucian father-son relationship;¹⁹⁵ it has been studied as such by most critics. Ushimatsu's father sacrifices his own life for Ushimatsu's career advancement, and proudly enjoys his son's return. He moved to the mountain pasture with his younger brother's family in order to keep their low caste origin a secret. Living in an unknown mountain area isolated from society, his only joyful moment is to have a drink bought by the money his son sends home every month. Ushimatsu, on the other hand, obeys his father's words and squeezes money from his slender wage to support his father. As the only promising young member of the family, Ushimatsu carries the hope and expectations of his father. In other words, he is not living for himself. Part of his life, if not all of it, is to realize his father's dream.

Throughout the novel Ushimatsu never has any direct conflict with his father. The struggle to cast off his father's influence exists only in Ushimatsu's mind. The father's image is mostly depicted by flashback narration. The father's absence does not undermine his power; rather, the invisible image makes an even stronger effect of the father's authority and spiritual control over Ushimatsu. His voice is carried as if by supernatural powers to Ushimatsu from the mountain pasture far away. The night before his father's death, his mysterious voice is heard three times.¹⁹⁶ Whenever Ushimatsu aspires to disclose his *eta* identity, the father's commandment sounds in Ushimatsu's mind and stops him from taking action. Even after his father's death, the power still remains so strong that it can restrain Ushimatsu's free will.

But Rentarô—to tell *him* was to confide in an elder brother, a second father....
Do not tell! echoed a solemn voice deep within him. He hesitated. "Sensei!

¹⁹⁵ Ushimatsu's father also takes care of his younger brother, Ushimatsu's uncle. This relation, between brothers, is one of the five Confucian familial relations.

¹⁹⁶ Some scholars hold that this novel imitated Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Oota Masaki, *Ronshû: Shimazaki Tôson*. Shimazaki Tôson Gakkai, 1999, p.84). It also reflects, as Ito Kazuo has pointed out, the belief in the existence of the next life, a major difference between the Hirata school and Norinaga school of National Learning. It is evident that Tôson's father, Masaki, was a follower of Hirata, and that Tôson was probably influenced by him as well..

Sensei!” The words were imprisoned on his lips; even as he struggled to speak them, some invisible power seemed to block his rebellious striving.... *Do not tell!* echoed the voice once more....¹⁹⁷

The august pressure of the father’s influence reinforces a still powerful moral control. It creates a kind of spiritual framework from which the protagonist must break free. As the influence of the “commandment” exerts becomes more powerful, the greater the strength Ushimatsu needs to break free of it. His obedience to his father reflects not only the conventional Confucian expectation for intellectuals. As Terry Eagleton points out, the meaning of texts are “never fully present in any one sign alone,” because meaning is often “scattered or dispersed along the whole chain of signifiers.”¹⁹⁸ The manifest conflict between father and son should not deter us from further exploring the essential theme of the relationship; what informs the father’s commandment is the absolute belief in the need for official career advancement. The centrality of the “commandment” throughout the novel reveals the deep influence of Confucian ideology.

The introduction of the father immediately depicts a physically strong man with a firm will who failed to achieve his ambition and became a hermit. Making the solid commandment to keep secret their *eta* origin, the father imposed his dream onto his son. “Nothing in his own life had gone the way he wanted,” but he wanted at least for his son and even his son’s children to live out the dreams he could not carry out himself.¹⁹⁹

Ushimatsu’s father had retired early to these mountain slopes, but a longing for fame and position burned within him all his life. In that, with his *passionate (aggressive) nature*, he was quite unlike his *diffident and unassuming* brother. The fierce resentment that drove him to the mountains because his birth made it impossible for him to work his way up in the world never left him.²⁰⁰
[interpretation and emphasis added]

Tôson, however, is not overly sympathetic to the character of the father; instead, he cruelly sets a tragic death for the father, as if to allude to the tragic death of his own father.

¹⁹⁷ Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandment*, Kenneth Strong trans. (University of Tokyo Press), 106.

¹⁹⁸ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: an introduction*, 2nd ed (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd, 1996), 111.

¹⁹⁹ Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandment*, Kenneth Strong, trans., 84.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 84.

In the novel, Ushimatsu's father gave up his life by moving to a mountain village in order to protect his son's future advancement. He possesses an unshakable pride of origin that he passes on to his son, separating them from other *eta* groups. Although the pasture husbandry he engaged in was nowhere near his true ambition, he did devote himself to whatever he undertook. Several years of experience made him an expert. Ironically, he was killed by the stud bull which he was looking after so carefully.

In real life, Tôson's father was also a victim of his devotion to his career. He believed in the unreconstructed Confucian ideal of loyalty and public service; by devoting himself to his position he was fulfilling his duty to the emperor. Yet, he was abandoned by the emperor. He failed to transform himself into a wage earner within the new, modern Japan. As Kenneth Strong suggests in the introduction to his translation of *The Broken Commandment (Hakai)*, Tôson's father "did not take kindly to the upheavals that followed the Restoration. He did advocate change, but he wanted the new Japan to return to the simpler pieties of her prefeudal past, not to adopt 'modern,' Western ways."²⁰¹

Image of a Dispossessed Samurai

If the father of the protagonist is characterized by more or less rebellious emotions, the pathetic father character, Kazama, arouses mainly sympathies. What is depicted is an old life swept along by the fast currents of modern society, a victim of the social transition. He personifies the image of a lower status samurai in decline. As well, there is a shade of Tôson's real father in Kazama. He could not forget the glory of the past. His energy is gone and he cannot cope with anything new. But the memory only makes it more difficult for him to truly merge into the new society.

"My family were Iiyama samurai. When I was little, I served the lord of our fief as a page: then I was sent to Edo City, till the Restoration, that is. What changes there've been! Change, change—look at the castle ruins down by the river. What do you and your generation think of those stone walls, or what's

²⁰¹ Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandment*, Kenneth Strong trans., xvi. Itô Kazuo also reveals in *Shimazaki Tôson Jiten* (Meiji Shoin, 1982) that as a follower of Hirata school of national learning, Tôson's father advocates *ôsei fukko* (Restoration of Imperial Rule).

left of them? I'm so overcome when I see all that ivy creeping up them, I nearly choke. Almost every castle you go to, it's the same; nothing but a few ruins, and mulberry trees planted where the samurai used to drill. That's how low samurai have sunk. The ones who've kept their heads above water have only managed it by teaching school or clerking in government offices; that's all they could do. There's nothing so useless as a samurai—and I'm one of them, Segawa."²⁰²

That Kazama could not find meaning in his life as a wage earner served as an example of a life without meaning. This timeworn character cannot stand working for even just another six months, after which he would be eligible for his retirement pension, a critical means for supporting his family. The tragedy of this former samurai suggests that the system of old Confucian values, signified by the traditional beliefs of the samurai caste, was out of date and did not fit in a modern society. Kazama explains that "being a samurai, of course," he knows nothing about managing his family's finances, not to mention labour work in the field.²⁰³ He says: "If I tried, I'd be ill in no time."²⁰⁴ Despite the sympathetic tone of narration, Kazama's life is depicted unmercifully as of the living dead. The old ideology imbued with Confucian ideas did him only harm—his soul is eaten up by it and what is left is only a shell. His meaningless life brings him nothing but numbness.

"My life's been such a failure." He sighed. "Failure—can you imagine what bitterness the world holds for me? Some people say I'm poor because I drink, but if you ask me, I drink because I'm poor. I can't go a single day without drinking. When I started drinking, I drank to forget my troubles, but now it's the other way around: I drink to make myself feel the pain. Sounds silly, I suppose. If I miss the *sake* for just one evening, my mind goes numb...it's only when I'm drinking and letting the misery of it all sink in that I feel alive at all."²⁰⁵

The tragic life of Kazama's family was not unusual during the transitional period of early modern Japan. The social problems reflected by his story, such as low wages and nonexistent welfare, are a result of many complicated factors including the national

²⁰² Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandment*, Kenneth Strong, trans., 47.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

economy. It may also be mixed with Tôson's own experience as a teacher in the Komoro mountain area, as he was struggling with low wages to feed his three infant daughters and a son on the way. But on the whole, Kazama is portrayed as being essentially indifferent to victims such as Ushimatsu's father, who still hold on to their old sense of pride and privilege. When they failed to overcome the transition towards a modern society, their Confucian philosophy became a great obstacle.

A Minority Madman

Rentarô, who has the same social background as Ushimatsu, functions as a mentor for the protagonist. Unlike Ushimatsu, he bravely disclosed his *eta* identity and abandoned "learning for learning's sake."²⁰⁶ From the time of his resignation as a teacher, Rentarô becomes an ideologue, writing against the injustices done to the lower classes and the poor. Ushimatsu holds similar views, and when the miserable Kazama is denied his pension, he takes up the case with Kazama's former boss, the principal. While Ushimatsu is able to fight for others as a common man without revealing his origin, he does not have the courage to fight for himself. He is still bound by the constraints placed on him both by his biological father and society in general. Therefore, Rentarô has the quality which Ushimatsu admires the most and yet has not gained himself—inner freedom.

Just as Rousseau's language in *Confessions* gave Tôson the power to live, Rentarô's book with the same title, *Confessions (zange roku)*, gives Ushimatsu strength to fight for the right to live. If being born *eta* is the same as being born a "sinner," then confession is the way for spiritual liberation, to fight against biased conventions. Ushimatsu's father and Rentarô function as two poles of force in Ushimatsu's inner world, contending with one another for dominance of Ushimatsu's soul: "Father's teaching of submission to the world" stands for the conventional philosophy, whereas "Rentarô's fierce anger at the world's heartlessness" represents the new revolutionary spirit.²⁰⁷ With the tragic death of the two most important men in his life—the formidable father and the adoring mentor Rentarô—he experiences growing pressure to commit himself. If his father's tragic death signifies

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 12.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 113.

disengagement, then the political assassination of the heroic Rentarô serves as a catalyst for action.

Tôson's close friend Kitamura Tökoku is generally seen as the model for the character of Rentarô.²⁰⁸ In real life Tökoku had a great influence on Tôson in his youthful years. As Tôson's torchbearer, he "inspired Tôson to live his life according to his own inner morality." Tökoku's suicide meant that Tôson not only lost a friend, but also a spiritual mentor.²⁰⁹ Tomi Suzuki states that "although Tökoku separated spiritual freedom and spiritual independence from the political sphere, his stance remained highly political and 'patriotic' in that he aspired to 'serve society and save people'."²¹⁰ Kunihiro Shinbo states that the novel *The Broken Commandment* is informed by Tôson's own spiritual struggles during his youthful years.²¹¹ Shinbo sees that this novel illustrates that Tôson's youthful dream was fading. He did not want to die as Tökoku had done, whose suicide at the age of twenty-six was driven by strong political dreams and passion.²¹² Taking into account Seki Ryôichi's explanation that Tôson's political dream was broken around the same period (during his twenties), this novel reflects Tôson's resolve to cast off all the harmful influences of the "old morality." Rentarô's death also illustrates Tôson's negation of enthusiasm for politics at the time when he was composing this novel.²¹³

Rentarô's illness is a paronomasia signifying both his physical disease (pulmonary) and his madness (or anger). For the majority of non-*eta* people, it is convenient to see his deviance and madness as a result of his physical pain. He is referred to as a sick writer with "twisted ideas."²¹⁴ Physical weakness serves as a foil for a strong willpower, and it reinforces the effective depiction of important moral characteristics. In Ushimatsu's eyes,

²⁰⁸ Regarding Kitamura Tökoku, please refer to page 49.

²⁰⁹ Janet A. Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism*, 144.

²¹⁰ Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity*, 35: "Tökoku defined poets as 'lofty soldiers' (kôdai naru senshi) who fight with a 'spiritual sword' (rei no tsurugi) or the 'spear of truth' in order to 'save the nation and its people.'"

²¹¹ Shinbo Kunihiro, *Doppo to Tôson: Meiji sanjû nendai bungaku no kosumoroji* (Tokyo: Yûseidô, 1996), 256: "...Tôson jijishin no seinenki no jiishikijô no kattô wo katakushita..."

²¹² *Ibid.*, 256.

²¹³ Rentarô Inoko was assassinated by a political enemy. Inoko was prepared to risk his life by helping a candidate in councillor election, who stands up for the oppressed.

²¹⁴ Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandment*, Kenneth Strong, trans., 147.

the sick Rentarô possesses an adamantine spirit.

...Ushimatsu was surprised and delighted to see Rentarô so well, with no sign of the emaciated appearance Ushimatsu in his anxiety had imagined. The broad forehead, lined by inflexible will, the jutting cheekbones, and above all the eyes, burning with a fierce, nervous light, reflected the heroic spirit within. Maybe his lack of pallor was misleading—consumptives often have bright cheeks—but from what Ushimatsu saw, he could not believe the man opposite him was as ill as the paper had said, in great pain and retching blood....²¹⁵

The greater significance of Rentarô's illness is that the contradiction is no longer between those who discriminate and those who are discriminated against, but between different sets of ideology. For instance, Ushimatsu's close friend, Ginnosuke, sees that the illness is the philosopher inside Rentarô's mind:

“People with that kind of disease are always more serious-minded. Staring death in the face makes a man think non-stop. There's a kind of urgency in Inoko's writing that's characteristic of consumptives. Plenty of famous men have had illness to thank for their success.”²¹⁶

In other words, “it's his illness, not the fact that he's an *eta*, that makes him write those books of his.”²¹⁷ What kind of urgency is Inoko writing about? What is he mad at? As a victim himself, he is of course mad (or angry) first at the injustice of conventional biases. He then expands from a narrow personal concern to a wider view of society. The urgency expressed in his books, such as *Labour and Modern Thought and the Depressed Classes*, is related to enlightenment, human rights and liberation of the human spirit which has been bound by an inhumane morality. He sees the urgent need for the modernization of ideology that corresponds with scientific and technical modernization.

Orientation of the Protagonist

Ushimatsu and Rentarô are not only from the *eta* class, they are also part of an

²¹⁵ Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandment*, Kenneth Strong, trans., 73.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

ideological minority. As Jôko Shimoyama argues, the depiction of the school system keeps the novel from being primarily about minority discrimination.²¹⁸ Even before knowing Ushimatsu's secret, the principal and his colleagues already consider him an outsider who doesn't "fit in [with] the rest of us."²¹⁹ This reflects the corruption of the education system and the incompleteness in the process of modernization. Despite the establishment of a seemingly modern school where music, drawing and math are taught, and a place where activities are held, there is no real democracy and freedom. Teachers who graduated under scholarships have to serve for ten years as a mandatory condition of their acceptance. The principal and councillor ensure the continuation of their power by eliminating anybody who does not agree with them. The ceremony of The Emperor's Birthday adds an ironic effect not only on Ushimatsu's mood, but also on the image of modern teaching.

"Attention!" Ushimatsu's voice rang out, brisk and dignified, and the official ceremony began. Among the pupils, Ushimatsu—now the senior assistant teacher—was better liked than the principal. His command "Bow—low!" sent an indescribable vibration of feeling through their young breasts. Then came the singing of "May Thy Glorious Reign," during which the principal unveiled the imperial portrait; and the reading of the Rescript on Education, followed by massed shouts of "Banzai! Banzai!" The principal's speech came next. His gold medal displays squarely on his chest to enhance his dignity as a prominent educator, he took as his theme the duties of loyalty and filial piety.²²⁰

"The general mood of excitement and rejoicing" over the ceremony of the sovereign's birthday saddens Ushimatsu, as he has just learned that Rentarô's illness has worsened.²²¹ He and his mentor Rentarô are probably the only ones who cannot enjoy the excitement, because they don't fit into the majority. To them, the atmosphere is a social ritual of outdated morality, which is opposite to the ideas of modernity which move and motivate them. As society was transformed into a modern nation state following the Meiji Restoration, Tôson expected a corresponding transformation in social ideology. And yet, the old influences deep within him echoed still, causing him to hesitate. In a sense, Tôson

²¹⁸ Jôko Shimoyama, *Shimazaki Tôson* (Tokyo: Hôbunkan, 1997), 132-133.

²¹⁹ Shimazaki Tôson, tr., Kenneth Strong, *The Broken Commandment*, 57-58.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 55.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 54.

exposed his own weakness through his character, Ushimatsu.

