

*Xiandai Zazhi* and An  
Alternative Vision of Chinese  
Modernity

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## Abstract

This thesis examines the literary and cultural practices of literary journal, *Xiandai zazhi* (现代, *Les Contemporains*, May 1932–May 1935), and explores the ways in which a mild cosmopolitan view of Chinese modernity is constructed in relation to the mainstream discourses of nationalism and radical Communist leftism in the early 1930s in China. The thesis situates the discussions of cosmopolitanism within the project of Chinese modernity in the early 1930s, and engages in the issues of nationalism, Westernization, Chinese tradition and revolutionary Communist discourses. Organized around the theme of cosmopolitanism as an alternative view of Chinese modernity, this thesis will first identify the journal's cosmopolitan attitude, featuring contemporaneity and all-inclusiveness, through its practices of translating and introducing world literature. This cosmopolitan perspective, however, does not imply a radical anti-traditionalism. Rather, *Xiandai zazhi* opted for a more balanced view towards modernity and Chinese tradition, and this constitutes the second feature of the alternative stance of *Xiandai zazhi*. The thesis also examines the journal's attempt to go beyond the class-based stratification of people and literature, as prescribed by the Chinese left-wing camp. Furthermore, it will examine the trans-national and cross-cultural writing practice of Pearl S. Buck and certain Chinese writers as a way of overcoming the ethnographic and national boundaries of self and Other. It thus reveals the spectrum of dimensions of Chinese modernity in the 1930s.

To my father and mother

I dedicate this thesis.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction: Cosmopolitanism as an Alternative Vision of Chinese Modernity

This thesis reveals and examines a cosmopolitan alternative on the basis of a study of the literary and cultural practices of *Xiandai zazhi* (现代, *Les Contemporains*, May 1932–May 1935), situated in the context of Chinese modernity and discussed in relation to the discourse of nationalism, Chinese tradition, liberal attitudes and modern Chinese identity. There has been a paradigmatic change in recent Chinese literary and cultural studies that reflects on the May Fourth paradigm of radical Westernization and total anti-traditionalism on the one hand and the discourse of radical Communist leftism on the other. My study follows this trend and offers a historical study of a cosmopolitan alternative, as revealed in *Les Contemporains*. This thesis is intended to contribute to the research in Chinese literary and cultural modernity, particularly in the dynamics of understanding Chinese modernity among intellectuals in the early decades of 20th-century China. I will focus on the following questions in this thesis:

- Proclaiming to be “Xiandai” (often translated as “modern” in English), as its title indicates, what are the main translating and editing practices of this journal?

How did this journal interact with Chinese tradition?

In what ways did this journal stand out and differentiate itself from the dominant left-wing camp?

· What is the significance of the cross-cultural writings about “Other”, as can be seen from the translation selection of Pearl S. Buck and the “exotic short stories” published in *Xiandai zazhi*?

Beginning with a brief account of *Xiandai zazhi*, this introductory chapter will revisit the existing studies of this journal and argue that the significance of *Xiandai zazhi* has not been sufficiently studied. It will then provide a brief historical account of Chinese modernity, from the late Qing Dynasty to the early 1930s. In doing so, the chapter will situate the discussions of a cosmopolitan perspective in the context of Chinese modernity in the early 1930s, by drawing on a set of issues with regard to cosmopolitanism, nationalism and Chinese Communist leftism. In the following part of this chapter, I will discuss in some detail the research that has inspired me in my study of *Xiandai zazhi* as an alternative vision of Chinese modernity.

#### 1.1. *Les Contemporains*: A Cosmopolitan Literary Journal in the 1930s in Shanghai

Established soon after the Shanghai Incident<sup>1</sup> in 1932, *Xiandai zazhi* emerged from the devastated situation of journal publishing in Shanghai and became a leading literary journal. In “Miscellaneous Reminiscences of *Xiandai*”, Shi Zhecun recounted the whole story of how *Xiandai zazhi* was established. After the Shanghai Incident, the two proprietors of *Xiandai shuju* [Modern Publishing House], Hong Xuefan (洪雪帆, ?–1936) and Zhang Jinglu (张静庐, 1898–1969),<sup>2</sup> decided to launch the first literary journal at a time when the publishing industry in Shanghai was so severely disrupted that almost all literary periodicals had been brought to an end. Since their previous left-leaning periodicals had been officially prohibited by the Nationalist government, they had to make sure that the new journal would not be exposed to political risks. Therefore, they identified Shi Zhecun (施蛰存, 1905–2003), an experienced journal editor and writer, who was neither a left-wing writer, nor connected with the Nationalist government. Hong and Zhang firmly believed that Shi was the very person they were looking for to establish a new literary journal, and they named it *Xiandai zazhi* after *Xiandai shuju*.

It should be noted that, in addition to the Chinese title, 现代 [*Xiandai dai*, usually translated as modern in English], a French title, *Les Contemporains*, was given in upper case letters on the front page. Although neither Shi Zhecun, the editor, nor Modern Publishing House, the publisher of the journal, said a word about the reason why a French title was also printed on the cover, the first factor can be attributed to Shi Zhecun’s advantage of having competence in French. In fact, not only Shi Zhecun but also Dai Wangshu (戴望舒, 1905–1950), a regular contributor to *Xiandai zazhi*, and Du Heng (杜衡, 1907–1964, usually known by his pen name Su Wen 苏汶), who later became co-editor of the journal, had successively attended the special one-year course in French at Shanghai Aurora University from 1925 to 1926.<sup>3</sup> This