In the beginning, Ushimatsu can only secretly stand by Rentarô's side, hiding his true identity. As he distances himself from his father's influence, he gradually falls under the influence of the "madman" Rentarô. During the process of self development, Ushimatsu despairs and thinks about ending his meaningless life. He aspires to a free life, different from that of his father's generation. Ushimatsu, like his creator Tôson, has special feelings about nature, especially the mountains. He admires creatures in nature, because they are free from duties and restraints. Yet he sells his favorite books by Rentarô because he is afraid that keeping them might reveal his true, *eta* identity. Oscillating between two opposing forces, Ushimatsu finally builds up enough strength for rebirth.

As if concerned that the reader may fail to fully recognize the spiritual conflicts resulting from a source within Ushimatsu, the narrator discloses what is in his mind: "he was certainly not content with his present position..." Like many of his colleagues, he chose a career in primary school simply as a means of earning a living: "there was no way at all for a primary teacher to advance."²²² It is informative that this decision is proceeded from a concern for avoiding attention. He has to keep his secret safe: first complete ten years of mandatory service to the government and then wait for opportunities to advance from there.

He had thought of taking the secondary training at the time of his graduation from Nagano, and if only he had applied, there was not much doubt he would have been selected. Yet in the sad awareness of his *eta* birth, he had felt no urge to apply, either then or since. Suppose he did qualify at the Higher Teachers' College, and took a job at a middle school or primary teachers' college, what if he were to meet the same fate as Rentarô? *Nowhere* would he be safe.

....

Had he not been an *eta*, though, he would never have let any friend overtake him in the race.... Ushimatsu sighed. How he envied Ginnosuke!²²³

Seemingly, Ushimatsu's background is responsible for his suffering; however, what caused his real inner struggle is his reluctance to cast off the old influence which is

²²² Shimazaki Tôson, tr., Kenneth Strong, *The Broken Commandment*, 122.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 122.

personified by the father and his articulation of the conventional worldview. The only hope for Ushimatsu is to be rescued by his own awakening. Ushimatsu starts to show growing agitation and resistance to his father's injunction to silence. The father's death in *The Broken Commandment* functions as a turning point of the story. After the father's death, the power of his commandment is gradually overcome by Ushimatsu's desire for freedom. He wants to live as he pleases, an honest life though unsuccessful in terms of a career.

The energies of youth were powerfully at work within him, like the stirrings of new grass beneath the snow. He yearned for spring, yet the life within him, walled in by suspicion and fear, could not expand and grow. Why should not the snow melt under the spring sun? Why should not a young man go forward fearlessly on his life's road ...?²²⁴

After his father's funeral he watches the guilty bull being dismembered; the last imprints of his father on earth are destroyed. Although he is still terrified by the thought of breaking his promise, the change in Ushimatsu is already obvious.

Do not forget! The dying man's last feverish breath, on which those words had been spoken, seared the very core of his living being; his father was reborn within him... From the innermost depths of his consciousness a voice called in warning: *Ushimatsu, lad, will you turn your back on your father?* How poignant the rebuke! Will you turn your back on your father? Ushimatsu repeated to himself.

He had changed of course. He was no longer a child, to obey his father mechanically in everything. Others besides his father peopled his mind's world now. In a sense, the memory of his father's stern, austere character impelled him in the opposite direction, toward the notion of his freedom to enjoy and to suffer as himself, and not as his father, willed.²²⁵

The dramatic change takes place when Katsuno Bunpei, the principal's nephew and confidant, stigmatizes Rentarô. Ushimatsu is irritated and cannot help but fight back. He finally stands up in defence of Rentarô's thoughts as well as his own, which actually announces his point of view.

²²⁴ Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandment*, Kenneth Strong trans., 104.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 112-113.

“As a matter of fact, I’ve read something of Inoko’s myself,” said Bunpei, knocking the ash from his cigarette. “I borrowed it from a friend. But just what sort of man is this fellow Inoko, that’s what I’d like to know.”

...

“A thinker, is he?” said Bunpei contemptuously. “An empty-headed dreamer, if you ask me. A—a species of madman in fact.”

Laughter broken out again among the listeners, Ginnosuke joining it.

The blood rushed to Ushimatsu’s head, and with it a sudden wave of anger, suffusing his pale cheeks and ears and eyelids.

“You’re not far out, either,” Ushimatsu came in again. “Inoko sensei is a kind of madman, just as you say. Who nowadays, when autobiography means self-advertisement, the stringing together of whatever plausible titbits a man can get together to flatter his own image, would write a Confessions like him, so stark and true they make you shiver? It was this society of ours that robbed him of his job, and society that drove him by its persecution to that terrible illness and nearly killed him. Yet it’s for the same society’s sake that he makes such passionate speeches and writes such moving books, the fire burning him up till his pen breaks in his hand and his voice is worn to a whisper—where else can you find such a crazy, deluded fool? His whole life has been one long confession of his folly, humbly accepting the sneers of ‘dreamer’ and ‘simpleton’ the world throws his way.”

...

“So Mr. Katsuno is the enlightened one, the man of culture, and Inoko sensei is the barbarian, the inferior breed—is that it? The mistake is mine. I always thought both you and he were just human beings—”[emphases added]²²⁶

For the first time, all of his “pent-up feelings” burst outward. It is only at this moment that Ushimatsu looks completely different to his friend Ginnosuke. The latter senses “Ushimatsu’s inner life, young and strong and vital still.” From this moment on Ushimatsu was destined to gain his inner freedom and “no one could stop him.”²²⁷ He buried his old self and walked into “the new world” led by Rentarô’s spirit as a renewed man.

No matter who you meet, no matter what happens to you, never reveal it! Forget this commandment just once, in a moment of anger or misery, and from that moment the world will have rejected you forever.... Tell no one! What it had cost him to obey! Do not forget, he had reminded himself again and again; and with every repetition of those words, fear and suspicion had grown within him. His father, had he lived, would surely have thought him mad now....

²²⁶ Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandment*, Kenneth Strong, trans., 198-200.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 201.

Ushimatsu pictured his anger, and his sorrow, at the change in his son. But he knew now he must break the commandment. No one could stop him. For some moments Ushimatsu stood absorbed and wistful, drinking in the cold, exhilarating air, and assailed by regrets—till the opening words of Rentarô's Confession, returning with new force, swept away all doubts, and he spoke them aloud from the window as if for all the town to hear: "*I am an eta....*"²²⁸

Despite his humble gesture (kneeling down), it is clear in his actual confession in front of his students that Ushimatsu has decided to live freely and honestly as a modern man. What he asks for from his students is to forgive his dishonesty—"imamade kakushite ita nowa mattaku sumanakatta."²²⁹ Some critics argue that Ushimatsu's decision to confess is marked with a passive colour. Kaoru Takasaka, for example, argues that Tôson does not intend to have Ushimatsu follow in the radical footsteps of Rentarô. By giving him an unexpected offer to move to Texas, along with the love of Oshio, Tôson's protagonist is given expiation for breaking the commandment.²³⁰ I would argue that the ending shows a disappointment of the writer with his society, and that any kind of valid resolution was beyond his capability of comprehension.²³¹ The fact that Rentarô is assassinated prefigures a society that is still not ready to accept the idea of the modern. Nor is there free air for Ushimatsu, the *eta*, to breathe. He has to leave his homeland and seek a new life in the United States, the mythical locus of democracy. There, the protagonist may finally cast off the restraints of Confucian morality.

An Urgency to Break the Commandment

Tôson started to write *The Broken Commandment* in 1904, around the time of the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war. Bourdaghs cites Tôson's account of the novel's creation as follows:

²²⁸ Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandment*, Kenneth Strong, trans., 220.

²²⁹ Shimazaki Tôson, *Hakai in Nihon bungaku zenshu 3: Shimazaki Tôson* (Tokyo: Kawadeshobôshinshasha, 1974), 194. Some critics draw parallels between Tôson's *The Broken Commandment* and *Crime and Punishment*.

²³⁰ Kaoru Takasaka, *Tôson no seikai: ai to kokuhaku no kiseki* (Tokyo: Izumi shoten, 1987), 62.

²³¹ Kenmochi Takehiko and Hiraoka Toshio, *Bunmei hihyô to shi to shôsetsu* (Tokyo: Sôbunsha, 1996), 137.

In my far-off mountain home, I heard about plans of my friends in the city to observe the war and I too decided to pick up my pen and follow along with the troops—although in the end that wish went unfulfilled. It was then that I began work on the *Broken Commandment* manuscript. Life is a battleground, and an author is nothing but its war correspondent: thinking this way, I comforted myself with the thought that I, writing my novel, and my friends, on the far-off plains of Manchuria, were engaged in the same effort.²³²

Unlike Bourdaghs's interpretation, which sees it simply as a nationalistic desire to participate in the war,²³³ I see something in the novel that is as urgent and crucial as a battle. The writer experienced a great crisis in his life. Ryûsei Yamamoto argues that Tôson started the battle for liberation and creative freedom to break the bonds of feudal convention. Intellectually he placed himself at the centre of the military political situation so that he could condemn the spiritual restraints by finishing *The Broken Commandment*.²³⁴ In the fictional world, Ushimatsu's breaking the commandment also served as a catharsis for Tôson: he purged himself of the torment caused by the old morality. Writing this novel meant challenging the still powerful old morality by overcoming his own flaws, and eventually liberating his spirit from all restraints.

Tôson could not put his pen down and wait even one day longer; he persisted writing even during financial difficulties. The novel was finally published with funds borrowed from his father in law. The great financial difficulty did not stop him from writing. His three daughters died due to poor diet while Tôson was working on completing *The Broken Commandment*. In a sense, *The Broken Commandment* is built on the sacrifice of the writer's three small daughters. Tôson's words, quoted below, may help us to understand his willpower to complete this novel at all cost: "with the pent-up spirit newly pervading me both internally and externally, I was determined to complete this work."²³⁵

²³² Michael K. Bourdaghs, *The Dawn That Never Comes: Shimazaki Tôson and Japanese Nationalism*, 47.

²³³ It is not surprising that Tôson had the typical kind of patriotic emotion about his home country; this notion of this passage would have appeared among most intellectuals of Japan even before the modern nation state existed. Here, the Confucian kind of patriotism coupled with modern nationalism.

²³⁴ Ryûsei Yamamoto, *Bugaku ni egakareta kyôshitachi: Sôseki, Kenji, Takuboku, Tôson, Kaizan* (Tokyo: Shinfûsha, 1999), 128: "nihon no houkenteiki na shûzoku wo yabouru to surujiyû to sôzô no tatakai wo hajimeta. Tôson wa jûgunshita jôkyô no naka ni jishin wo oite *Hakai* wo kakitsuide itta."

²³⁵ Junji Yada, *Hyôden: aru shijin no shôgai* (Ymaguchi: Gendaishi Kenkyûkai, 1995), 73: "jibun no uchi nimo soto nimo

Vernacular Fiction: express the thoughts of new life

In his book *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era*, Donald Keene comments that despite “the plainness of the sentences” in *The Broken Commandment*, the novel “appealed to younger readers who found the approximations of ordinary speech more immediately affecting than the ornate prose hitherto considered indispensable to literature, much as many readers in America and Britain first welcomed the lean prose of Hemingway.”²³⁶ Aside from its thematic reason, the popularity of this novel is also credited to Tôson’s writing style. It is perhaps more correct to say that it is bidirectional: the vernacular language was required by such a theme while the ideology reflected by the theme was the main impulse for the writer to compose such a work in a vernacular language.

Tôson’s final choice of vernacular fiction emerges after attempts at other forms of writing. Despite his reputable poetry, the literary achievement won by his new style of poetry did not satisfy Tôson’s inner need for long. Yamanouchi Hisaaki remarks that Tôson’s lyrics were where “the traditional Japanese sentiment and Western ideas were happily unified”: they consisted of traditional syllables and the successful expression of his true emotional voice.²³⁷ Yet some Japanese critics, like Hajime Shinoda, argue that in spite of the new and fresh notions presented in Tôson’s poetry, its style did not break away from traditional poetry. In terms of structure and rhyme, Tôson’s poetry is like pouring new wine into an old bottle.²³⁸ Yamanouchi explains that the form and language of Japanese poetry proved to be insufficient to confront the overwhelming social realities: “Its short form and rigid metric scheme made it not particularly suitable for discursive reasoning and argument.”²³⁹

Tôson, like many other Meiji poets, felt dissatisfaction with himself. The poetic vehicle was inadequate for him to express his ideas and feelings; it only “managed to express the

atarashiku atama wo mochiagete kita utsubotsu toshita seishin de kono saku wo tsuranuku beku keshinshita.”

²³⁶ Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era*, 223.

²³⁷ Hisaaki Yamanouchi, *The Search for Authenticity in Modern Japanese Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 1978), 23.

²³⁸ Hajime Shinoda, “*Bungaku nyûmon: Shimazaki Tôson*” in *Nihon bungaku zenshu 3: Shimazaki Tôson*, 407.

²³⁹ Hisaaki Yamanouchi, *The Search for Authenticity in Modern Japanese Literature*, 32-33.

narrow sphere of their isolated sensibility.”²⁴⁰ He finally turned his back on poetry after trying to create a different style following his first poem collection *Wakanashû*. Giving up poetry, Tôson practiced the *shaseibun* (sketch prose), a form close to a traditional form of essay, called *zuihitsu*, for a short period. For Tôson, another form of literature had yet to be found that furthered his search for the “self.” When he stated that “fiction is the best form to express my thoughts,”²⁴¹ he did not mean the stereotyped *saishi kajin* (young talented hero and beautiful maiden) fiction, but a realistic vernacular one. To Tôson, the form and the language cannot express his inner struggles without one another.

What Tôson wrote in 1904 is significant: “Life is power. Power is voice. Voice is language. New Language is new life. I too seek to enter into the new, I too have passed many lonely and dark days.”²⁴² These words were written in the same year as he started writing *The Broken Commandment*; they reflect Tôson's determination to pursue a new colloquial written language with this novel. According to Tomi Suzuki, Most Meiji writers devoted themselves to Western literature and found that modern fiction, with its new colloquial written language—experimented with as “the source of truth and power”—was the best medium for them to directly represent the true reality of life, and to better express their true selves.²⁴³ Kenneth Strong has also suggested that, by the 1890s, those

“who dreamed of a spiritual liberation—a new individualism to replace the constricting codes imposed by the Confucianism that an authoritarian government had used for so long to mould education, morals, and social relations—no longer keep the same dream.”²⁴⁴

On the contrary, “the Confucian moral outlook was very far from dead”;²⁴⁵ the

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 22.

²⁴¹ Junji Yada, *Hyôden: aru shijin no shôgai*, 69: “*shôsetsu ga wotakushi no shisô wo arawasu noni mottomo fusawashii katachi da to omou.*”

²⁴² Michael K. Bourdaghs, *The Dawn That Never Comes: Shimazaki Tôson and Japanese Nationalism*, 4-5. This is part of the preface to an anthology. Bourdaghs considers it as “a manifesto often compared to Wordsworth’s 1802 “Preface” to his *Lyrical Ballads*.”

²⁴³ Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity*, 42.

²⁴⁴ Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandment*, Kenneth Strong, trans., xv.

²⁴⁵ Marius B. Jansen, *Japan and China: from war to peace 1894-1972* (Chicago: Rand McNally College Pub. Co., 1975), 317.

conventional influence still held strong power on contemporary social ideology. The contentious issues prepared writers for the choice of a writing style. The *Genbun-itchi* movement gave them a good opportunity to express their spiritual conflicts. When they voluntarily applied the colloquial language several decades after the movement was first proposed, they were ready—at least they thought—to break away from the restraints of the old influence.

In a magazine article Tôson wrote in 1906 (Meiji 39), he stated:

The prevalence of *genbun-itchi* is an activity inspired by the spirit of the new era. While some may think form and thought are separate, I believe that they are inseparable.... To adopt the free form advanced by *genbun-itchi* is itself a new spirit.²⁴⁶

To Tôson, form and style are inseparable from thought. To apply the free form of *genbun-itchi* already involves a new way of thinking. To use the new language in the novel is the writer's act of breaking from the old era. By drawing a line between the old generation and the new spirit, Tôson articulates his uncompromising position. Tôson already makes it clear that he belongs to the new spirit.

His hero Ushimatsu represents this new spirit. In the eyes of the principal, for instance, Ushimatsu is seen as one of the "foreign elements." Placing himself in opposition to Ushimatsu, the principal sees that he and Ushimatsu represent two different eras and their thoughts cannot communicate with each other at all.²⁴⁷

"His [Ushimatsu's] kind has such different ideas from people of my generation. Anything that appeals to me he turns up his nose at, and things that seem trashy to me fascinate him. Do you think that just because the generations are so different we can't work together? Is there such a gap between us?"²⁴⁸

...he [the principal] wanted to be able to say that "today" still belonged to himself and his contemporaries, but in fact times had changed without his

²⁴⁶ Junji Yada, *Hyôden: Aru Shijin no Shôgai*, 67.

²⁴⁷ Shimazaki Tôson, *Hakai* in *Nihon bungaku zenshû 3: Shimazaki Tôson*, 49: "atarashii jidai no hito to wareware towa sonnani kangae ga awanai mono nanndeshouka."

²⁴⁸ Shimazaki Tôson, tr., Kenneth Strong, *The Broken Commandment*, 58-59.

noticing it. Nothing is so frightening as the [new era].²⁴⁹

An example of the confrontation through language appears when both Rentarô and Ushimatsu use the classical language in their confession: “*ware wa eta nari*” (I am an *eta*); whereas the rest of the text is written in modern style verb inflections like *ta* or *dearu*. Rentarô begins his *Confessions*, a manifesto to challenge the conventional influences, with this declaration. Towards the end, Ushimatsu repeats the same sentence “aloud from the window as if for all the town to hear”; thus he makes clear his resolution to confront the unreconstructed influence.²⁵⁰ This short but powerful sentence serves as a sign of his will to fight back.

As critics like Kôjin Karatani have already argued, one of the most obvious differences that distinguish the classical and vernacular written languages is the position of the narrator.²⁵¹ The colloquial literary language usually ends sentences with the suffix *ta* which “unifies into a single form the many complex suffixes used in the classical language (*bungo*).” It is a significant change, because it enables “the narrator and protagonist to become subtly fused.”²⁵² To use Karatani’s explanation:

The premodern literary suffix *keri*, for example, expresses hearsay. The well-known opening line of each episode in the *Tales of Ise* (c.950), “*Mukashi otoko arikeri*” (Long ago there was a man), means that “it is said that there was a man.” In other words, through the suffix, the tale announces itself as narration and indicates the presence of a narrator. Once *ta* is used, the narrator’s presence is not made explicit, even though the function of the narrator remains.²⁵³

Because of the *ta* ending, narrator and character can merge into a single entity, thus bringing out “a sense of ‘reality’ in the text.”²⁵⁴ It is convenient and effective especially with the use of self (*jibun, onore*) to transform the protagonist to a spokesman for the writer’s own thoughts. Feelings and thoughts are expressed freely and smoothly without

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 222. Shimazaki Tôson, *Hakai in Nihon bungaku zenshû 3: Shimazaki Tôson*, 188.

²⁵⁰ Shimazaki Tôson, tr., Kenneth Strong, *The Broken Commandment*, 220.

²⁵¹ Kôjin Karatani, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, Brett de Bary trans. and ed.

²⁵² Ibid., 72.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

putting into the form of quoted monologue. For instance, when Ushimatsu confronts his inner struggles, the narrative voice moves from third person to first person immediately; the only subject “*jibun*” becomes authoritative.

“Kisama wa oya wo suteru ki ka” to Ushimatsu wa jibun de jibun ni kurikaesite mita.

Naruhodo, jibun wa kawatta. Naruhodo, ichi nimo ni nimo chichi no kotoba ni fukujūshite, sore wo kikaiteki ni junpōsuru yōna, sonna kodomo dewanaku natte kita. Naruhodo, jibun no mune no soko ha chichi bakari sumu sekai dewanaku natte kita. Naruhodo, chichi no kibishii seikaku wo kangaegu tabini, jibun wa kaette akobeko na hō e nukedashite itte, jiyūjizai ni naitari, warattari shitai yōna, sonna kangae wo motsu yōni natta. a a, yo no mujō wo ikidōru senpai no kokoromochi to yoni shitagae to oshieru chichi no kokoromochi to—sono futari no sōi wa donna dearou.²⁵⁵

The tension between the “*kangae*” (thoughts) of “*jibun*” (self) and the “*kotoba*” (words) of “*chichi*” (father) is expressed in spoken language with a tone obviously belonging to the character, yet it is narrated. The writer thus uses the character’s voice (inner voice) to vividly express his own feelings. Sometimes, as shown in the passage below, the narration brings out “feelings of the body of an active ‘*jibun*’” without specifying the subject.²⁵⁶ The reader can readily identify the feelings of the character, even though the consciousness and sensibility of narrator and character are already mingled.

Mijikai fuyu no hi wa itsunoma nika kurekakatte kita. Mou nido to nokoyo de miru koto wa dekinakatta youna hisōna kokochi ni natte, hashi no ue kara tooku nagameru to, nishi no sora sukoshi minami yori ni ittai no fuyugumo ga ukande, chōdo natsukashii kokyō no oka wo nozomu youni omowaseru.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ Shimazaki Tōson, *Hakai* in *Nihon bungaku zenshū 3: Shimazaki Tōson*, 95. For English translation, please refer Shimazaki Tōson, *The Broken Commandment* Kenneth Strong, trans., 112-113:

From the innermost depths of his consciousness a voice called in warning: *Ushimatsu, lad, will you turn your back on your father?* How poignant the rebuke! Will you turn your back to your father? Ushimatsu repeated to himself.

He had changed of course. He was no longer a child, to obey his father mechanically in everything. Others besides his father peopled his mind’s world now. In a sense, the memory of his father’s stern, austere character impelled him in the opposite direction, toward the notion of his freedom to enjoy and to suffer as himself, and not as his father, willed.

²⁵⁶ Yūsaku Yamada, *Seido no kindai: Tōson, Ōgai, Sōseki*, 19.

²⁵⁷ Shimazaki Tōson, *Hakai* in *Nihon bungaku zenshū 3: Shimazaki Tōson*, 178. For English translation see *The Broken Commandment* by Kenneth Strong, 211: “The brief winter day began to fade. As Ushimatsu, sad at heart, stood on the beidge gazing as if for the last time at the distant landscape, a back of cloud formed in the western sky—over the hills

In this passage, the narrated psychological activity—namely “psycho-narration”—helps to articulate the character’s consciousness. The narrating voice yields to the figural thoughts and feelings not by abstract statements, but by description of nature: nature becomes the objective correlative of Ushimatsu’s state of mind. The seeming objective depiction of nature is covered by a subjective colour. The thoughts and feelings are expressed not in a neutral tone, but are intertwined with sensations of the character and sensibility of the author. Putting both his and the character’s feelings into the landscape is what Tôson excels in, through the practice of his poetry and *shaseibun* (sketch prose).

In addition to the narrative perspective, the irony of vocabularies shows Tôson’s mentality from another angle. According to Kenmochi Takehiko and Hiraoka Toshio, giving the modern word *shakai* (society) different pronunciations in different situations in the story, such as *yononaka* and *seken*, Tôson implies that despite the prevalence of *shakai*, which signifies modernity, the reality has not changed accordingly.²⁵⁸ Moreover, Watanabe Hiroshi indicates that using new vocabulary such as inner life and thoughts of the self, Tôson intends to negate the old Japanese language.²⁵⁹

Tôson once declared that there was an urge to pursue change and freedom in writing (“*henka to jiyû wo motomeru*”), because the limitation of writing of the past obstructs the natural expression of feelings and implications of language and he could not go on with this status.²⁶⁰ The great inner need for change and liberation, as a means to express his feelings, can only be achieved by breaking the commandment—a code word for the Confucian notion of morality.

of his home, surely...”

²⁵⁸ Kenmochi Takehiko and Hiraoka Toshio, *Bunmei hihyô to shi to shôsetsu* (Tokyo: Sôbunsha, 1996), 131: “*shakai toiu hyôgo no atarashigena ryûkô nimo kakawarazu, genjitsu niwa nani mo kawatte inai.*”

²⁵⁹ Hiroshi Watanabe, *Shimazaki Tôson wo yominaosu* (Tokyo: Sôkisha, 1994), 54-55: “*naibuseimei=jibun shisô to iu atarashii kotoba wo kataru atarashii kotoba wa, nihon no furui kotoba wo hitei suru shisô deatta hazu dearu.*”

²⁶⁰ Junji Yada, *Hyôden: aru Shijin no Shôgai*, 68: “*furuku kara no bunshô no yakusokugoto wa, kotoba no (kanjô toka yingei toka) no shizen no ryûro wo samatageru. Kono yô na jôtai dewa doushitemo ikitumaruru.*”

Chapter Three Lu Xun and “Diary of a Madman”

Putting aside, for now, the discussion of Shimazaki Tôson, I turn my attention to the Chinese writer, Lu Xun. Lu Xun’s short story “Diary of a Madman” serves as an example of how the anti-Confucian impulse informed the rise of vernacular fiction in early modern China. Lu Xun’s short stories, in particular, express the artist’s inner need for a more direct vernacular language, a need that was paralleled by the desire to break away from the strictures of Confucian morality.

In comparison to Toson, who was a popular writer in his native Japan but whose writings received only marginal attention overseas, Lu Xun’s work, particularly his novella “The True Story of Ah Q,” gained the attention of the international literary community as well as recognition in China. With the publication of two collections of short stories, *Outcry (Nahan)* and *Wandering (Panghuang)*, Lu Xun came to be regarded in the West as the father of Chinese modern literature. And yet, while his fiction was so highly regarded abroad, his “miscellaneous essays” (*zawen*) have attracted a greater attention in China.

The preference for Lu Xun’s essays over his literary works in China was, in part, due to their sociopolitical relevancy at their time of publication. Lu Xun’s satirical essays were popular amongst the revolutionary Left for their criticism of the *Guomindang* (GMD) which had, in collusion with the United States, led the Chinese people into chaos and untold suffering. Another reason for the popularity of Lu Xun’s essays was their wholesale condemnation of Chinese society, a criticism welcomed by contemporary readers and critics. As Gang Yue points out, “so much has been written on Lu Xun that it would be difficult to add to the formidable body of scholarship.”²⁶¹ While I acknowledge that his works have been thoroughly examined in modern scholarship on Chinese literature, I put forth that my study of Lu Xun will address a lesser explored aspect of the “Diary of a Madman,” by looking at the short story and its themes in relation to the rise of modern vernacular writing in China.

In his essay “Old Books and Vernacular Language” (*Gushu yu baihua*) Lu Xun states:

²⁶¹ Gang Yue, *The Mouth That Begg: Hunger, Cannibalism, and the Politics of Eating in Modern China* (Duke University Press, 1999), Acknowledgement (page number unknown).

It is very true that to criticize classical books those who used to study them are the most effective; it is just like when explaining the harm of opium, those who had smoked it feel the strongest.²⁶² Lu Xun admits that he is one of those who has been immersed in classical literature and is thus deeply troubled by the evil influence of the very literary canon he has studied so closely.²⁶³ As a further extension to this notion of being entrenched in classical literature and at the same time rebelling against it, David Der-wei Wang asserts, “Lu Xun cannot indict the ‘living hell’ of China without demonstrating that his power derives from the hell of which he is a part.”²⁶⁴ In other words, he is a resolute fighter for the transformation of China into a modern nation state, and at the same time he is the victim of the cultural collapse that must inevitably come with the death of the classical world.

When Lu Xun refers to “old books” (*gushu*) in his work, he is not only making reference to those from the Confucian school, but also from the Taoist and Legalist schools as well. Since Confucianism was adopted as an ideology to support the maintenance of a feudal social hierarchy, theories from other schools were often taken as counter examples for exercises in critical thinking. Moreover, after thousands of years of development, Confucian schools have continually absorbed aspects from other philosophies to strengthen their own theories. For example, in terms of morality and politics, Legalism shares a similar logic with that of Confucianism. Lin Yü-sheng argues that Lu Xun was influenced by both Confucianism and Legalism; therefore, he affirms the Confucian ideal of politics as based on the ethics of intentions in pursuit of moral ends, while he also confirms through concrete observation, the Legalist understanding of the actuality of politics as immoral action for immoral ends.²⁶⁵

As the most dominant and long standing form of social philosophy, Confucianism is deeply embedded in the collective conscious of the Chinese and as such it becomes the

²⁶² Wu Zimin, et al, *Lu Xun: lun wenxue yu yishu* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1980), 199: “*feibo gushu zhe, wei duguo gushu zhe zui youli, zhe shi dique de. Yinwei ta dongzhi bibing, neng 'yi zi zhi mao gong zi zhi dun,' zheng ru yao shuoming yapian de bihai, dagai wei xiguo yapian zhe zui wei shenzhi, zui wei tongqie yiban.*”

²⁶³ Wu Zimin, et al, *Lu Xun: lun wenxue yu yishu*, 222-223.

²⁶⁴ David Der-wei Wang, *The Monster That Is History: History, Violence, and Fictional Writing in Twentieth-century China* (University of California Press, 2004), 52.

²⁶⁵ Yü-Sheng Lin, “The Morality of Mind and Immorality of Politics: Reflections on Lu Xun, the Intellectual” in *Lu Xun and His Legacy*, Leo Ou-fan Lee ed., (University of California Press, 1985), 125-126.

foremost object of Lu Xun's criticism. Examining the anti-Confucian theme in his fiction we will begin with an introduction of relevant information from Lu Xun's biography.

A Permanent Scar

Lu Xun (real name Zhou Yushan, Zhangshou or Zhou Shuren) was born to the Zhou clan in 1881, in Shaoxing. The Zhejiang province to which Shaoxing belongs to has been a fertile ground for literati and revolutionary elites. According to David E. Pollard, over the centuries the Zhou clan in Shaoxing enjoyed a certain degree of prosperity brought on by "its share of higher and middle ranking bureaucrats."²⁶⁶ However, by the time Lu Xun was born the clan had already begun to decline, and was further weakened both by the occupation of the Taiping rebels and by heavy government taxation. Lu Xun's own grandfather received the *Jinshi* degree, which is granted to successful candidates in imperial examinations, and secured an official position.²⁶⁷ Driven by a strong desire for fame and profit through his whole life, he expected his son to "climb the ladder of success" to guarantee the family's continued prosperity.

Unfortunately, "both Lu Xun's father and grandfather were victimized by the very system that had served to establish the family reputation."²⁶⁸ Initially, Lu Xun's grandfather became embroiled in a bribery scandal involving his attempt to obtain an official position for his son, Lu Xun's father. After his grandfather's imprisonment, the Zhou clan rapidly declined. During this period, Lu Xun and his brothers were sent away to avoid male members of the family from being caught up in the scandal. This period of rapid decline wherein Lu Xun was "reduced from the status of 'young master,'" had a strong impact on the young author and he quickly came to "understand what the real world is like."²⁶⁹ Lu Xun reflects on this formative experience in his preface to *Outcry*: "Anyone

²⁶⁶ David E. Pollard, *The True Story of Lu Xun* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2002), 1.

²⁶⁷ In Ming and Qing dynasties, the degrees of the imperial official recruitment from low to high are *xiucai*, *juren* and *jinshi* (the top three of *jinshi*: *zhuangyuan*, *bangyan* and *tanhua*). The evaluation is mainly based on performance of the imperial examination which tests candidates' skills on the application of classical works in the form of eight-legged essays.

²⁶⁸ Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Voices from the Iron House: a Study of Lu Xun* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 6.

²⁶⁹ Quoted in Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Voices from the Iron House: a Study of Lu Xun*, 6.

who has fallen from comfortable circumstances onto hard times will on that road have seen the true features of his fellow men.”²⁷⁰

During this period, Lu Xun’s father was also stripped of his “*xiucai*” degree and barred from any further participation in the imperial examinations. He became an alcoholic and opium addict as a way of anesthetizing himself during a deep depression that had left him bedridden and which ultimately ended in his death. The tragedy of his father’s life left Lu Xun with “a permanent scar in his psyche” and had a deep impact on his life. Lu Xun describes this experience in his preface to *Outcry* and in his memoir/short story *Father’s Illness*. Lu Xun describes his intense humiliation when he is forced to make repeated visits to the pawnshop, handing over the family valuables in exchange for cash to pay his father’s doctor’s bills.²⁷¹ After his father’s death, as the eldest son, Lu Xun was expected “to assume the role of a young father and to redeem his grandfather and father and restore the family name.”²⁷² It was to “alleviate the suffering of all those unfortunates who had been victimized” by the system (like his father) that became the primary motivation for Lu Xun’s choosing to take up the study of medicine.²⁷³

Life Path: Confucian Classics, Modern Medicine and Modern Literature

Born into a traditional family of court officials, Lu Xun was without exception taught Confucian classics. David. E. Pollard and Kirk A. Denton report that Lu Xun had a good memory and it made him a good student at reciting Confucian Classics as a young boy. Yet Lu Xun was never particularly enthused by classical studies; rather, he was interested in subjects “somewhat beyond the pale of the orthodox Confucian canons” such as drawing and fantastic ghost tales.²⁷⁴ In *Zhaohua xishi* (Dawn Blossoms Plucked at Dusk), Lu Xun recalls his naïve and lively private school days with his classmates making fun of their strict and fussy teacher, who forces them to recite classical articles.