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<sup>1</sup> The Shanghai Incident, also known as the January 28 Incident (in Chinese “一二八事变”), which lasted from 28 January to 3 March 1932, was among a series of battles initiated by Japan as part of its military aggression in China. Throughout this period, Japanese aircraft bombed Shanghai and its troops launched attacks on the city. The Chinese 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army put up strong resistance, but had to retreat due to a lack of supplies and manpower. The economic and social situations were devastated by this incident. According to Shi Zhecun’s account, “almost all the literary journals ceased publication”. See Shi Zhecun, “*Xiandai zayi*” (Miscellaneous Reminiscences on *Xiandai zazhi*) in Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> According to Shi Zhecun’s account, Modern Publishing House was founded by Zhang Jinglu, Hong Xuefan and Lu Fang (卢芳, 1901–1991), who was mainly responsible for marketing and distribution. For more information on the establishment of *Xiandai zazhi*, please refer to Shi Zhecun, “*Xiandai zayi*” (Miscellaneous Reminiscences on *Xiandai zazhi*), and “*Wo yu Xiandai shuju*” (Modern Publishing House and I), in Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), pp. 26–57, 58–65.

<sup>3</sup> Dai Wangshu transferred from Shanghai University to Shanghai Aurora University in 1925. One year later, Shi Zhecun and Du Heng also transferred to Aurora University. For more information,

one-year university period may account for their special interest in the French language and literature and hence for Shi's adding a French title to this Chinese literary journal. In addition, the French title added an exotic flavour to the journal. It would have reminded people of another influential Chinese magazine in the 1910s and 1920s, *Xinqingnian* [New Youth, 新青年], which played an important role in the May Fourth movement and also carried a French title, *Le Jeunesse*. The French title for *Xiandai zazhi* highlighted both its admiration of and its influence from France and from the West in general.

More relevant to my study is that the French title, *Les Contemporains*, conveyed a contemporaneous preference for looking out at world literature and culture. I define this clear preference for contemporary literature and the ambitious goal to be coeval with the West as contemporaneous cosmopolitanism. In the journal's search for contemporaneity, it found the school of modernism (and post-modernism), a particular literary, philosophical and cultural movement initiated in the West and transformed into a worldwide fashion in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the literary and artistic fields of the 1920s and early 1930s, to translate *Les Contemporains* was to translate modernism, since it was a popular – and perhaps even dominant – literary and cultural movement in the West. Even though *Xiandai zazhi* was an influential journal, admired for its translation, introduction and creative writings on modernism, contemporaneity was the first and foremost feature in its claim to be “*Xiandai*”, or modern, in the context of China in the early 1930s.

Since its inception in May 1932, the editing practice of *Xiandai zazhi*, featuring contemporaneous cosmopolitanism, appeared to be both a literary and a commercial success. Recognized as the most “modern” and avant-gardist literary journal in the 1930s, *Xiandai zazhi* opened up a window on contemporary world literature and cultivated a mature literary school of modernism in the 1930s in China. Western and Japanese modernists, such as Arthur Schnitzler, Pierre Baudelaire and Yokomitsu Riichi, for example, were translated into Chinese and began to be acknowledged and welcomed by Chinese readers. The regular contributors, including Mu Shiyong (穆时英, 1912–1940) and Liu Na'ou (刘呐鸥, 1905–1940), were defined as neo-sensationalist short-story writers,<sup>1</sup> and Dai Wangshu (戴望舒, 1905–1950) as

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please refer to Gregory Lee, *Dai Wangshu: The Life and Poetry of a Chinese Modernist*, pp. 2–3; Shen Jianzhong (ed.), *Shiji laoren de hua: Shi Zhecun juan* (Words of Centenarians: The Volume of Shi Zhecun), pp.37–40.

<sup>1</sup> The writing style of neo-sensationalism focuses on representing new sensation and experiences that are brought about by the rapidly transforming urban environment. It originates in Japan, and was welcomed by Chinese modernists like Liu Na'ou and Mu Shiyong in 1930s Shanghai. See Shih Shumei, *The Lure of Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917–1937*, Part 3; Peng Hsiao-yen,

a modernist poet.<sup>1</sup> In addition, many of the established literati became contributors to this literary journal, including Ba Jin (巴金, 1904–2005), Mao Dun (茅盾, 1896–1981), Shen Congwen (沈从文, 1902–1988) and Zhao Jiabi (赵家璧, 1908–1997), to name just a few. Some young people who made their literary debut in *Xiandai zazhi* demonstrated their talent and later formed a new literary generation in China. Among this new generation of young writers, Xu Chi (徐迟, 1914–1996) can be seen as the most typical example. In terms of distribution and sales, *Xiandai zazhi* was, at that time, a remarkable success. The appearance of the first issue of its large-format journal in May 1932 created quite a stir. The first issue of the second volume<sup>2</sup> was reprinted and “even set a record of 10,000 copies”.<sup>3</sup> Zhang Jinglu, one of the two proprietors of Modern Publishing House, highlighted the success of the journal by affirming that “the sales of *Xiandai zazhi*, a purely literary monthly magazine, could approximately run up to 15,000 copies”.<sup>4</sup>

Despite its great success as a literary journal in 1930s Shanghai, only 31 issues were launched before *Xiandai zazhi* was shut down in 1934. From the launch of the first issue of Volume 3, there was a decline in sales of this journal. According to Shi Zhecun’s account, the record of 10,000 copies for each issue had hardly been reached since the first issue of Volume 3.<sup>5</sup> The lower sales were partly due to the change in the editorship of the journal. The first two volumes of *Xiandai zazhi* were edited by Shi Zhecun while, from the third volume to the first issue of Volume 6, Du Heng joined him as co-editor to work on selecting and editing fiction and essays. Du was, at that time, involved in the debate about the “Third Category Men”, a derogatory term from the stance of the Chinese League of Left-Wing Writers, implying a politically middle group of people who were actually against the literary and ideological principles of the League. Although Du Heng presumably wished to plead for the creative freedom of literature from the political and ideological control of Communist-dominated leftism and of the Nationalist-directed government, the debate inevitably put *Xiandai zazhi* in an unfavourable position. The situation was made even worse by another debate in 1933 between Lu Xun and Shi Zhecun, on whether young people should learn from Chinese

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*Dandyism and Transcultural Modernity: The Dandy, the Flâneur, and the Translator in 1930s Shanghai, Tokyo, and Paris*, pp. 22–58.