Lu Xun’s attitude towards the classic learning can also be glimpsed in his short story

²⁷⁰ David E. Pollard, *The True Story of Lu Xun*, 8

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*,

²⁷² Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Voices from the Iron House: a Study of Lu Xun*, 7.

²⁷³ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 23.

²⁷⁴ Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Voices from the Iron House: a Study of Lu Xun*, 5

An Unimportant Affair. In memoir style, the writer/narrator confides that

For me, the momentous civil and military affairs of the past several years have long since become one with all that *Confucius says and the poetry Classic states* kind of thing that I had to memorize as a youth—can't recall so much as half a line.²⁷⁵

The passage above shows that, to a modern intellectual, outdated classical learning has become irrelevant.

His father's misfortune accelerated Lu Xun's rupture with the old life style. As described in the preface to *Outcry*, after the dark days of his father's illness, he was completely disappointed by people and the conventional path of life. Accordingly, he decided "to escape, to take a different path, to seek out a different kind of people."²⁷⁶ His mother wept, mostly because he did not follow the "proper" path.²⁷⁷

Back then, the only proper path for a young man to follow was to study the classics and sit for the civil examinations. Most folks thought that anyone engaged in what was known as "studying foreign things" must be a down-and-outer at the end of his rope, with no choice but to sell his soul to the foreigners.²⁷⁸

Despite this bias against Western learning and his mother's sadness at seeing him leave home, Lu Xun was resolute about going to the Jiangnan Naval Academy School of Mining and Railways. As David E. Pollard asserts, it was there that Lu Xun's eyes were opened to Western studies, such as English and German, science, geology, mechanical drawing and physical education. During this period he became caught up "in the reformist momentum of the time, set in motion by scholars of the 'new learning' that he admired most—Yan Fu and Liang Qichao—who turned to Western and Japanese models as 'windows' on enlightenment for the Chinese, a nation and a race that they felt had to compete with other

²⁷⁵ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 69.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

²⁷⁷ His mother still believed in the official careerism. In *True Story of Lu Xun*, 8, Pollard reveals that she even "paid someone to substitute for him when it was his turn to take the local examination, despite what should have been the awful warning" of the grandfather's bribery.

²⁷⁸ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 22.

nations of the world in the human 'jungle' for survival."²⁷⁹

Lu Xun was attracted to Western readings such as Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* and Western adventure novels (mostly works translated by Yan Fu and Lin Shu). As Leo Lee has described, the Social Darwinist concepts such as "survival of the fittest" and "natural selection," along with the works of other philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and the Stoics "opened the mind of a young man to a bright new vista, whereas the world of Chinese tradition was pushed to the background shadows."²⁸⁰ Rudolf G. Wagner notes that the New Culture movement (later seen as an integral part of the May Fourth agenda) was largely under the belief that only by radically transforming the trappings of Confucian culture (both elite and mass) could the Chinese become "men" and "have a chance to survive in an environment of Social-Darwinist selection."²⁸¹ Understandably, later as an active writer in New Culture movement, Lu Xun expresses a similar notion in his works.

In the New Learning schools Lu Xun had to change his birth name (Zhou Shuren) in order to avoid being known by people from his home town. The so-called "New Learning" was still despised by the majority of the educated elite and Lu Xun could not really ignore this pressure. The young Lu Xun's experience with hidden identity resembles Shimazaki Tôson's protagonist Ushimatsu in *The Broken Commandment*. Both characters are forced to hide their real identities in order to survive in conventional society. The realization that one has been denying their true identity is an integral stage in these intellectuals' lives embracing modernity.

Lu Xun's decision to pursue medical studies in Japan was probably due both to his father's misfortune and his exposure to the ideals of the early enlightenment—through his pursuit of a medical degree he intended to strengthen his "countrymen's faith in modernization."²⁸² In "Lu Xun Biography" Kirk A. Denton suggests: "With the defeat in the Sino-Japanese war, LX's [Lu Xun's] father told his sons to go to Japan or Europe to

²⁷⁹ Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Voices from the Iron House: a Study of Lu Xun*, 11.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Rudolf G. Wagner, "The Cannoization of May Fourth" in *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China's May Fourth Project*, Milena Doleželová-Velingerová and Oldřich Král eds., 67.

²⁸² Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 23.

study and then return to China to erase the shame and humiliation.”²⁸³ The different path young Lu Xun tended to take was still influenced, at least partly, by the notion of satisfying his father’s expectation and family fame. While the early enlightenment encouraged Lu Xun to pursue ways of strengthening his country with science and technology, it was his years spent in Japan that ultimately determined Lu Xun’s path in life.

Lu Xun went to Japan under government scholarship and lived there for almost a decade from the age of twenty. He recounts in his preface to *Outcry*, that it was an image he saw during a lantern slide show that served as a major turning point in his life: it was this particular image that led him to withdraw from medical school and take up his pen to write. Lu Xun recalls, how he had been bored with having to be part of his clapping and cheering Japanese classmates at the slideshow when a number of slides were shown which portrayed military victories of Japan over Russia during the Russo-Japanese war. It had been a long time since he had seen a group of his fellow Chinese; yet, seeing them within the context of these images was very awkward and unsettling. One slide depicted the beheading of a Chinese man as a “public example” for spying—“the other Chinese gathered around him [the spy] had come to enjoy the spectacle.”²⁸⁴

Adopting Roland Barthes’ ideas on perception and spectatorship, Gang Yue brilliantly reveals Lu Xun’s unease at being a double audience in this particular instance. According to Gang Yue, there are 3 spectators in total: (1) Lu Xun as author whose preface is completely self-reflexive; (2) the narrator who is watching both the slide show and his Japanese classmates; and (3) the group of Chinese people watching their fellow countryman being beheaded.²⁸⁵ Lu Xun was shocked by the numbness of his countrymen that he saw in that slide and he was ashamed by his awareness of his Chinese identity among his Japanese classmates—the fact that he shared the same identity as those people in the slide who were watching the beheading scene. This particular moment, whether real or invented, awoke Lu Xun from his naïve dream. It was at this moment that he decided to transform the awkward

²⁸³ Kirk A. Denton, “Lu Xun Biography” *MCLC Resource Centre*, Copyright 2002, 5 of 23.

²⁸⁴ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 23.

²⁸⁵ Gang Yue, *The Mouth That Begs: Hunger, Cannibalism, and Politics of Eating in Modern China*, 82. Cody Poulton points out that the Japanese students that Lu Xun was with were also audiences.

'spirit' of his people through literature.

The practice of medicine was nothing urgent to begin with, since no matter *how* healthy or strong the bodies of a weak-spirited citizenry might be, they'd still be fit for nothing better than to serve as victims or onlookers at such ridiculous spectacles.²⁸⁶

This passage in the preface to the collection *Outcry* illustrates Lu Xun's awkwardness with the situation he finds himself in as well as foreshadows the ironic contrast between the two differing states of mental health attributed to the protagonist in the first work in the collection. What emerges in my subsequent analysis is the image of a protagonist who is considered to be of sound body and mind only when he behaves like the majority of his countrymen. In actuality, it is at these moments that he is the victim of an "ill spirit"—the old ideology. Whereas when the protagonist is perceived as being ill he is, in actuality, illustrating an enlightened man's insight.

A Lonely Madman

The project of transforming the spirit of the Chinese people, however, turned out to be an unexpectedly lonely task. Lu Xun's emotions shifted from feelings of loneliness, disappointment and despair to a state of quiet "madness" in which he was "waiting for death."²⁸⁷ It was loneliness that first made Lu Xun aware that he was a minority in society. When his first attempt at transforming people's spirits resulted in "nothing definite," (evidenced by the failure of his magazine due to lack of financial support and determination of the initiators) Lu Xun realized that he was very alone in this battle. He wrote:

When a man comes forward with an idea and others approve, that's enough to encourage him to go on; if they disapprove, that's enough to goad him into keeping up the struggles. But the real *tragedy* occurs when he cries out in the realm of the living and there's no response at all—no approval, and no position either. It was like finding myself in the midst of a boundless and desolate plain

²⁸⁶ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 23.

²⁸⁷ Kirk A. Denton, "Lu Xun Biography" *MCLC Resource Centre*, Copyright 2002, 12 of 23: Lu Xun made "a seal on which was carved the name Si Tang, which can mean 'waiting for death' or 'waiting to see that will happen' (later, he uses the reversal of these two characters as a penname)."

where there were no reference points, nothing to lay one's hand to—an agonizing plight. At that point I began to realize that what I actually felt was loneliness, a loneliness that grew larger by the day and coiled round my soul like a giant poisonous snake.²⁸⁸

Because the feeling of loneliness “was far too painful to bear,” Lu Xun thought he had to “find some way of shaking it off”; and he tried to drug his soul.²⁸⁹ Yet, his solution was unsuccessful: he was still one of the few who remained “awake” and who “would go to a certain death fully conscious of what was going to happen.”²⁹⁰ This is also expressed by his personal seal. Inspired by Qian Xuantong, a leading intellectual of the New Culture movement, Lu Xun wrote his first piece of “vernacular fiction” (*baihua xiaoshuo*) “Diary of A Madman” to awaken at least some of the people asleep in the “iron house”—Lu Xun’s famous metaphor for the darkly oppressive structure of traditional Chinese society—in an attempt to save them from suffocation and certain death.

The terrible irony of Lu Xun’s metaphor is that the iron house has no doors or windows; it is a totality. Even if some of the sleepers do awaken when Lu Xun “cries out,” what are they to do? Is it better to let his fellow countrymen die in their sleep, or should he shout out to awaken a few to the awareness of impending doom? Lu Xun had come to a point in his personal journey where he saw no purpose in waking the sleepers. Yet, there were others who had also been awakened by Western learning, and they persuaded him to continue in his contribution to their struggle to dismantle the “Iron House.” In the end Lu Xun agreed to add his voice to this small chorus of voices, not because he believed, but because he could not disprove the power of hope.

“Diary of a Madman” was published in *New Youth* magazine in 1918, and was immediately seen as a manifesto of the Vernacular Literature movement (*Baihua yundong*), a movement which predates May Fourth, but was later subsumed under the general classification of the May Fourth Movement. D.W. Fokkema states that anything which significantly weakened the Confucian establishment was welcomed by May Fourth

²⁸⁸ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 24-25.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

intellectuals.²⁹¹ While somewhat older than the new group of young intellectuals, Lu Xun got along easily with such men as Cai Yuanpei, Qian Xuantong, Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu. To be sure, they were all members of an ideological minority:

They were in the midst of publishing *New Youth* at the time. However, not only had no one come forward to approve of what they were doing, but no one had yet bothered to mount an opposition to it either. I knew that he [Jin Xinyi, modeled on Qian Xuantong] must be feeling very lonely.²⁹²

As implied in the preface to *Outcry*, Lu Xun situates his “mad” diarist in a world of isolation. The madman’s diary (as it is presented to us by the narrator) is composed of thirteen entries that clearly illustrate a state of psychotic delusion. The madman’s vision of reality is of a barbarous society where people regularly practice cannibalism. Of course, his mad vision is considered a symptom of his psychosis and in this way the disease of the Madman exerts a unique power. It is clear that the diarist is one of the truly unfortunate who must suffer the terrible psychological pain of knowing the worst possible end is at hand—being eaten alive by his own people.

Marston Anderson explains that Hu Shi, leader of *Baihua yundong*, realized from Ibsen’s plays that “progress comes only through the lonely struggles of a few extraordinary people against society.”²⁹³ Hu Shi further suggests that the disease metaphor serves as a vital role in society’s survival: “The health of the society and the nation depends on a few tenacious, unrelenting white blood cells who battle the wicked and depraved elements of society; only through them is there hope of reform and progress.”²⁹⁴ Lu Xun repeatedly expresses the similar spirit in his work—lonely struggles of an enlightened intellectual who is surrounded by the unenlightened majority.

²⁹¹ Douwe W. Fokkema, “Lu Xun: The Impact of Russian Literature” in *Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era*, Merle Goldman ed.; sponsored by the Social Science Research Council (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), 94.

²⁹² Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 27.

²⁹³ Marston Anderson, *The Limits of Realism: Chinese Fiction in the Revolutionary Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 32.

²⁹⁴ Quoted in Marston Anderson, *The Limits of Realism: Chinese Fiction in the Revolutionary Period*, 32. Tôson also chose the disease metaphor with his character Rentarô, a subject I will return to in Chapter Four.

It was not only the content of Lu Xun's first short story that was so powerful, but also the structure of the story itself. In a sense there are two distinct texts: (1) a framing text written in classical Chinese (*wenyan*); (2) a diary written in the vernacular (*baihua*). The narrator, who speaks through the framing text, introduces the unnamed protagonist and contextualizes the diary. In his prefatory remarks the narrator reveals that after his bout of illness the "mad" diarist regains his senses and returned to his official duties. Leo Ou-fan Lee argues that the 'happy ending' in fact accentuates the protagonist's failure.²⁹⁵ In regard to Lu Xun's use of a framing text, Leo Lee suggests that Lu Xun "did not really expect his contemporary readers to accept" the full meaning of the subtext he embedded in the vernacular language of the diary.²⁹⁶ The contrast between the two states of physical/psychological health indicates that the truth revealed by the "crazy" mind is irreconcilable with the current society, and the madman has to conform (i.e., recover from his illness) in order to survive. As Lin Yü-sheng suggests, the madman, "who was reared in the same Chinese environment" cannot be exempted from cannibalism unless he is "insane"—"it takes an 'insane' person to break through the barriers that obstruct vision and penetrate to reality."²⁹⁷ Leo Ou-fan Lee also points out that "the inner message of the story is locked in a tragic paradox: the very process of gaining an acute consciousness dooms the enlightened individual (the madman) to alienation—to rejection by the very people he wishes to enlighten and change."²⁹⁸

The use of cannibalism as the metaphor for a society which devours its own citizens clearly suggests the far-reaching and awful power of Confucian ideology. The madman's "insanity" stems from his intense frustration at being unable to breakthrough the social strictures that bind everyone he sees around him.

²⁹⁵ Leo Ou-fan Lee, "Tradition and Modernity in the Writings of Lu Xun", in *Lu Xun and His Legacy*, Leo Ou-fan Lee ed., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 8.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 8. Beyond the public's comprehension is also an important characteristic of madness, which we will further discuss in the next chapter.

²⁹⁷ Yü-Sheng Lin, "The Morality of Mind and Immorality of Politics: Reflections on Lu Xun, the intellectual" in *Lu Xun and His Legacy*, Leo Ou-fan ed., (University of California Press, 1985), 110.

²⁹⁸ Leo Ou-fan Lee, "Tradition and Modernity in the Writings of Lu Xun" in *Lu Xun and His Legacy*, Leo Ou-fan Lee ed., 8.

They want to eat others and at the same time they're afraid that other people are going to eat them. That's why they're always watching each other with such suspicious looks in their eyes.

...

What is it that these fathers [and] sons, brothers, husbands [and] wives, friends, teachers [and] students, enemies, and even people who don't know each other *really* do? Why they all join together to hold each other back, and talk each other out of it!

That's it! They'd rather die than take that one little step.²⁹⁹ [words added]

While Leo Ou-fan Lee lauds Lu Xun for inventing a narrator and narratorial points of view,³⁰⁰ David Der-wei Wang argues that Lu Xun failed to bring out the versatility of the heroes portrayed in his short stories; the Madman's story, for instance, becomes his own story—that of a frustrated realist.³⁰¹ Lu Xun's frustration and despair towards his fellow man is also expressed in his essay "What Happens After Nora Leaves Home" (1923):

The Masses, especially in China, are always spectators at a drama. If the victim on the stage acts heroically, they are watching a tragedy; if he shivers and shakes they are watching a comedy.... There is nothing you can do with such people; the only way to save them is to give them no drama to watch.³⁰²

It is true that Lu Xun tends to use narratorial points of view to cast colours of either irony or sympathy on the heroes of his short stories. As "Diary of a Madman" is the main focus of this thesis, we will concentrate on the narrator and protagonist in this story. Representing the majority and authoritative view (in classical language), the narratorial voice helps to reinforce the ironic situations that isolate and frustrate the Madman.