<sup>1</sup> See Gregory Lee, *Dai Wangshu: The Life and Poetry of a Chinese Modernist*. Lee argues in the introduction of his book that the foremost exponent of Modernism in the 1930s was the poet Dai Wangshu.

<sup>2</sup> *Xiandai zazhi* was published on a monthly basis, and every six issues were arranged in a volume.

<sup>3</sup> Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> Zhang Jinglu, *Zai chuban jie ershi nian: Zhang Jinglu zizhuan* (A Twenty-Year Publishing Career: An Autobiography of Zhang Jinglu), p. 150.

<sup>5</sup> See Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), p. 54.

classics such as “*Zhuang Zi* [Chuang Tzu, 庄子] and *Wen Xuan* [Selections of Refined Literature, 文选]”. Lu Xun, as one of the leading figures in the Chinese Left League and also Chinese literary scene in the 1930s, took an active part in both debates, which left an even more unfavourable ideological stain on *Xiandai zazhi* within the dominant leftist discourse of modern Chinese literary historiography. The issue of the freedom of literature and art and the problematic Chinese tradition in the subject of Chinese modernity have formed sources of contention in two debates over the “Third Category Men” in 1932 and over “*Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*” in 1933. The prejudiced attitude towards *Xiandai zazhi*, resulting from the point of view of the Chinese left-wing camp in the 1930s, demonstrated a gulf between the two, and this gulf constitutes what I will propose as the divergence between a radical Chinese Communist left-wing discourse and a non-revolutionary cosmopolitan view of Chinese modernity.

A total of 31 issues of *Xiandai zazhi* were published under the editorship of Shi Zhecun and Du Heng before it was finally shut down in November 1934. As Shi recalls, there were three main factors that may have accounted for the closure of *Xiandai zazhi*: increased competition due to the newly-emerging literary journals in Beijing and Shanghai (as mentioned before, when *Xiandai zazhi* was first launched, almost all the literary journals in Shanghai had been destroyed in the Shanghai Incident); debates with the left-wing camp, which had led to some writers’ unwillingness to contribute to *Xiandai zazhi*; and the poor financial situation of Modern Publishing House.<sup>1</sup> After the launch of Issue 1 in Volume 6 in November 1934, *Xiandai zazhi* was forced to close, and Shi and Du both resigned as editors.

After a three-month suspension, *Xiandai zazhi* was reopened under the editorship of Wang Fuquan (汪馥泉, 1900–1959)<sup>2</sup>, who completely “revolutionized” the journal. In 1984, when *Shanghai shudian* [Shanghai Bookstore] reprinted all the issues of *Xiandai zazhi*, the compilers drafted a “Reprinting Preface” in which they stated that Modern Publishing House had been controlled by the Nationalist Party, which had designated Wang Fuquan as the chief editor for the later issues. As Shi Zhecun recalls, Modern Publishing House was taken over by Xu Langzi (徐朗西), and it was Xu who appointed Wang as the chief editor.<sup>3</sup> Xu and Wang,

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> The historical account of Wang Fuquan is far from clear. The most complete description of Wang Fuquan that I have found available is provided by Michel Hockx. As he points out, biographical data on Wang is confusing and sometimes conflicting. For more information, please refer to Michel Hockx, *Questions of Style: Literary Societies and Literary Journals in Modern China 1911–1937*, pp. 69–72.

<sup>3</sup> Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), p.29.

as Leo Lee Oufan believes, were “presumably designated by the Guomindang”.<sup>1</sup> Wang managed to release only three more issues before the journal was formally discontinued in April 1935. Although sharing the same Chinese title, the “revolutionized” issues appeared to be quite different from the previous 31 issues. Available discussions of *Xiandai zazhi* have rarely touched upon the last three “revolutionized” issues, although their nationalist approach is worth revealing to better understand the cosmopolitan stance of the first 31 issues of *Xiandai zazhi*. Therefore, all the 34 issues of *Xiandai zazhi*, in terms of its literary and cultural practices, will constitute my primary object of research in this thesis. The main contention of this thesis is that the significance of *Xiandai zazhi* not only lies in its translating and introducing world literature in a contemporaneous manner, but also lies in its conciliatory, tolerant approach of cosmopolitanism towards Chinese modernity.

## 1.2. Limitations in Existing Scholarship on *Xiandai Zazhi*

For about half a century after its demise in 1935, *Xiandai zazhi* received little attention, until the 1980s, when modernism was reintroduced to Mainland China and became popular once again. In the very few cases when it was referred to, *Xiandai zazhi* was dismissed as bourgeois or irrelevant to social reality. In *A Draft History of Chinese New Literature*, written by Wang Yao and published in the 1950s,<sup>2</sup> the poets in *Xiandai zazhi* were defined as belonging to the school of modernism. Deeply influenced by the so-called French symbolism<sup>3</sup>, which came into being at the time of the declining bourgeoisie, as Wang argued, these poets believed that the one and only task of poetry was to express emotion, and the more unintelligible a poem could be, the more artistic an effect it would achieve. Wang also denounced their “escapism”<sup>4</sup> for not throwing themselves into the real social struggle. He then moved on to criticize *Xiandai zazhi* for being “the shelter for those intellectuals who were disappointed at the reality”. A rigid conclusion then was drawn that the practice of the school of modernism in *Xiandai zazhi* was in opposition to the left-wing literature, which was under

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, Leo Oufan, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945*, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> Volume One of this book was Published by Kaiming Bookstore in 1951, and Volume Two was published by Shanghai New Literature and Art Press in 1953.

<sup>3</sup> It was mainly a literary and art movement in late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It originates with the publication of Charles Baudelaire’s masterpiece *Les Fleurs du mal* in 1857.

<sup>4</sup> Wang Yao, *Zhongguo xinwenxue shigao* (A Draft History of Chinese New Literature), p. 200.



the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, and thus definitely hindered progressive literature in China.<sup>1</sup>

The rediscovery of *Xiandai zazhi* in 1980s China was closely related to the rise and popularity of modernism in China in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This “New Era” witnessed the end of the Cultural Revolution and the start of the “Reform and Opening-up” policy. It was not only a period of economic and political reform, but also a time of change in the cultural and intellectual environment. After that, with the loosening of ideological control, modernism, which had been brought into China after the May Fourth era and had been overlooked for half a century, became the key issue on the literary scene. With the rise of modernism in Mainland China, the earlier works and writers in the 1930s have been studied with great interest. Almost at the same time, Shanghai, a metropolitan city in the 1930s, also became a popular topic for discussion in critical studies of Chinese modernity. Since then, *Xiandai zazhi* has been rediscovered and re-evaluated as the most important text source of modernism in 1930s Shanghai.

The last three decades have witnessed development in the study of *Xiandai zazhi*, but the rediscovery of it still leaves much to be desired. The limitations of existing scholarship on *Xiandai zazhi* mainly lie within two aspects: a narrow scope of viewing it as a journal of modernism and a revisionist view, which has tried to rectify the biased evaluation through defining similarities between *Xiandai zazhi* and the left-wing discourse in 1930s China and putting the journal on the “Left” track. The first paradigm has misinterpreted and overlooked the journal’s cultural attitude of contemporaneous cosmopolitanism, as defined in Section 1.1, and the second strategy, which is still powerful currently, has hindered a historical reading of alternative cultural attitudes between the left-wing camp and those of a more liberal mind in the 1930s.

### **1.2.1. A Narrow Scope of Viewing *Xiandai zazhi* as a Journal of Modernism**

In 1985, *An Anthology of Neo-sensationalist Fictions*, edited by Yan Jiayan, was published in Beijing, China. The main writers of neo-sensationalism and their works are reviewed in this book, including Liu Na’ou, Shi Zhecun and Mu Shiyong. In the preface, written in 1983, Yan analyses the general history, main writers, literary characteristics and ideological inclinations of neo-sensationalism. He argues that in May 1932, when *Xiandai zazhi* made its first appearance, this marked the formation of a literary school by the regular contributors to

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

*Xiandai zazhi*, including Liu, Shi, Mu and some other writers.<sup>1</sup> In the preface, he summarizes the artistic characteristics of neo-sensationalism as representing the morbid lifestyle of the semi-colonial metropolis, deliberately pursuing subjective sensation and the innovation of forms and techniques of fiction. Since Yan was unable to entirely shake off the ideological influence on literary criticism, the criterion of left-wing literature was still applied to the evaluation of neo-sensationalism in the 1930s. Yan believes that there was an apparent tendency of pessimism in short stories of neo-sensationalism. “On the one hand, it reflects the authors’ Nihilism and the dark side of heart; on the other hand, it indicates that this literary school entirely accepted the negative influence of Modernism from the West.”<sup>2</sup> In his study of modern Chinese fiction schools, published in 1989, Yan continues to examine the modernists from the perspective of the studies of literary schools. He believes that although one could not define *Xiandai zazhi* precisely as a journal of the school of modernism, a group of modernists did exist in terms their writing of modern fiction.<sup>3</sup>

Characterizing *Xiandai zazhi* as a journal of the modernist school, could first be connected to the fact that its rediscovery was closely related to the rise and popularity of modernism in the late 1970s and early 1980s in China. *Xiandai zazhi*, in which modernist works from the West were translated, and short stories of neo-sensationalism and poems of modernist style were published, was then defined as a literary journal of “*Xiandai pai*”, a Chinese term that normally refers to the literary and artistic school of modernism. The significance of *Xiandai zazhi* is highlighted by Lee’s assertion that “the journal *Xiandai zazhi* is now, after half a century of neglect, celebrated as marking the beginning of Chinese literary modernism”.<sup>4</sup> It has also been pointed out by Yang Lianfen that “there has not been such a considerable scale of Modernism in Chinese literature as that in poems and short stories of modernist style published in *Xiandai zazhi*”.<sup>5</sup>

It is a reasonable argument that some works in the journal can be categorized as modernism, but it would be a narrow and limited view to describe *Xiandai zazhi* as a journal of “*Xiandai*

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<sup>1</sup> Yan Jiayan, “Preface”, in *Xinganjue pai xiaoshuo xuan* (An Anthology of Neo-sensationalist Fictions), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Yan Jiayan, *Zhongguo xiandai xiaoshuo liupai shi* (A History of Modern Chinese Fiction Schools), p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> Lee, Leo Ou-fan, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945*, p. 130.

<sup>5</sup> Yang Lianfen, *Ershi Shiji Zhongguo Wenxue Qikan yu Sichao: 1897–1949* (Literary Journals and Trends in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in China: 1897–1949), p. 273.

*pai*” – if “*Xiandai pai*” is understood as the literary school of modernism in the narrow sense – as it normally is.

The expression “school of modernism” to refer to those associated with the journal was repeatedly rejected by Shi Zhecun, the chief editor of *Xiandai zazhi*. He repudiated his reputation as a leader of a “school of modernism” almost every time he was asked about it. In 1992, Liu Huijuan, a Singaporean writer who was at that time studying intellectual history in the US, conducted an interview with Shi Zhecun when she was in Shanghai for archival research. During this interview, when Shi Zhecun was asked about his understanding of “*Xiandai pai*”, which was used to refer to the literary school formed in *Xiandai zazhi* in the 1930s, he replied that “*Xiandai pai*” was not equivalent to the “school of modernism” in the West.