Reorientation of the "Self" By Self-dissection

²⁹⁹ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 36: The translation tends to neglect the ties between father and son, husband and wife, and teacher and student implied in the original Chinese text. The "one little step" indicates to "give up the way of thinking" that "they want to eat others and at the same time they're afraid that other people are going to eat them."

³⁰⁰ Leo Ou-fan Lee, "Incomplete Modernity: Rethinking the May Fourth Intellectual Project" in *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China's May Fourth Project*, Milena Doleželová-Velingerová and Oldřich Král eds., 48.

³⁰¹ David Der-wei Wang, *Fictional Realism in Twentieth-Century China: Mao Dun, Lao She, Shen Congwen* (Columbia University Press, NY: 1992), 10.

³⁰² Quoted in Gang Yue, *The Mouth That Begs: Hunger, Cannibalism, and the Politics of Eating in Modern China*, 79.

Lu Xun explains in the preface to *Outcry* that he learned that “by and large the modernization of Japan had its beginning in their study of Western medicine.”³⁰³ If the more advanced Western medical studies require dissecting real human bodies, then exposing the symptoms in a human mind has the potential to cure spiritual illness.

Lu Xun was the only Chinese student at the Sendai Medical School, and he received generous help from his teacher Fujino Genkyûrô. As mentioned in his memoir/short-story “Teacher Fujino” (*Tengye xiansheng*), the teacher once pointed out that in Lu Xun’s drawing of the human body, a vein was slightly moved from its actual location out of an aesthetic consideration. He was reminded that the actual objective of a dissection graph was not an artistic exercise, and one should not beautify it.³⁰⁴ The young Lu Xun was forced to confront the ugliness of the physical body so that patients could effectively be cured. Using the same rationale, Lu Xun deduced that the spiritual illness of the Chinese body politic must be exposed to the light so that suitable treatment could be applied. This logic is verified by Leo Ou-fan Lee in pointing out that Lu Xun intended “to expose the disease so as to draw attention to its cure,” and the disease that engaged his mind was primarily of a “spiritual” nature.³⁰⁵ David Der-wei Wang has also pointed out that after Lu Xun gave up medicine for literature, “he consistently maintained a greater interest in...moral illness.” Not surprisingly, “he spent all his time trying to cure the Chinese soul.”³⁰⁶

Lu Xun dissects the Chinese mind to find and remove the tumorous growth of Confucian moral philosophy. As he confides in the epilogue of *Tomb (Fen)*: “It is quite true that I often dissect other people, but even more often—and more ruthlessly—I dissect myself.”³⁰⁷ He forces himself to face his own flaws and expose them to the cure.

One of these explicit flaws is exposed when the writer/narrator dissects his own weakness in the short story “An Unimportant Affair.” The contrast between the rough

³⁰³ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 22.

³⁰⁴ “*Tengye xiansheng*” in Lu Xun Xuanji Vol 1 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1983), 442.

³⁰⁵ Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Voices from the Iron House: a Study of Lu Xun*, 61.

³⁰⁶ Wang Derwei, *Fictional Realism in Twentieth-Century China: Mao Dun, Lao She, Shen Congwen*, 6.

³⁰⁷ Quoted in Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., xxxii. For original Chinese see Wu Zimin, et al, *Lu Xun: lun wenzue yu yishu*, 220: “wo dique shishi jiepou bieren, ran'er gendou de shi geng wuqing de jiepou wo ziji”

rickshaw man and the “petty me” under a “big fur coat” reveals the weakness and numbness of the protagonist. When an old woman with ragged clothes is hit by their rickshaw, the hero/narrator shows no sympathy, thinking instead that the old woman is faking her injuries. Hiding in his indifference, the protagonist is just trying to avoid being delayed by this “little” accident—nothing important compared to his own business. However, he was shocked by the rickshaw man’s heroic behaviour—helping the old lady without hesitation and not worrying about earning his tip.

At this point a strange feeling came over me. It was as if the rickshaw man’s receding and dust—covered form had, in a flash, somehow been magnified. It grew larger and larger with every step he took, until finally I had to look up just to take it all in. What was more, that form gradually solidified into an oppressive weight that bore down upon me until it had squeezed out the pettiness that was hidden by big fur coat.³⁰⁸

In “Diary of a Madman”, Lu Xun’s dissection begins and ends with his dissection of himself:

Moonlight’s really nice tonight. Haven’t seen it in *over thirty years*. Seeing it today, I feel like a new man. I know now that I’ve been completely out of things for the last three decades or more.”³⁰⁹ [emphasis added]

Lu Xun was in his mid-30s when he wrote his two collections of short stories. The observations of the mad diarist, in my view, mirrors Lu Xun’s own “spiritual” awakening. He completely rejects his old life; he feels “himself” only when he is able to see reality with a new mind—he feels like “a new man.” In the end, the protagonist is horrified by the thought that he himself might have eaten people for so long that he is practicing without knowing. He reflects that the old morality is the cause of China’s barbaric social practices that keep it from evolving into a modern and humane society.

Can’t think about it anymore. I just realized today that I too have muddled around for a good many years in a place where they’ve been continually eating people for four thousand years...

³⁰⁸ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 68.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

Who's to say I didn't eat a few pieces of my younger sister's flesh without knowing it? And now it's my turn...

Although I wasn't aware of it in the beginning, now that I *know* I'm someone with four thousand years' experience of cannibalism behind me, how hard it is to look real human beings in the eye!³¹⁰

The madman cannot exclude himself from the social crimes he observes around him; instead he must face up to the fact that he is an unwitting participant in these acts of cannibalism. He cannot easily erase the deeply imbedded influence of the old morality and therefore considers himself to be a member of the dark society and he shares in its terrible crimes. The younger sister's death illustrates this interconnectedness:

"I realized that the reason for my younger sister's death lay entirely with him. I can see her now—such a lovable and helpless little thing, only five at the time.

...

Younger Sister was eaten by Elder Brother. I have no way of knowing whether Mother knew about it or not.³¹¹

The character of the younger sister is likely based on Lu Xun's youngest brother who also died at the age of five. In his biography of Lu Xun, Kirk Denton notes that when Lu Xun's third younger brother died he was so upset that he could not sit for the next level of the county exams. Lu Xun was the eldest brother in his family, and in "Madman's diary" it is the diarist's elder brother who is responsible for the younger sister's death. It is entirely possible that this element in the narrative expresses Lu Xun's self-accusatory feelings surrounding the death of his own younger brother.

Self-reflection and self-confrontation are frequent occurrences in the madman's diary. Throughout the short story, the focus of the narrative is on the diarist himself, who writes in the first person (as does the narrator of the framing text). The madman's first person narrative effectively exposes the problem he faces—he does not fit in with the majority. For

³¹⁰ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 68. According to his fellow Japanese students, Lu Xun was so shocked when he first dissected a frog in the laboratory and discovered that the blood of an animal was the same as humans. This experience, to some extent, might have inspired Lu Xun to relate human society to the barbarian world where creatures eat their own kinds.

³¹¹ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 40.

example, the Zhao family's dog gave *me* dirty looks, Venerable Old Zhao looked at *me*, and a group of children looked at *me* "as though they would like to do me some harm."³¹² The madman sees himself standing alone on one side of a great divide, whereas everyone else stands on the opposite side along with Mr. Antiquity, a cipher for traditional Confucian ideology. Because the diarist "trampled the account books kept by Mr. Antiquity," they "decided to right the injustice."³¹³ The madman, is frightened and hurt by their devouring looks, and is bewildered by the gap between their consciousness and his own. He is shocked when he faces up to the fact that his elder brother is a cannibal, and that he is the brother of a cannibal.³¹⁴

In a society permeated and shaped by Confucian ideology, national issues take precedence when a crisis arises. In this particular context intellectuals like Lu Xun, whether consciously or not, combined their condemnation of Confucianism with a kind of nationalism that was prevalent in later nineteenth-century European literature.³¹⁵ Understandably, Lu Xun's inner struggle tended to be shielded by the more severe crisis of the nation and his works are often studied merely as social criticism. However, his deep sense of spiritual affliction cannot be easily ignored. William A. Lyell argues that although Lu Xun "responded by attacking the old Confucian "man-eating" society at home" and "diagnosed China's illness" he could offer no solution to "a society so driven by inner conflicts that it could neither learn from the Western powers nor defend itself against their greed."³¹⁶ The connection Lu Xun made between the national crisis and his own personal crisis reflects his belief that a change in consciousness (national and personal) was the precondition for spiritual liberation. His individual torment comes from the discontinuity between the pre-modern and modern; he cannot find an appropriate place in which to locate himself in the current society. There is an urgency in Lu Xun's vision; if the country fails to

³¹² *Ibid.*, 30.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 30.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

³¹⁵ Leo Ou-fan Lee, "Tradition and Modernity in the Writing of Lu Xun" in *Lu Xun and His Legacy*, Leo Ou-fan ed., 9: Leo Ou-fan Lee argues that taking into account his study of Western fiction, Lu Xun "shared the interest in nationalism that was fairly prevalent in later nineteenth-century European literature."

³¹⁶ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., xxx.

transform itself into a modern nation state, he will remain a lonely and isolated soul until being suffocated to death.

Confucianism as an Infectious Disease

The madman envisions Confucianism as an infectious disease that insidiously embeds itself in people's minds. For Lu Xun and his like-minded contemporaries it is this infectious disease that is responsible for China's misfortunes. Just as the madman repeats in his diary that "you really have to study everything very carefully before you can understand it,"³¹⁷ what the madman concludes from his study is that Confucian thought is an infectious disease devouring the consciousness of the Chinese people.

There were no dates in this history, but scrawled this way and that across every page were the words BENEVOLENCE, RIGHTEOUSNESS, and MORALITY. Since I couldn't get to sleep anyway, I read that history very carefully for most of the night, and finally I began to make out what was written between the lines; the whole volume was filled with a single phrase: EAT PEOPLE!³¹⁸

"BENEVOLENCE, RIGHTEOUSNESS, and MORALITY" are core concepts of Confucian dogma. Lu Xun's antipathy towards these orthodox "virtues" is so intense that he equates them with acts of cannibalism. In deconstructing "Diary of a Madman." David Der-wei Wang argues that it is Lu Xun's use of the irrational (i.e., the madman's psychosis) which allows him to establish the connection between the canon of Confucian texts and the phrase "eat people."

Lu Xun's "totalistic iconoclasm"³¹⁹ with regards to Confucian ideology coincides with the thoughts and feelings of many of his contemporaries. As the co-founder of *New Youth* magazine, in which Lu Xun published "Madman's Diary," Chen Duxiu "singled out Confucianism as the biggest stumbling block to the development of a new China." In the pages of *New Youth*, Chen proposes that the Confucian mentality be replaced by the two

³¹⁷ Ibid., 31.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 32.

³¹⁹ See Yü-Sheng Lin, *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness: Radical Antitraditionalism in the May Fourth Era* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979).

Western concepts of science and democracy.³²⁰ In *The Literature of China in the Twentieth Century*, Bonnie S. McDougall and Kam Louie discuss the fact that for Chen Duxiu and his followers “science” was “more a culture of experimentation and skepticism towards received ideas.”³²¹ It is this skepticism that Lu Xun tries to awaken among the Chinese people. He is frustrated that they continue to adhere with blind faith to a psycho-social system that is devouring them alive. Xiaobing Tang argues that Hu Shi’s modernistic skepticism towards the past (or totalistic iconoclasm) and his critical awareness of the transformative power of language directly begot Lu Xun’s *Madman*.³²²

To Lu Xun the five Confucian relations were the linchpin holding together traditional Chinese social culture. He specifically emphasized the bonds between father and son, brother and brother, husband and wife, and teacher and student, as blocking the free expression of emotions and ideas. Ironically, it is the “madman” who, temporarily from outside of this net, comes to see that within this ancient trap of Confucian “bondage” everyone constantly circulates through the system, either eating others or being eaten by them. This is the “truth” the madman cries out in the pages of his diary, but from the framing text we already know at the beginning of the story that the madman regains his “sanity” and returns to his official duties. He has returned to the conformity of society and he is not able to resolve the problem.³²³

The madman’s analysis of his own family (and to a greater extent, of himself) extends outward to encompass the greater family of the Chinese people. As he diagnoses the illness in his own family, he is diagnosing the fatal spiritual illness at the very heart of Chinese civilization--Confucianism. The madman can no longer relate to the commonly accepted, orthodox mentality. As such the lonely visionary looks outward at those around him and he

³²⁰ Bonnie S. McDougall, Kam Louie, *The Literature of China in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 18.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

³²² Xiaobing Tang, “Lu Xun’s ‘Diary of a Madman’ and a Chinese Modernism” in *Chinese Modern: the Heroic and the Quotidian*, Xiaobing Tang ed. (Durham [NC]; London: Duke University Press, 2000), 67.

³²³ Interestingly, just the opposite occurs in Tôson’s story, where the protagonist, Ushimatsu, rebels against the absolute authority of his father, announcing that “he was no longer a child, to obey his father mechanically in everything.” (see Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandment*, Kenneth Strong, trans., 112-113.)

sees that they are “savage as a lion, timid as a rabbit, crafty as a fox...”³²⁴—possibly metaphors of characteristics of the Chinese people. The fundamental dilemma for the mad diarist is that he is already speaking a language that the others do not understand. Viewed from the perspective of literary craft, Lu Xun accentuates the madman’s dilemma by framing the text in classical language while writing the diary itself in the vernacular.

Disruptive Force of Language

“Diary of a Madman” is widely acknowledged as the foundation for a new form of writing in China, and as McDougall and Louie point out, “with its penetrating analysis of fundamental flaws in Chinese society, [it] proved beyond doubt that vernacular fiction was a suitable vehicle for the expression of serious views in prose.”³²⁵ As I have previously mentioned, Liang Qichao was an early advocate of using literature as a tool for social change, even though the vernacular language was not specifically emphasized. Lu Xun was influenced by the things he read in Liang’s journal *Xin xiaoshuo* (New Fiction), but when he was finally persuaded to write himself he went beyond Liang Qichao in his search for a new language and new modes of expression.

To the leading intellectuals of the New Culture movement, especially Hu Shi, the need for a new language was the foundation of a new discourse, a new worldview; the new language was to be “more than a discipline of linguistics.”³²⁶ To Lu Xun the written language and the theme of his work go hand in hand; he cannot renew one without the other. He puts the question of language front and center in his work. In a speech given in Hong Kong in 1927, Lu Xun argued that to save the children from certain infections they must be stopped from “using the language of Confucius, Mencius, Han Yu, Liu Zongyuan and their fellows.... From now on we only have two roads before us: to die sticking to classical writing or to live breaking away from it.”³²⁷

³²⁴ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 35.

³²⁵ Bonnie S. McDougall, Kam Louie, *The Literature of China in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 19.

³²⁶ Leo Ou-fan Lee, “Incomplete Modernity: Rethinking the May Fourth Intellectual Project” in *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China’s May Fourth Project*, Milena Doleželová-Velingerová and Oldřich Král eds., 51.

³²⁷ Wu Zimin, *Lu Xun: Lun Wenxue yu yishu*, 233-234: “women yao huo guolai, shouxian jiu xu you qingnianmen bu zai

Lu Xun's iconoclastic view of Confucianism is articulated repeatedly throughout his best known fictional works such as "Kong Yiji," "New Year's Sacrifice," "Medicine" and "The True Story of Ah Q." In these texts, language is key to conveying Lu Xun's iconoclastic intentions. William A. Lyell remarks in the introduction of his translation of Lu Xun's works *"Diary of a Madman" and Other Stories* that "one of the hallmarks of Lu Xun's style involves the contrast between the classical or literary language (*wenyan*) and the colloquial (*baihua*)." Written in the colloquial yet "a highly stylized colloquial, studded with words, phrases, and whole quotations from the classics," his stories make for "a style that is particularly suited to the intention of the stories in that Lu Xun almost invariably quotes the classical language in a satirical vein, so as to disparage the tradition that language represents."³²⁸

In "Kong Yiji," for example, Lu Xun gives the character, an outmoded intellectual, the same surname as Confucius and the simplest characters take on his given name, satirizing the uselessness of classic learning. Kong is described as always using words "nobody could understand." At one point, he talks to himself intoning the classic (from the *Confucius Analects* 9.6.3): "Few be my beans. Hath the gentleman many? Nay, he hath hardly any."³²⁹

In "Zhu Fu" ("New Year's Sacrifice"),³³⁰ choice of language again works in a similar fashion. For instance, Lu Xun names the narrator's uncle—who is "an old Imperial Collegian and follower of Neo-Confucianism"³³¹—"Si Shu" (Fourth Uncle, fourth boy in father's family) which shares the same pronunciation with the Confucian classic textbook *Four Books* (*Si Shu*). Lu Xun's writer/narrator realizes that it is entirely futile to try and communicate with Fourth Uncle's old and stubborn mind and that he can no longer exist in this stiflingly old atmosphere any longer.

shuo Kongzi Mengzi he Han Yu Liu Zong-yuan men de hua.... Women cihou shizai zhiyou liangtiaolu: yi shi bao zhe gumen er sidiao, yi shi shediao gumen er shengcun."

³²⁸ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., xi. In the translator's introduction, William adds in its footnote that Lu Xun was very capable of writing in a flat purely colloquial and undistinguished style.

³²⁹ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 46.

³³⁰ The English title is a literal translation of the story, yet the original Chinese title itself has an effect of irony: Zhu Fu meaning blessing, serves as the foil to the tragedy of the main character Sister Xianglin.

³³¹ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 219.

Aimlessly I went over and rummaged through the pole of old-fashioned stitched books on the desk by the window: an incomplete set of the Kang Xi Dictionary, a copy of Collected Commentaries to “Reflections on Things at Hand,” and a copy of A Lining to the Garment of the “Four Books.” Then and there I decided to leave the next day [*wo mingtian jueji yao zou le*].³³²

The complex competition between the old and new forces cannot be reconciled, which brings us back to the “Diary of a Madman,” in which Lu Xun provides two states of mind with their respective spokesmen and marks a clear break with the past. The narrator’s description and the madman’s writing are valid within their own systems. As Xiaobing Tang states, “the madman writes in his own language, employing a syntax that is itself both colloquial and logical.”³³³ The narrator uses the classical language and the common view of mental disorder; he judges the diarist as a paranoid whose ideas are “confused and incoherent.”³³⁴ We are not informed how the Madman recovers, nor is it divulged how exactly he becomes “ill.” Leo Ou-fan reminds us that the enlightenment of the Madman is declared in a single sudden act aided by the moonlight (“en-lighten-ment”).³³⁵ The significance of the contrast here and a point central to this thesis is that this newly articulated worldview requires a new language as a medium of expression.

Leo Lee argues that while irony serves to distance Lu Xun’s mentality from the sensibilities of his readers, it “adds intensity to the tortures” of the madman.³³⁶ The tortures of the Madman are precisely what afflict Lu Xun; hence there is no way for him to escape his responsibility in being Chinese. The fear behind the setting of the story can be informed by what Lu Xun wrote in the epilogue of his miscellaneous essay collection *Tomb (Fen)*. He admits that although he wishes he could let out all he has in his mind through his words, but he is incapable of doing so. He concedes that he is still

³³² Ibid., 221.

³³³ Xiaobing Tang, “Lu Xun’s ‘Diary of a Madman’ and a Chinese Modernism” in *Chinese Modern: the Heroic and the Quotidian* Xiaobing Tang ed., 68.

³³⁴ Ibid., 69.

³³⁵ Leo Ou-fan Lee, “Incomplete Modernity: Rethinking the May Fourth Intellectual Project” in *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China’s May Fourth Project*, Milena Doleželová-Velingerová and Oldřich Král eds., 34: the radical transformation also reflects May Fourth intellectuals’ ideal of transforming their culture.

³³⁶ Leo Ou-fan Lee, “Tradition and Modernity in the Writing of Lu Xun” in *Lu Xun and His Legacy*, Leo Ou-fan ed., 8.

not brave enough to express himself fully because he still needs to exist *in the current society*.³³⁷ This remark probably explains the “happy ending” of “Diary of a Madman”: he is able to survive only if he conforms to the conventional society.

Despite Lu Xun’s inability to shake off the influences of the culture within which he was nurtured, he turns this obstacle into an advantage by adopting the role of “warrior of the spirit” (*jingshen jie de zhanshi*).³³⁸ David Der-wei Wang remarks that “Lu Xun appears as the self-imposed tragic fighter standing at the threshold of hell, unable, or unwilling, to cross over to either side.”³³⁹ Lu Xun situates himself in the middle phase in the development of vernacular writing, acknowledging that he and others like him are necessary stepping stones towards the future. His mission, therefore, is to give voice to the words of awakening and who better than a warrior from the old camp to reveal all the enemy’s weaknesses.³⁴⁰

Exposing his own spiritual struggle, which in turn reveals the spiritual disease of the Chinese people, was as much as Lu Xun could accomplish; it was far beyond his capabilities to provide a cure. Lu Xun’s later writing reflects that his search for a treatment was ongoing. As Xiaobing Tang points out, Lu Xun’s brilliant use of madness both distorts and displaces existing texts to show “the disruptive force of language itself.” After breaking down the existing chain of signs, he makes his own voice heard; whether or not it could wake up the people in the iron house remains a matter of conjecture.³⁴¹

Here we can see a correspondence between the way in which Lu Xun and Tôson endow language with power: power is voice, voice is language, and new language is new life. The kind of voice that Lu Xun longs for is the fearless and true voice of one’s

³³⁷ Wu Zimin, *Lu Xun: lun wenxue yu yishu*, 221: “yinwei, wo hai meiyou zheyang yonggan, na yuanyin jiushi wo hai xiang shenghuo, zai zhe shehui li.”

³³⁸ This term is quoted in Kirk A. Denton, “Lu Xun Biography” (MCLC Resource Center, 2002), 9 of 23.

³³⁹ David Der-wei Wang, *The Monster That Is History: History, Violence, and Fictional Writing in Twentieth-century China* (University of California Press, 2004), 52.

³⁴⁰ Translated and quoted from Wu Zimin et al., *Lu Xun: lun wenxue yu yishu*, 222.

³⁴¹ Xiaobing Tang, “Lu Xun’s ‘Diary of a Madman’ and a Chinese Modernism” in *Chinese Modern: the Heroic and the Quotidian* Xiaobing Tang, ed., 68.

own. In a speech entitled “The Voiceless China” Lu Xun encouraged the young audience to forget about restraints of the old and to fearlessly let out their real thoughts; only when they speak their own words in a living and modern language that expresses their true feelings and thoughts, can China become a voiced country.³⁴² In other words, the “iron house” is not a totality and it can be destroyed with the right voice! Understandably, to Lu Xun a good literary work is something that comes spontaneously from one’s heart; mechanical composition about a determined topic is no different from the eight-legged essay. It has no value in literature, not to mention it lacks the necessary ability to move readers.³⁴³ Spontaneity of expression was the charm of vernacular language that writers like Lu Xun and Tôson embraced.

By contrast, classical writing obstructs spontaneity and direct and free expressions. While classical grammar and syntax are subjects that exist outside the scope of this thesis, introducing some general differences between classical and vernacular Chinese is important to illustrate the “failure” of classical writing as a medium through which one could potentially cultivate a literature incorporating free and direct discourse. One of the representative characteristics of fiction in the classical style, similar to that of classical Japanese fiction, is that the position of the narrator is overtly separated from the protagonist, whereas language in modern vernacular fiction enables the narrator and characters to merge, allowing the author to express his own feelings more directly and freely. For example, the first sentence of the preface replicates the typical opening of a traditional piece of fiction: “*moujun kunzhong, jin yin qiming.*”³⁴⁴

This is also a common style used in Ming and Qing fiction, which often begins with hearsay “*huashuo*” (there was once said). Although Ming Qing fiction made significant developments in vernacular writing, the narrator was always separated from the characters

³⁴² Wu Zimin et al, *Lu Xun: lun wenxue yu yishu*, 234.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 240: “*haode wenyi zuopin, xianglai duo shi bushou bieren mingling, bugu lihái, ziran'er'rande cong xinzhong liulu de dongxi; ruguo xian guaqi yige timu, zuo qi wenzhang lai, na you heyiyu bagu, zai wenxue zhong bing wu jiazhi, geng zuobudao nengfou gandongren le.*”

³⁴⁴ *Lu Xun xuanji* vol.1 (Beijing: renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1995), 9. For English see Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 29: “there were once a pair of male siblings whose actual names I beg your indulgence to withhold.”

and therefore could give no insight into their inner lives and thought processes. The role of the narrator is not more than that of a faithful storyteller or a recorder. In fact, writers in the classical style consciously try to make their narrators neutral, without mixing their own feelings into the narration. If the narrator also takes part in the story, his opinions or thoughts are expressed in an overt manner rather than being divulged through internal monologue. The following excerpt illustrates this neutrality:

*Chi gui yue yiguo, zhi suohuan gai "pohaikuang" zhilei. Yu po cuoza wulunci, you duo huangtang zhiyan; yi buzhu yueri, wei mose ziti buyi, zhi fei yishi suoshu. Jian yi you lue ju lianluozhe, jin cuolu yipian, yigong yijia yanjie. Jizhong yuwu, yizi buyi; wei renming sui jie cunren, buwei shijian suozhi, wuguan dati, ran yi xi yiqu. Zhi yu shuming, ze benren yuhou suoti, bu fu gai ye. Qinian siyue er'ri shi.*³⁴⁵

While this is evident in the Chinese version, it is unfortunately not translated in its entirety in the William A. Lyell translation. In this English language translation only the two sentences underlined above are translated:

As to the lapsus calami that occur in the course of the diaries, I have altered not a word. Nonetheless, I have changed all the names, despite the fact that their publication would be of no great consequence since they are all humble villagers unknown to the world at large.

Recorded this 2nd day in the 7th year of the Republic.³⁴⁶

In order to better comprehend the writer-narrator's function as a neutral recorder, it is necessary to fill the gap left by Lyell's translation. At the same time this addition will reinforce the effective contrast devised by Lu Xun, the ideological gap between "normal" people and the madman, and the disadvantages of classical writing in effectively expressing the writer's true thoughts.

I brought them home and read through. I learned from the writing that the symptom belongs to a kind of paranoia [of persecution]. The composition is full of nonsense and is scattered without logic and date. Only through differences of

³⁴⁵ Lu Xun *xuanji* vol.1 (Beijing: renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1995), 9.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

colours of the ink of the handwriting, could one tell it is written on different days. I edited some of those that make a little sense into one article for the research of medicals.

By comparison, the body of this fiction—diary entries—written in vernacular style has a first person narrator to directly express what the protagonist sees, thinks and feels.

But the more *courage* I had, the more that made them want to eat me so that they could get a little of it for free. The old man walked out. Before he had taken many steps, he lowered his head and told Elder Brother, “To be eaten as soon as possible!” He nodded understandingly. So, Elder Brother, You’re in it too! Although that discovery seemed unforeseen, it really wasn’t either. My own elder brother had thrown in with the very people who wanted to eat me!³⁴⁷

In the above passage, the dramatic tension between first person narration and first person internal monologue shifts back and forth with rapidity, at times merging so that the reader experiences them as a single voice. The advantage of this style can be seen once again in the following passage when a sense of psychosis allows the madman to convert Confucianism into a doctrine of cannibalism, both in the literal and figurative sense.

When our tenant farmer came in from Wolf Cub Village a few days back and talked about eating a man’s heart and liver, Elder Brother didn’t seem to see anything out of the way in that either—just kept nodding his head. You can tell from that alone that his present way of thinking is every bit as malicious as it was when I was child. If it’s all right to exchange *children* and eat them, then *anyone* can be exchanged, anyone can be eaten. Back then I just took what he said as explanation of the classics and let it go at that, but now I realize that while he was explaining, the grease of human flesh was smeared all over his lips, and what’s more, his mind was filled with plans for further cannibalism.³⁴⁸

It is also noteworthy to mention that the short and highly condensed classical writing style does not allow writers to directly and fully express themselves; it is also difficult for the majority of readers to follow. Usually, one syllable has several meanings or functions, and omissions often occur in classical writing. Readers need to have a very high level of literacy and a clear understanding of context in order to comprehend such writing. For

³⁴⁷ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 34.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

example, in classical grammar the subject is often omitted. While subjects are often added when translating the classical language into English, the subjects in vernacular writing are usually indicated without confusion. For someone who is not an expert of Classical Chinese, it is common to have to reread the lines more than once. Vernacular writing, on the other hand, makes the thoughts of each character relatively clear and direct.

When Gang Yue confides that “Lu Xun was one of the few modern Chinese writers whom my generation of mainland students grew up reading, and we read him with varying degrees of political fervor if not religious reverence,”³⁴⁹ I feel an echo within myself; I happen to be one of those mainland students who grew up reading Lu Xun in school. Gang Yue focuses on cannibalism as an example of the fact that “we were ill equipped and hardly emboldened enough” to raise “repellent questions.” It is true that Lu Xun’s darkness has often been only interpreted as a pure social criticism in mainland China; yet, his individual affliction has been left out. My return to Lu Xun’s first vernacular story has brought me new insight into the cause of the inner struggle that informed his awareness of the need to write clearly for the people using vernacular language.

³⁴⁹ Gang Yue, *The Mouth That Begg: Hunger, Cannibalism, and the Politics of Eating in Modern China*, 100.

Chapter Four a Comparative Study

Through separate examinations of Shimazaki Tôson's *The Broken Commandment* and Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman," I have demonstrated mainly how opposition to the constraints of Confucian ideology, as a decisive factor in adopting a vernacular language, was reflected thematically. Now, I will discuss similarities and clarify differences through a comparative study. It should be stressed that anti-Confucianism is responsible for both thematic and stylistic changes. More specifically, shifting emphasis to a stylistic analysis, this chapter will show that a colloquial language is both desired and required in order to actually break away from the classical writing style that is promoted by Confucian morals.

Critiques of Confucianism: Filial Piety, Career Advancement and Dogmatic Education

In general, Shimazaki Tôson's *The Broken Commandment* discloses the harm of Confucian values from two perspectives: stern obedience to one's father—filial piety—and pursuit of the ideal of career advancement. These powerful social forces intertwine in Tôson's hero Ushimatsu. Initially, blind obedience largely determines Ushimatsu's value judgments. Later, he becomes aware that the pursuit of Confucian virtues will fulfill his father's expectations, but it means his loss of "self." When he realizes that becoming a virtuous man by Confucian standards can only be achieved by sacrificing honesty and spiritual freedom, Ushimatsu hesitates and struggles to break through.

By comparison, Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman" attacks Confucianism as a whole. The protagonist reduces all the great writings contained in the canonical texts down to the simple phrase, "eat people." Lu Xun might not be the only intellectual in early modern China to note the cannibalistic nature of Confucian ideology, but the famous phrase ("man-eating") was coined by him as a caricature of Confucian weaklings.³⁵⁰ In "Diary" he illustrates that the act of eating humans begins in the family with an extreme form of filial piety which justifies the sacrifice of children's lives to serve the wishes of their parents.

³⁵⁰ Rudolf G. Wagner, "The Canonization of May Fourth" in *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China's May Fourth Project*, Milena Doleželová-Velingerová and Oldřich Král eds., 96.

Challenging the Confucian system by revealing this truth, the Madman is quarantined; if his real thoughts are not categorized as insane, he would be persecuted for undermining social and state authority. Theodore Hutters argues that the “Diary of a Madman” is an allegory about challenging the rules of the traditional Confucian system. Like the Madman, anyone who has “the temerity to point out the obvious will be threatened with the most extreme ostracism.”³⁵¹ The Madman seems to be more vehement in his opposition to the status quo than the timid teacher/hero Ushimatsu; nevertheless, in the end, the Madman recovers from his psychosis and goes back to sleep in the “iron room,” rejoining the majority for—or as a result of—official advancement.