Liu: Was there such a term as “Modernism” in the 1930s [in China]?

Shi: No. There was just a “*Xiandai pai*”. *Xiandai* was the name of a journal that I edited. The regular contributors of *Xiandai* could be categorized as “*Xiandai pai*”.

Liu: Do you mean that *Xiandai zazhi* is a journal of the Modernist School?

Shi: Those who got their articles published in *Xiandai zazhi*, such as we three (Shi Zhecun, Mu Shiyong, Liu Na’ou) who wrote short stories, and Dai Wangshu, Bian Zhilin, Xu Chi and Lu Yishi who composed poems, were *Xiandai pai* [A Modern School] of that period. But this term should be used with quotation marks. It is not the school of Modernism [Modernism is originally in English] that has been frequently used nowadays.<sup>1</sup>

It has to be made clear that when Shi Zhecun used the term “*Xiandai pai*”, it referred to a group of people who happened to share similar literary style, rather than a literary school as it was normally understood. It was clearly stated in the opening statement of *Xiandai zazhi* that the journal did not intend to promote any specific literary trend or form any literary school. It may have been quite beyond Shi Zhecun’s expectation that the journal exerted such great influence on Chinese literature of Modernism that even Shi himself have to accept the term of “*Xiandai pai*”. Zhou Liangpei echoed Shi Zhecun in his understanding of “*Xiandai pai*”. In an essay written in honour of Professor Shi Zhecun’s hundredth birthday, Zhou pointed out that:

In the past, it was very difficult, or even impossible, for individuals to read a complete copy of *Xiandai zazhi*. One cannot distinguish the right from the wrong impressions of this journal. Ever since the Reform Era, there has been no difficulty in accessing *Xiandai zazhi*. However, some researchers on modern poetry still authoritatively took

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Da Liu Huijuan wen: wei zhongguo wentan caliang ‘xiandai’ de huohua” (Shi Zhecun’s Answering Liu Huijuan’s Questions: Striking a Spark of “Modern” for Chinese Literary World), in Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), p. 181.

the poets from *Xiandai zazhi* in the 1930s as equivalent to the Western School of Modernism... Therefore, in referring to Dai Wangshu as the representative poet of modern poetry, Mr. Shi Zhecun seriously and solemnly told me: “Dai Wangshu should be categorized into *Xiandai pai* instead of the Modernist School”.<sup>1</sup>

Although they did not go further and elaborate on the difference between “Xiandai pai” and “modernist school”, both Shi Zhecun and Zhou Liangpei have pointed out that it was a misinterpretation to define *Xiandai zazhi* as a journal of the “modernist school”. It is in the difference between “modern school” and “modernist school” that the cultural attitude of *Xiandai zazhi* can be detected. I will argue in this thesis that “Xiandai pai” (modern school) implies a historical and temporal consciousness of modernity while the notion of modernist school would limit the study of *Xiandai zazhi* in the realm of literary study.

The reason for misunderstanding the title “Xiandai pai” should first be attributed to the Chinese name of this journal, *Xiandai*, which meant the equivalent of both “modern” and “modernist” in the Chinese language. It is reasonable for a journal run by *Xiandai shuju* (Modern Publishing House) to be named *Xiandai zazhi*. What is worth more consideration is its French title, *Les Contemporains*. If we translate the French title back to Chinese, it should be more accurately translated as *Dangdai* [当代, contemporary] rather than *Xiandai* [现代, modern]. In fact, in 1930s Shanghai, the equivalent of the English word “modern” in the Chinese language was more likely to be *modeng* [摩登, modern], a transliterated neologism, than *xiandai* (现代) in Chinese.<sup>2</sup>

Translation has played a complex part in characterizing *Xiandai zazhi* as a journal of “Xiandai pai”, a Chinese term that could be the translation of both “modernist school” and “modern school”, despite these two notions showing considerable disparity in their meanings. When “Xiandai pai” was first proposed as a literary school, it referred to the poems published in *Xiandai zazhi*. In the column of “Wenyi dubai” (Monologue on Art and Literature, 文艺独白) in the first issue of Volume 4, Shi Zhecun responded to some readers’ negative attitudes towards the poems published in *Xiandai zazhi* by affirming that these poems were perfectly modern ones.

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<sup>1</sup> Zhou Liangpei, “Shi Zhecun yu xinshi ji ‘xiandai’ pai” (Shi Zhecun, the New Poetry and “*Xiandaipai*”), in Chinese Department in East China Normal University (ed.), *Qingzhu Shi Zhecun jiaoshou baisui huadan wenji* (A Collection of Essays for Celebrating Professor Shi Zhecun’s Hundredth Birthday), p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> See Zhang Yong, “Modeng” kaobian – 1930 niandai shanghai wenhua guanjianci zhiyi (A Textual Research of Modern – One of the Key Words of Shanghai Culture in 1930s), in “Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan” (Modern Chinese Literary Studies), 2007: 06.

The poems published in *Xiandai zazhi* are surely poems, and they are purely modern poems. They are works in modern poetic form made up of modern words and expressions which depict modern frames of minds that modern people have felt in modern life.<sup>1</sup>

From the perspective of the readers and, later, researchers, the six repetitions of “modern” (“Xiandai” in the original Chinese text) undoubtedly verified the impression that *Xiandai zazhi* was actually a journal of “Xiandai pai” (modernist school). From then on, “Xiandai shi” (modern poetry) would be easily associated with the newly-emerging modernist poetry in European countries and in America. Consequently, “‘*Xiandai pai*’ has become the translated title of the Modernists in China”.<sup>2</sup> It is not difficult to see that translation has played a very tricky role in the terminology of “Xiandai pai” in Chinese. “Modern” usually equates to *Xiandai* when it is translated into Chinese. Therefore, the literary group that mainly emerged in *Xiandai zazhi* was referred to as “Xiandai pai”, even though this “Xiandai pai” was not the same thing as “modernist school”, either in the Western context or in the 1980s in China.

“Pai”, or literary association, is a commonly used Chinese word to define a group of people sharing similar literary claims. After the May Fourth movement, most of the literary periodicals that advocated and practiced “new literature” were established by coterie, or “pai”. However, to classify *Xiandai zazhi* as a journal of “Xiandai pai” was clearly against Shi Zhecun’s intention. In the short opening statement, which was written in an informal but forceful tone, Shi Zhecun announced that *Xiandai zazhi* was “a general literary journal, not a coterie one; it is not intended to promote any literary trend, doctrine, or fashion; and the editor wishes to be supported by all Chinese writers so as to make a contribution for all those who are interested in literature”.<sup>3</sup>

In refusing to form any literary school, or to make *Xiandai zazhi* a coterie journal, Shi Zhecun had a much broader picture of *Xiandai zazhi* than merely a journal of modernism. From the very beginning of the launch of *Xiandai zazhi*, Shi Zhecun stated very clearly that the journal had not the least intention to form any literary school or camp. Rather, it aimed to translate and introduce all accessible modern and contemporary Western literature into China.

*Xiandai zazhi* not only applied a strategy of contemporaneity in translating and introducing Western literature into China, but it also held an all-inclusive attitude in its editing practices,

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “You guanyu benkan zhong de shi” (A Re-discussion of the Poems in *Xiandai zazhi*), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 1 (November 1933), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Xiandai zayi” (Miscellaneous Reminiscences on *Xiandai zazhi*), in Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Chuangkan xuanyan” (The Opening Statement), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 1 (May 1932), p. 2.

and every type of contemporary literary work in world literature was eligible to be covered in its blueprint, including literary works and events in Japan, the Soviet Union and also those nations neglected in terms of literary achievement in the 1930s, like Romania and Korea. Therefore, even if *Xiandai zazhi* was to be categorized as “Xiandai pai”, this “Xiandai pai” should be a “modern school”, which drew a much bigger picture than the “modernist school” as understood in 1980s China.

To sum up my argument in this section, the “Xiandai pai” initiated in *Xiandai zazhi* in the 1930s carried different meanings from the “modernist school” in its sense of a literary school. *Xiandai zazhi* was “modern” in the way that it chose to translate, introduce and even practise contemporaneous world literature in a prompt and timely manner, and this consciousness of being contemporaneous with the West indicates a cosmopolitan attitude in embracing the “other”. The notion of being “modern” denotes a historical consciousness and thus invites discussions of a broader scope of Chinese modernity.

### **1.2.2. A Revisionist View that Views *Xiandai zazhi* as a Middling-Favouring-Left Journal**

A historical and critical perspective will also help to investigate the dynamics in Chinese intellectuals’ response to modernity, which has been overlooked in the revisionist view over the last few decades. From the late 1980s onwards, researchers in Mainland China have tended to rectify the biased evaluation of *Xiandai zazhi* by means of defining similarities between *Xiandai zazhi* and the dominant left-wing discourse in 1930s China, which constitutes what I would refer to as the revisionist view of modern Chinese literary study. However, the revisionist perspective has rarely been explored beyond the limits of the May Fourth paradigm. The differences between *Xiandai zazhi* and Chinese left-wing discourse have been smoothed over, which to me is a misinterpretation of *Xiandai zazhi*.

The re-evaluation of *Xiandai zazhi* from within mainland China since the 1980s was greatly inspired by the project of “Rewriting Modern Chinese Literary History”. In the late-1980s China, Huang Ziping, Chen Pingyuan and Qian Liqun proposed a new research paradigm of “20th century Chinese literature”,<sup>1</sup> which took a more complete view of modern Chinese literature, aimed at rewriting modern Chinese literary history. It was also hoped that this would shake off the dogma of Maoist literary theories and enable a step into the age of “World Literature”. It takes the rediscovery of the “hidden texts” in the decades since the beginning of the 20th century to the 1980s, in order to rewrite a literary history of all 20th

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<sup>1</sup> Huang Ziping, Chen Pingyuan and Qian Liqun, *Ershi shiji zhongguo wenxue sanrentan* (A Three-Person Conversation on 20<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese Literature), p.1.

century literature. Since then, an impressive number of research achievements in the studies of modern Chinese literature, under the theme of “Rewriting Chinese Literary History”, have been published in Mainland China. Among the most significant examples is the rediscovery of Zhang Ailing and that of “Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies Writers”. *Xiandai zazhi*, which had been neglected for more than half a century, has undoubtedly become an important text for this project. However, based on the rigid dichotomy between East and West, and tradition and modernity, which has been the dominant discourse in China since the early years of the 20th century and has continued up until the late 1980s, the strategy of revision or rectification of this forgotten literary text was to assimilate it into the dominant discourse in the 1930s and neglect the alternative voices.