In both narratives, the conflict between the protagonists’ private lives and their need for political or career advancement draws the reader’s attention to the writers’ attitudes towards traditional education. For modern intellectuals, the mechanical use of education as a means of obtaining fame and profit is seen as being harmful. Both Tôson and Lu Xun came from families that had fallen victim to the traditional system. Both of their fathers clung to the Confucian classics in the hope of restoring (or maintaining) their families’ official status, but the very system they relied upon only brought them tragedy—one went insane and the other became an alcoholic. The fact that both Tôson and Lu Xun were left fatherless at a young age had a decisive influence on both writers and caused both a great deal of spiritual and financial suffering.

Furthermore, Lu Xun and Tôson were both forced to carry the expectations, placed on them by their fathers, to be the redeemers of their respective family names. Leo Ou-fan Lee has described “the pathetic efforts of a disillusioned scholar to make his son fulfill what he himself had failed to achieve—the academic knowledge which would lead to officialdom, wealth and prestige.”³⁵² What is more, in the traditional system of Confucian morality, the father is the symbol of unquestionable authority; at the same time, he represents a role model for his sons. In the cases of Tôson and Lu Xun, the misfortunes of their respective fathers served as examples of the harm of Confucian ideology, and propelled the two young writers in a radical new direction. In addition, the modern education they received finalized

³⁵¹ Theodore Hutters, *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China*, 272.

³⁵² Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Voices from the Iron House: a Study of Lu Xun*, 7.

their awakening as modern individuals. The Confucian notions which motivated their fathers' generation—as a means of cultivating personal virtue and climbing the traditional ladder of success—became irrelevant to them.

In Tôson's narrative, classical learning is shown to be helpless when encountering questions that can only be answered by modern studies such as science. For example, it is described in the novel that “none of the shogun's courtiers or learned Confucian scholars” could answer the question of “what becomes of a man after death.”³⁵³ Tôson also satirizes the principal's method of mechanical teaching—education is all about rules. The principal knows the official rules well enough to secure a solid career. He is awarded a gold medal inscribed “*In Recognition of Meritorious Service.*” The narrator inserts the aside, “at least in his own estimation.”³⁵⁴ It is clear that the kind of success the principal celebrates is not appreciated by the writer. Tôson apparently supports and appreciates Inoko Rentarô's action of abandoning “learning for learning's sake.”³⁵⁵ Moreover, the “airy doctrines” the principal espouses are described as “mere useless tinsel” and “irrelevant to the serious business of life.”³⁵⁶ His speech, for example, which is based on the ideas of loyalty and filial piety—unshakable principles for him—is outdated and lacks sincerity; all he can do is to consult dictionaries and reference books.

When this type of dogmatic educational system informs (or mis-informs) the beliefs of the people, it is reflected in a situation in which “reason bows to force.”³⁵⁷ The “force” consists of rules such as loyalty and obedience to authorities. Any voice that opposes the rules is immediately suppressed. “In a world where reason bows to force, who would stand up and declare it was wrong to expel an *eta*?”³⁵⁸ This rhetorical question illustrates and

³⁵³ Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandment*, Kenneth Strong, trans., 159. This is also a question similar to the one dealt in Lu Xun's famous fiction “New Year's Sacrifice”. When asked by Sister Xianglin, an uneducated widow, who is ideologically dominated by Confucian morals, the narrator can not discuss the answer with her in a modern sense. The gap between the old Confucian philosophy and the new Modern thought is portrayed with the writer/narrator's own affliction. He is aware of the gap, yet does not know how to bridge the two.

³⁵⁴ Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandment*, Kenneth Strong, trans., 14.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

expresses Tôson's discontent.

Similar criticism is seen in "Diary of a Madman", where Lu Xun expresses the need for a new type of learning, especially a kind of skepticism. Furthermore, Lu Xun utilizes the Madman's psychosis to alert the people around him to their own psychic illness. He reflects that, before he went "mad," he was like everyone else and took what his elder brother "said as explanation of the classics and let it go at that."³⁵⁹ But now that he is awake, he realizes what it really means—"eat people," both figuratively and literally.

The conflict between tradition and modernity is the underlying dynamic which animates the struggle of both protagonists. As Samuel Yamashita argues, one of the elements of Confucian ethical discourse in Japan is a commitment to the past which is in tension with the contemporary.³⁶⁰ It is also true in China. The past itself is representative of authority and power without the need for reason. Aspiring toward the notion of newness yet unable to make a clean break from old influences, Tôson and Lu Xun struggle even harder to overcome their limitations. It is interesting to note, however, that despite the vigorous and vocal condemnations of traditional learning, their fictional characters are marked by cowardice.

For example, Ushimatsu admires the writing of his mentor Rentarô, and buys every new work whenever it is published, even when it is financially difficult for him to do so. According to the narrator, "for our young men, indeed, knowledge is as food to the starving." The narrator goes on to explain that "All the money he had was gone; but what was material need, compared to his spiritual hunger?"³⁶¹ Ushimatsu is intensely drawn to the open intellectual world of modernity, which stands in direct opposition to the narrowly prescribed ideas and rules imposed by the old school of thinking, and by his biological father. Yet, for all his developing intellectual radicalism, Ushimatsu fears the power of social ostracism. He hides his admiration for Rentarô's work, going so far as to secretly sell his favorite book to avoid being implicated by his *eta* origin. Lu Xun's Madman, on the

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 35.

³⁶⁰ Quoted in Tu Weiming et al, *The Confucian World Observed: a Contemporary Discussion of Confucian humanism in East Asia*, 30.

³⁶¹ Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandmen*, Kenneth Strong, trans., 7.

other hand, has the courage to trample Mr. Antiquity's books,³⁶² but fears revenge—being eaten alive. In the end, the Madman “magically” regains his sanity—perhaps due to the writer/creator's fear of living in the current society—and returns to the “proper path”—an official post.

Perception of the Self

That a writer's perceptions of reality are critical in shaping the form and content of his work is a key concept in the preceding thesis. I have demonstrated that both Tôson and Lu Xun share a generally similar anti-Confucian iconoclasm, which is similarly triggered by a reaction against the anti-humanist, anti-individualist nature of traditional Confucian thinking. Both Tôson and Lu Xun portray their heroes as minorities in society, even outcasts as they are widely known. Through their fictional characters, these two writers constantly put themselves into oppositional categories. They feel extremely lonely because they cannot communicate their modern ideas to others; consequently, the tension created by the conflict between the modern and the traditional is so painful that both writers are looking for a way to break out and save their lives.

Ushimatsu is of *eta* minority, although such a division no longer has any legal ground and is only a conventional bias. The conflict behind this discrimination is the conflict between two different ideologies. Ushimatsu lives in fear of being exposed as being *eta*, but his belief in the modern emancipation of the individual fills him with the desire for change. Ushimatsu and his mentor Rentarô are both rare individuals in their society. They are likely not alone in terms of the origin they share, as the *eta* group may not be so small in number; what makes them rare is the modern notion they represent. While the majority accepts the way things have “always” been, everything about the old moral philosophy is antithetical to these modern men. They are irritated by the majority's indifference and lack of sympathy. While Rentarô stands in the frontline and represents a more revolutionary spirit fighting against the conventional power, Ushimatsu hides in the dark and is given time until he awakens voluntarily.

³⁶² A metaphor of classic books and history books.

In "Diary of a Madman" the protagonist's minority status is defined by his mental health. Unlike Ushimatsu, who has Rentarô as his mentor and friend, the Madman has no comrade in arms. On one level, while Ushimatsu is an outcast because of his origin, the Madman is an outcast because of his mental "abnormality." On another level, just as with Ushimatsu, the modern vision of the Madman is truly extraordinary compared to the view of the majority. He is seen as an outsider because his state of mind prevents him from fitting in with the rest of society. Consciousness of the true "self" separates these characters from those around them. The same notion also causes their spiritual affliction, as they struggle between two oppositional states of mind, which manifests itself in the struggles of the protagonists.

Throughout the journey to establish his "self," Ushimatsu soliloquizes repeatedly with a clear consciousness of self: he can only be saved by his self (*jibun de jibun wo sukuu*). He constantly confronts the real self and questions it. The same expression "he asks himself" (*jibun de jibun ni tazunete miru*) appears several times whenever he is confused and lacks courage or direction. Sometimes his old self has to stop the desire of the new self from breaking restraints and fighting for freedom (*jibun de jibun wo oshitodometa*); other times, he encourages his new self to continue struggling (*jibun de jibun wo hagemasite miru*). He despises himself when he realizes that he is deceiving his own self (*jibun de jibun wo azamuiteita*); on the other hand, he sympathizes with his self for having to struggle between two powerful notions (*jibun de jibun wo awaremu*). After his father's funeral, the turning point of the story, it becomes clear to Ushimatsu that his new self is growing firmer and stronger. Ushimatsu realizes that this self has its unique power (*jibun niwa chikara ga aru*); he can no longer suppress him[self] (*jibun de jibun wo osaeru koto ga dekinakatta*). The new self eventually overcomes the old: the old one is dead and the new dawn is coming along with the era of the new self (*imamade no jibun wa shinda monoda, atarashii akatsuki no chikazuita koto wo shitta*).

"Ushimatsu is a modern, self-conscious, and clear-thinking man," as Kenneth Strong comments; he "slowly comes to realize that it is within his own power to free himself from

the attitudes of subservience to which his birth condemned him.”³⁶³ In comparison, the Madman’s awakening erupts suddenly and powerfully. The disruptive force is exerted incisively and vividly by the symptom of his madness. He gains his sense of self by transcending the old state of mind to occupy a new state of mind; once he gains the insight as a modern man, he cannot stand the same environment he has lived in for over thirty years. The Madman scares the people who are filled with evil Confucian thoughts. When he outguesses the sneaky trick of the people—wanting to eat people yet camouflaging their real intention, he laughs out loud; he knows that the laughter comes from his *real self*, which is filled with courage and rightness (justice).³⁶⁴ Unlike Ushimatsu, who is portrayed by a third person narrator, the madman’s story is told by himself, a first person narrator. Therefore, the self is often directly indicated by “I” or “me.” When he realizes that his old self has been nurtured by the same evil philosophy that thrives on the consumption of people, he feels despair and hopelessness: “I [the new self] just realized today that I [the old self] too have muddled around for a good many years in a place where they’ve been continually eating people for four thousand years.”³⁶⁵

It seems to be coincidental yet unsurprising that both Tôson and Lu Xun use “madmen” (the mentor in *The Broken Commandment* and the Madman in “Diary”) to voice thoughts that are too radical, too revolutionary and too dangerous to speak openly in a political forum; they may be too striking for conventional minds. Xiaobing Tang argues that the word madman “characterizes talented individuals who contemptuously oppose themselves to a stagnant society and whose actions exceed the public’s comprehension.”³⁶⁶ It can well explain the situation of the minority intellectuals in both works: because their enlightened minds exceed the public’s comprehension, they are considered mentally abnormal and are treated as outcasts. Xiaobing Tang further explains that the madness means “a return to the primal or instinctual drive”; “It captures, to a certain extent, the inner experience of the

³⁶³ Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandmen*, Kenneth Strong, trans., xxiii.

³⁶⁴ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 34. For the original Chinese see *Lu Xun xuanji* vol.1 (1995), 13: “ziji xiaode zhe xiaosheng limian, yodeshi yiyong he zhengqi.”

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.

³⁶⁶ Xiaobing Tang, “Lu Xun’s “Diary of a Madman” and a Chinese Modernism” in *Chinese Modern: the Heroic and the Quotidian*, 58.

alterity of reason, of what has to be repressed and marginalized as irrational.”³⁶⁷ The deep discontent that causes the madness becomes “a discursive energy that erupts and interrupts the normal and normalizing system of meaning.”³⁶⁸

Recalling remarks made by Tôson and Lu Xun prior to the publication of their first works of vernacular fiction, it is not difficult to see that they share similar feelings of darkness and loneliness. Tôson’s preface to an anthology shows that he has passed many lonely and dark days before he discovers the power of voice (language). Lu Xun, in his preface to *Outcry*, expresses the unbearable loneliness and the extreme darkness of the world surrounding him—a suffocating room without windows; there is an urgent need for an effective voice.³⁶⁹ Discontent suffuses both narratives with despair, and it is this despair which forces the writers to reach beyond their personal fears to find new voices, and a new spirit that will save them from darkness and loneliness.

Voice of the “Self”: Advantages of Modern Narration

After the “self” that had been repressed was awakened, the writers aspired to have their voices heard in a new language that matched the new spirit.³⁷⁰ Indeed, the new thinking needed a new language, because so many of the new concepts and ideas could not be expressed in classical language.³⁷¹ As for the new spirit of democratic individualism, the old language was useless for expressing one’s thoughts and feelings freely and directly.

As both Tôson and Lu Xun realized the power of a new language, understandably, their spiritual struggles to adopt a new language in opposition to the old classical writing is embodied by their attempts to break away from the restraints of both old thought and language. For example, Lu Xun uses a self-mocking tone in his celebrated fiction “Ah Q-

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 58.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 59.

³⁶⁹ Please refer p.68 and pp.80-81 of this thesis.

³⁷⁰ Kôjin Karatani in his book *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* tends to claim that the modern “self” (the discovery of interiority) is given birth by the *Genbun-itchi* movement. In other words, it is the modern language that made possible the modern consciousness. This is an inversion of what this thesis has argued; thus it may require a study from a different angle and will not be further discussed here.

³⁷¹ It is evident that both Japan and China had to invent a large number of words as translations of modern concepts from the West (China imported ready vocabularies from Japan) during the late 19th and early 20th century.

The Real Story” (“*Ah Q zhengzhuan*”) to criticize conventional views of vernacular writing. “The style is ‘vulgar’” and the language he uses “is not the language of the classics but rather the ‘vile vernacular of mere rickshaw boys and peddlers.’”³⁷² He goes on to disclose the conventional position of fiction writers (known as storytellers):

And so in the end I’ve taken my title from a phrase that’s popular among the storytellers [*xiaoshuojia*], those lowly souls who have always been the pale of the Three Doctrines and Nine Schools. Storytellers often end a long digression with the cliché, “Enough of this idle chatter, let’s get back to the real story.” That’s where I got my title from.³⁷³

This is a typical attitude toward vernacular fiction that prevailed in Ming and Qing China and influenced Japan at least until the early Meiji era.³⁷⁴ Yet both Tôson and Lu Xun expressed their determination to escape linguistic and thematic clichés that were typical of this literary convention. The undermining of literary conventions is evident as Tôson sets up a realistic scene without unnecessary prefatory rhetoric from the very first paragraph of *The Broken Commandment*:

Rengeji temple took in boarders. The room Segawa Ushimatsu arranged to move into, after his sudden decision to change his lodgings, was a corner room upstairs in the priest’s house, adjoining the temple....³⁷⁵

Lu Xun also creates a wholly new form of fiction with “Diary of a Madman” by using vernacular language to give voice to a shockingly unorthodox text, which is enclosed by a framing text written in classical Chinese. Set off by this startling contrast, the actual story begins with the first diary entry.

Moonlight’s really nice tonight. Haven’t seen it in over thirty years. Seeing it today, I feel like a new man.³⁷⁶

³⁷² Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 102.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 102-103. Three Doctrines and Nine Schools are the major religions and philosophies. Confucianism holds the first place in both categories.

³⁷⁴ Please also refer to Page no 33 of this thesis. Ming and Qing fiction had a profound influence on Japanese fiction.

³⁷⁵ Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandmen*, Kenneth Strong, trans., 1.

³⁷⁶ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 29.

The socio-historical environment provided writers in Meiji Japan and early modern China with access to modernity through Western learning. Modern Western fiction inspired writers who longed for such a flexible form and free writing style. At the same time, the particular historical context also gave impetus to the development of a new literary language, since a more direct and fast-spreading national language had already been advanced at the time as a means of strengthening national awareness. The direct and free nature of colloquial language resonated with new young writers, for whom the “vulgar” style and “vile” vernacular language brings about a modern man’s quest for spiritual freedom and concern of the self.

Novel vs. Short Story and Third-person vs. First-person Narrations

Earlier I referred to some of the advantages of writing in the vernacular, and here I would like to draw particular attention to the different styles of narration between vernacular fiction and classical literature in both Japan and China. First, I will discuss the different forms of narration in Tôson’s novel and Lu Xun’s short story. Some critics might question the validity of comparing a novel with a short story, but it is noteworthy that both novel and short story fell into the same category—fiction; and in Japanese and Chinese they are named by a single term pronounced *shôsetsu* and *xiaoshuo* respectively. Short story and novel are literally distinguished by their lengths: a short story is called *short* fiction and a novel is called *long* fiction. Therefore, Tôson and Lu Xun essentially chose forms that (in nature) belong to the same genre. Within the same category, the two writers chose the one that best allowed themselves to express their thoughts and feelings. The longer novel provided Tôson ample space to fully portray characters and depict the hardships of breaking out of the cage of spiritual restraints. The short story format, on the other hand, brings out Lu Xun’s frustration, indignation and the notion of urgency.