Conducted from the perspective of studies of literary societies, Jin Li’s *From Orchid Society<sup>1</sup> to Xiandai* is a recent work on the literary societies that were united around Shi Zhecun, Dai Wangshu, Du Heng and Liu Na’ou. In addition to its chronological analysis of the five literary societies, this book-length study highlights the significance of *Xiandai zazhi*, both for the studies of literary societies and for Chinese literary history at large. Jin defines *Xiandai zazhi* as being modern, miscellaneous and neutral. In defining *Xiandai zazhi* as being “modern”, Jin delineates its features in translating Western literature, relating it to urban life and learning from Western literature in order to develop Chinese literature. Jin’s study is informative and provocative, but the research scope is still limited to a revisionist approach. First, when he points out the nationalist drive of *Xiandai zazhi* in its reaching out and learning from the West, he seems to have overstated the utilitarian role of the literary and cultural practices of *Xiandai zazhi*. In addition, while Jin regards *Xiandai zazhi* as a politically neutral journal, he still puts much emphasis on the political leftism that Shi and his friends were interested in. To assimilate *Xiandai zazhi* with the dominant left-wing discourse in 1930s, rather than investigating the gap between them, Jin’s study is still limited to the revisionist scope. Moreover, as I will argue in Chapter 2, literary works and theories of Communism from the Soviet Union were translated and published in *Xiandai zazhi*, as a modern and yet new theory to Chinese people, but not as a political and ideological framework that could be employed to save China.

In addition to the studies of *Xiandai zazhi* from the perspectives of literary schools and literary societies, scholars tend to cast a revisionist view of Shi Zhecun in such a way that

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<sup>1</sup> Lanshe, or Orchid Society, was the first literary society founded by Shi Zhecun and his friends, such as Du Heng, Dai Wangshu, Zhang Tianyi (张天翼, 1906–1985) and others, in September 1922 when they were studying at Zhijiang University in Hangzhou.

legitimizing Shi Zhecun would help to legitimize *Xiandai zazhi*. In 2003, the Chinese Department of East China Normal University compiled and published a collection of essays for celebrating Professor Shi Zhecun's hundredth birthday. Those who had been Shi's colleagues, friends and students and those who had received support from Shi all contributed essays to this volume. As regards the debate in the 1930s between Shi Zhecun and Lu Xun, on whether the Chinese young generation should be recommended to read Chinese classic texts such as *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*,<sup>1</sup> these essayists all attempt to identify the similarities in understanding modern Chinese literature between Shi Zhecun and Lu Xun,<sup>2</sup> and argue that these two intellectuals shared the same concern for the Chinese young generation.

The same strategy could be identified in another collection of essays in remembrance of Shi Zhecun. In 2008, Chen Zishan, a scholar and professor working in East China Normal University, just as Shi Zhecun once did, compiled a book entitled *The Last Rose of Summer: In Remembrance of Shi Zhecun*. In their essays, Huang Shang, Lou Xiyong and Zhang Fuming all mentioned the debate between Lu Xun and Shi Zhecun over *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan* in the 1930s.<sup>3</sup> Given the unassailable position to which Lu Xun has been institutionalized in the history of modern Chinese literature, they had to either minimize the significance of this debate or emphasize the similarity in Shi and Lu's understanding of Chinese literature and culture. Since *Xiandai zazhi* had been involved in two notorious debates with Lu Xun, the rediscovery of the journal since the 1980s could not shun Lu Xun, who was the founder of the Chinese League of Left-wing Writers in 1930, and had been established as always being politically correct by China's dominant left-wing camp ever since.<sup>4</sup> The debates between Lu Xun and Shi Zhecun in the 1930s, which have hindered a further re-evaluation of *Xiandai zazhi* and its role in modern China, have also, in a way, demonstrated the gulf in understanding Chinese modernity between the exclusive Chinese left-wing discourse and the tolerant and liberal cosmopolitanism of Shi Zhecun and *Xiandai zazhi*.

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<sup>1</sup> The debate will be further studied in Chapter 3.

<sup>2</sup> See essays by Xu Zhongyu, Wang Tiexian and Liu Ling in Chinese Department in East China Normal University (ed.), *Qingzhu Shi Zhecun jiaoshou baisui huadan wenji* (A Collection of Essays for Celebrating Professor Shi Zhecun's Hundredth Birthday), pp. 1–4, 29–31, 122–126.

<sup>3</sup> Huang Shang, "Yi Shi Zhecun" (A Reminiscence of Shi Zhecun); Lou Xiyong, "Shi Zhecun tan yu Lu Xun de guanxi" (Shi Zhecun Talking on his Relationship with Lu Xun); Zhang Fuming, "Zhizhuo de zhongjianpai" (A Firm Middle Party), in Chen Zishan (ed.), *Xiari zuihou yiduo meigui: jiyi Shi Zhecun* (The Last Rose of Summer: In Remembrance of Shi Zhecun), pp. 15–23, 52–57, 296–308.

<sup>4</sup> The relationship between Lu Xun and the Chinese left-wing camp is another interesting and yet complicated issue. For more information, please see Leung Pak Wah, *Political Leaders of Modern China: A Biographical Dictionary*, pp. 113–117.



I have so far explained the limitations of the limited literary study and the revisionist view towards *Xiandai zazhi*. To arrive at a productive understanding of *Xiandai zazhi*, one must go beyond these limitations and examine its literary and cultural practices in relation to the issues of cosmopolitanism, Chinese tradition, liberal attitude and Chinese identity, which were all the defining elements of Chinese modernity.

### **1.3. Historical Contextualization of Chinese Modernity: Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Chinese Communist Discourse**

First arising from a Western context, the concept of modernity is now global and multiple, and no longer merely a Western construct. Seen as a multifarious concept, modernity is often explained using many terms, such as global industrialization, urban cosmopolitanism and consumerism, and intellectual enlightenment. Although it is not easy to come up with a very precise definition, it can first be argued that the notion of modernity carries with it a reaction against tradition or a rupture with the past. As Calinescu puts it, despite its heterogeneous origins and diversity of meaning, the concept of modernity is reflected above all “intellectual attitudes that are directly related to the problem of time”.<sup>1</sup> The time here refers to the human time and sense of history, as experienced and valued culturally.