There are two possible explanations for each author’s respective choice. One is that both Japan and China were facing a Social Darwinist notion of national survival; yet they were experiencing different degrees of social crisis. When the Western Powers precipitated the Meiji Restoration, Japan started its process of industrialization and modernization. Within a period of less than thirty years, Japan had developed to the point that it defeated its

once undefeatable neighbor China in the 1894-95 Sino-Japanese War. Its swift growth also put Japan among other Western countries carving up China's territory. While Tôson was writing *The Broken Commandment*, the Russo-Japanese War was taking place. These two powers were fighting within China's territory, competing for its benefits. It is imaginable that the Japanese people, in general, felt unprecedented pride. China, by contrast, had been struggling with foreign threats and domestic disorder for some seventy years. This once Great Dragon of the East experienced unprecedented humiliation. It affected everything on both the national and personal levels. Awakened by modernity, intellectuals' longing for "self" was oriented toward the crisis of saving the nation from complete foreign domination. Young intellectuals with lofty ideals, like Lu Xun and his fellow elites, nurtured the urge to change the ugly reality. Understandably, they tended to choose a literary form which was more penetrating and concise, such as short fiction.³⁷⁷

Another reason lies in the different depths to which both countries were victimized by Confucian morality, which in turn led to different degrees of resentment toward it. Both Tôson and Lu Xun experienced family turbulence, such as the early deaths of their fathers. Tôson's father merely lost his hereditary post and could not adapt to the transition of the social order brought on by the Meiji Restoration. He died in a way which more resembled suicide. Tôson's family was financially affected, even though, for the first couple of years after his father's death, the life of Tôson, the beloved youngest son, did not change much. Male members of Lu Xun's family, on the other hand, were in danger of being embroiled in legal affairs and possibly imprisoned.³⁷⁸ In addition to this ignoble experience, Lu Xun, as the eldest boy of the family, felt the humiliation most keenly: he had to pawn valuable belongings constantly to pay the bills for his father's medicine. Despite all his efforts, young Lu Xun still could not save his father's life. The two deaths depict two different arcs of victimization which impact how each of the writers tells his story of alienation and struggle. For example, the father endures a tragic death in *The Broken Commandment*, while

³⁷⁷ Leo Ou-fan Lee also notes in "Incomplete Modernity: Rethinking the May Fourth Intellectual Project" in Milena Doleželová-Velingerová and Oldřich Král eds., (p.48) that the leader of New Culture movement Hu Shi "fervently prefers the short story to the long, sprawling, and 'badly structured' narrative he found in traditional Chinese literature."

³⁷⁸ It was towards the end of the already shaky feudal Qing regime; corruption reached a greater degree. Lu Xun's grandfather was involved in a case which the court intended to execute an official as a warning to others.

the madman's father is never mentioned.

In his novel Tôson chose third person narration, whereas Lu Xun used the first person. In rendering consciousness, there is no essential divergence between these two types of narration. According to Dorrit Cohn, writers such as Dostoevsky and Kafka kept moving back and forth between first and third person narration only to best merge narration and figural consciousness.³⁷⁹ The three main techniques used in third-person narration can be found in first-person narration correspondingly. The “psycho-narration,” “quoted monologue” and “narrated monologue” in third-person narration will correspondingly be called “self-narration,” “self-quoted or self-narrated” monologue for first-person narration. Kafka, for example, began his novel *The Castle* in the first-person “but after writing about fifty pages decided to shift to the third person”; what he did, essentially, was to replace all the “I[s]” with appropriate third-person pronouns “without making any other substantial changes.”³⁸⁰

The subtle difference between the two forms of narration, as Dorrit Cohn asserts, lies in a different emphasis on inner lives. Third person narration offers advantages “for writers seeking to present the most complex inner adventures in the most direct possible manner”; first-person narration, on the other hand, is more suitable for explorations “for immediacy and drama.”³⁸¹ The different choices in narrative forms may again reflect different degrees of frustration and crisis felt by Tôson and Lu Xun. Lu Xun is more frustrated with his vision, knowing that despite his “awakening” he too will be destroyed along with the unenlightened majority; hence, he feels a greater urgency. He chose first-person narration for “the instant passing on without the least pause of reflex consciousness.”³⁸²

Tôson, on the other hand, lived in a less critical social environment but had the determination to present his complex inner struggles; therefore, the advantage of third-person narration—with an omniscient narrator accessing his characters' psyches more

³⁷⁹ Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), 172.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 169.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 172.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 143.

freely³⁸³—allows him to depict the inner happenings more fully. The narrator can “start from a stance of neutrality and objectivity—typically the description of a specific site or situation—and only gradually narrow their focus to figural mind.”³⁸⁴ For example, often certain inner experiences are stressed after an event or fact; Ushimatsu’s spiritual reactions are narrated first by depictions of landscape—a subjective perception reflecting sensibility—and then the focus will be moved to his silent thoughts. Rendering consciousness through naturalistic description suited Tôson’s interest and he benefited extensively from his previous experience with poetry and sketch prose.

Furthermore, one of the limitations of first-person narration may also reflect the difference between Lu Xun’s and Tôson’s states of mind. A first-person narrator relies on a “psychological vision conditioned by memory, “but if a narrator with ‘a strong memory’ can tell us what he thought at his life’s beginning, no narrator can tell us what he thought at its ending.”³⁸⁵ While Tôson sends his protagonist to the United States for a new life at the end of his story, Lu Xun’s Madman leaves only an uncertain cry. The introduction of the diary entries cannot hide the unsolved ending of the story. Just as Lu Xun is “waiting to see what will happen,” in the end, the madman does not know whether there is a promising future or not.

Necessity of Colloquial Language

Despite the subtle differences between narrative techniques, both third-person and first-person narration in modern fiction share obvious advantages as opposed to traditional narration in Japan and China. One of the most important attractions for Tôson and Lu Xun was that the neutral reporter narrator in traditional fictions is replaced by a modern narrator that “cannot be grasped as a separate entity.”³⁸⁶ This shift not only liberates authorial voice from moral guidance by granting readers “the freedom to form their own judgment,” but also enables the narrator to “manifest dimensions of a fictional character that the latter is

³⁸³ Dorrit Chon, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*, 144.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 116.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 144.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

unwilling or unable to betray” by creating a cohesion between figural thoughts and feelings and authorial sensations.³⁸⁷ This is crucial for Tôson and Lu Xun because the ingrained Confucian notion still exerts influence on them. To fight off this powerful influence, narrative tools are needed for the self-articulation of their complicated inner struggles. Tôson’s protagonist, for example, has difficulty establishing his real self which rebels against the moral constraints laid down by his father, but the narrator sees through his mind and helps to describe the detailed and contradictory feelings, especially ideas of rebellion, which scare Ushimatsu. Lu Xun’s madman is often shocked by what he discovers, articulating his reaction quickly and directly without thinking about the consequences.

The unity or consistency between figural and authorial voices is made possible by colloquial language. Only when the unity is achieved can affective and realistic depictions of the inner self be brought out. The colloquial language is thus necessary for rendering consciousness; it enables instinctive and flexible shifts in and out of characters’ minds.³⁸⁸ I would like to focus on narrated monologue or self-narrated monologue, as examples, to show the expertise of a modern narrator. (Narrated monologue in third-person narration has its equivalence in first-person narration—self-narrated monologue.)

In *The Broken Commandment*, when Ushimatsu is struggling to decide how to use what little money he has, between paying for his living or buying a book by Inoko Rentarô, the narrator plays an important role in revealing his subtle inner experiences. Although the words are still spoken in the tone of Ushimatsu, there is an authorial voice involved to make clear what the character is unable or unwilling to reveal, and to thoroughly establish an authorial mood of sympathy.

Ushimatsu thought for a moment. Tomorrow, or even this evening, he wanted to say; but he could not afford the move yet. All he had at the moment was forty sen, and that certainly would not be enough—there was the rent to pay at the other place as well.³⁸⁹

...

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 29, 31.

³⁸⁸ There are cases, though rarely seen, existing among classical fictions such as *The Tale of Genji* that also excel in rendering consciousness.

³⁸⁹ Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandmen*, Kenneth Strong, trans., 5.

Ushimatsu walked up and down several times, furtively clinking the coins in the pocket of his faded trousers—forty sen: enough for the book, anyway. But if he bought it now, he'd have nothing for tomorrow; and what about arranging for the move? Restraining himself, he started on his way again, but a moment later turned back and walked into the shop. He picked up *Confessions*.³⁹⁰

Using psycho-narration, the narrator instantly inserts more explicit information to help reveal Ushimatsu's complicated thoughts: "that certainly would not be enough—there was the rent to pay at the other place as well," "forty sen: enough for the book, anyway" and "he'd have nothing for tomorrow; and what about arranging for the move." These spoken words belong to a subject mind—that of Ushimatsu; yet, in the grammar of objective narration, they not only draw explicit attention to the character's interior thoughts, but also amplify an emotional note of sympathy. Dorrit Cohn has also pointed out that narrative techniques such as narrated monologue and quoted monologue are closely related to colloquialisms. With the aid of colloquial language, rendering consciousness in the form of narrated monologue is realistic and effective.

There is another example where the narrator explicitly exposes Ushimatsu's spiritual conflict between what he is supposed to do in order to keep his secret and what he has done in accordance with following his true self. When he realizes that his less careful behaviour may cause others to be suspicious, he regrets not being more careful and is tortured by the thought of having to conceal his identity:

Every thought brought new anxiety. Maybe the very actions which he had meant to divert any possible suspicion had on the contrary invited it—the more he thought about it now, the more careless and lacking in foresight he seemed to have been. Why hadn't he stayed on at the lodging house when Ohinata was made to leave? Why had he come scurrying here to Rengeji? Why, whenever anything new of Inoko's came out, must he go out of his way to announce it with such ill-concealed pride? Why did he have to defend Inoko, and so make people think there was some connection between the eta writer and himself—why should he bring up Inoko's name at all? Why didn't he take more care to conceal his buying of Inoko's books? And having bought them, why couldn't he have the sense to read them only when he was alone in his room? Exhausted with worries that led to no clear conclusion, Ushimatsu spent a tortured night, his body

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 6.

restless and his mind wandering in dark places.³⁹¹

In the above passage, through smooth transitions the narrator helps to turn the character's silent thoughts into a powerful voice. The narrator shapes inchoate inner happenings into virtual questions. A series of questions with ascending emotions without expectations of answers vividly displays the character's inner struggle and prepares for Ushimatsu's growing urge to break free from the restraints. Similarly, in the passage below from Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman," the self-narrated monologues by the first-person narrator display a mental operation and bring out the resentment and criticism to the greatest degree:

As I think of it now, a shiver's running from the top of my head clear down to the tips of my toes.

If they're capable of eating people, then who's to say they won't eat *me*?

Don't you see? That woman's words about "taking a good bite," and the laughter of that ghastly crew with their green faces and protruding fangs, and the words of our tenant farmer a few days back—it's perfectly clear to me now that all that talk and all that laughter were really a set of secret signals. Those words were poison! That laughter, a knife! Their teeth are bared and waiting—white and razor sharp! Those people are cannibals!³⁹²

Without pause, the narrator-hero expresses his thoughts with strong emotion. The diarist's silent thoughts are expressed as if he is yelling out loud; they are to be uttered in spoken language with real emotion and conviction. Dorrit Cohn states that when excluding "all factual statements, all explicit reports on present and past happenings," first-person narration, the language-for-oneself, in fiction makes the voice convincing.³⁹³ Moreover, when the speaker and listener coincide, the narrator moves back and forth between perspectives, which creates instant conflict and keeps a continuity of narration.³⁹⁴ The narrator shares with the reader the thought-process of the character and maintains an

³⁹¹ Shimazaki Tôson, *The Broken Commandmen*, Kenneth Strong, trans., 37-38.

³⁹² Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 31-32.

³⁹³ Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*, 226.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 149.

impression of spontaneity.³⁹⁵ The narrator merges even more instantly with the protagonist in first-person narration—so close that it is hard to separate the two entities. In the following passage, the narrator-hero brings in information, strong opinion and judgment to bear on the instant conflict in order to dissect it:

Don't let my thoughts run away with me? Convalesce in peace and quiet? If I convalesce till I'm good and fat, they get more to eat, but what do *I* get out of it? How can I possibly be *all right*? What a bunch! All they think about is eating human flesh, and they go sneaking around, thinking up every which way they can camouflage their real intentions. They were comical enough to crack *anybody* up.³⁹⁶

Through these brief glimpses of narrative styles in *The Broken Commandment* and "Diary of a Madman," we can see that the narrators in both texts take full advantage of modern narrative techniques, such as shifting back and forth between the narrator's consciousness and that of the characters. Rendering consciousness is achieved with both "the narrator's discourse about a character's consciousness" and "a character's mental discourse in the guise of the internal discourse."³⁹⁷ Colloquial language was indispensable for smooth transitions between narrations and monologues, and was naturally desired by authors as a way to express their thoughts and feelings with realism and power.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 244.

³⁹⁶ Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, William A. Lyell trans., 33.

³⁹⁷ Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*, 14.

Chapter Five Conclusion

Through the case studies of Shimazaki Tôson and Lu Xun, writers who were instrumental in the creation of vernacular literature in Japan and China, we are able to infer that the transformation of literary language was led by writers whose resistance to Confucianism was informed by twentieth century Western modernity. The emergence of vernacular literature in China and Japan was inevitably tied to specific historical forces that could only be articulated using that particular form of literary language.

As celebrated literary icons in Japan and China, Tôson's and Lu Xun's first fictional works in vernacular language have already generated numerous studies. The point of my reexamination is to increase our understanding of Tôson and Lu Xun from the perspective of vernacular fiction. Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman," as the first example of modern Chinese fiction, has been studied in great detail. Its anti-Confucian theme as social criticism is widely acknowledged, whereas the writer's personal suffering as central to Lu Xun's harsh social critique has been somewhat neglected. The research conducted in preparation for this thesis has shown that few critics have approached these texts from the analytical perspective of the transformation of literary language; even fewer critics have addressed the importance of Confucian values in *The Broken Commandment*.

The comparison of the two writers and their fictional works highlights general similarities in their mentalities. They share similar ideological interests which resulted in their choices to use vernacular language to express their inner struggles and desire to break through the restraints of traditional moral philosophy. The two heroes—Ushimatsu and the Madman—represent the modern spirit and bring out the protest of their authors. The analysis of Shimazaki Tôson's *The Broken Commandment* shows that under the cover of a minority origin the inner struggles of the protagonist are pressed upon by Confucian morality. The inner development of the hero is in fact its author's quest to break away from the conventional moral restraints through the act of writing in a new language. The study of Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman" demonstrates that it was the totalistic opposition to Confucian ideology that primarily motivated the author to adopt modern fiction and vernacular language in writing.

The success of the literary reforms during the late 19th and early twentieth centuries was influenced by complex forces both from the objective historical environment and the subjective perceptions of the literati; the former to a large extent shaped the latter. The study of literary works is meaningful in deducing a broader vision, because those literary works are always embedded with relevant social information particular to that specific time or historical era. Critics like Kôjin Karatani view *Genbun-itchi* as a gradual emergence; I would add that the gradual process of establishing the modern “self” in Shimazaki Tôson’s work coincides with that trend. On the other hand, the overnight enlightenment of Lu Xun’s *Madman* signifies the ideal underpinning *Baihua yundong*—a radical cultural transformation.

The conscious negation of Confucian ideology might be only one of the influential factors in the language transformations; yet, it was the foremost task seen by intellectuals in their quest for spiritual freedom. To articulate their inner struggles, the modern narrative techniques of Western literature provided authors with a practical medium of expression. In hindsight, we can see that the Confucian outlook still plays a role in Asian countries like China and Japan. It is difficult to quantify to what degree intellectuals cast off the shackles of Confucian morality, but their struggles, at least on the ideological front, generated major literary reforms. More significantly, they achieved the goal of creating a new type of literature written in a new language (corresponding to the spoken language), which disregarded the former hierarchy of genres and expressed the subjectivity of autonomous individuals describing contemporary life.

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