For this historical consciousness, the notion of modernity would inevitably lead to dialectical oppositions “to tradition, to the modernity of bourgeois civilization (with its ideals of rationality, utility, progress), and, finally, to itself, insofar as it perceives itself as a new tradition or form of authority”.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, as he argues, at some point during the first half of the 19th century, “an irreversible split occurred between modernity as a stage in the history of Western civilization – a product of scientific and technological progress, of the industrial revolution, of the sweeping economic and social changes brought about by capitalism – and modernity as an aesthetic concept”.<sup>3</sup> The first notion of modernity denotes the doctrine of linear development and progress, while the aesthetic modernity, defined as “the personal, subjective, imaginative *dur ée*, the private time created by the unfolding of the ‘self’”,<sup>4</sup> is often opposed to the values of the first modernity.

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<sup>1</sup> Matei Calinescu, *Faces of Modernity: Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p.10.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

Of equal relevance to my study of Chinese modernity is the well-known essay “Two Theories of Modernities”, in which Charles Taylor proposes cultural modernity as opposed to acultural modernity. The cultural theory characterizes transformation within a specific cultural context while the acultural theory understands modernity as “culture-neutral”<sup>1</sup> – all societies will undergo the same linear progress from traditional societies to modernization. By highlighting the differentiation between these two theories of modernity, he proposed a site-based reading of modernities for different cultures, because each of them “has a language and a set of practices that define specific understandings of personhood, social relations, states of mind/soul, goods and bads, virtues and vices, and the like”.<sup>2</sup> This site-based and culture-specific methodology of cultural modernity tends to produce alternative modernities at different national and cultural sites, while to rely on the acultural version is to lose all.

Wen-hsin Yeh has pointed out the increase in research interest in studies of Chinese modernity: “One of the most active fields of academic research in recent years concerns the history of modern China, especially China’s experience with modernity during the first half of the twentieth century.”<sup>3</sup> The mounting interest in and the fruitful discussion of Chinese modernity have suggested the significance of background reading in the realms of modern China. Although the research on Chinese modernity requires the Western discourse on modernity as a reference, it would be preferable to contextualize a study in the geographical and historical dimensions of Chinese modernity. As Shen Shuang suggests, the discussion of Chinese modernity should be situated within the “polemical context of the ‘Chinese modern’ – a term with many related connotations: it implies a geographical global condition of inequality and unevenness, the pursuit of self-independence and autonomy by the Chinese, the desire for equal recognition and competition on the global stage, and the internal reorganization of cultural institutions and knowledge systems according to Western models”.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the notion of Chinese modernity not only reflects the globalization of Western civilization, but also indicates China’s self-reflections as an independent nation-state exploring its own version of modernity. For the purpose of my discussion, I borrow from Qian Suoqiao’s framework in studying Chinese modernity through the interplay between imperialism, nationalism and cosmopolitanism. His analysis is worth quoting in full here:

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<sup>1</sup> Taylor, Charles, “Two Theories of Modernity”, in Gaonkar, Dilip Parameshwar (ed.), *Alternative Modernities*, p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Yeh, Wen-hsin, “Introduction: Interpreting Chinese Modernity, 1900–1950”, in *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond*, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Shen Shuang, *Cosmopolitan Publics: Anglophone Print Culture in Semi-colonial Shanghai*, pp. 25–26.

The defining element in shaping Chinese modernity lies in the interplay between imperialism, nationalism and cosmopolitanism. The rise of Chinese modernity can be seen on three dimensions: the socio-political, the socio-cultural and the cultural-aesthetic. The socio-political is concerned with the (re)construction of a new nation-state against imperialist encroachment, as actualized in nationalist (as well as communist, in practice to a large extent) revolutions. The socio-cultural, as exemplified in the ‘New Culture and May Fourth Movement’ offers a predominantly cosmopolitan discourse aimed at a cultural revolution to achieve the socio-political goal of nation-building. The cultural-aesthetic dimension deals with the problematic of self and identity in relation to a confusing and chaotic world caught in between the legacy of tradition and a rapidly modernizing society.<sup>1</sup>

Based on this cross-cultural research framework, Qian points out that the social-political concern of nation-building is generally shared by almost all the Chinese intellectuals, but treated with different approaches. The divergence in their approaches, Qian argues, must be traced back to the New Culture Movement and May Fourth era, when the notions of nationalism and cosmopolitanism constituted the defining features of Chinese modernity. In addition, as I will discuss in this section, the Communist ideology in China, which increasingly gained power with the founding of the Chinese League of Left-wing Writers in Shanghai in 1930, should also be taken into account.

The idea of cosmopolitanism in China existed long before that of nationalism. The former began in ancient China, with the Confucian notion of “All under Heaven”, while the latter was formed in the closing years of the 19th century, when China was desperately struggling for national survival against Western imperialist powers. It should be made clear that the cultural notion of China was never a nationalist concept with clear boundaries. Levenson defines the Confucian notion of “All Under Heaven” as “cosmopolitan”.<sup>2</sup> In other cases, he uses the term “Confucian universalism” to refer to the “supremely cultural, invincibly historical” set of Confucian values:

Its values were universal, like the Christian, but Confucian universalism was a criterion, a standpoint, not a point of departure. It applied to all the world (all “under-Heaven”: *t’ien-hsia*, both “the Empire” and “the world”, where the “Son of Heaven” ruled); and it was open to all.<sup>3</sup>

Levenson also argues that Confucianists, as pragmatists, accepted cultural differences as the way of the world, always producing candidates for the title of barbarian. “From the point of view of normative Confucianism, wedded to culture and history and anti-messianic to the core,

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<sup>1</sup> Qian Suoqian, *Liberal Cosmopolitanism: Lin Yutang and Middling Chinese Modernity*, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph R. Levenson, *Revolution and Cosmopolitanism: The Western Stage and the Chinese Stages*, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

the barbarians are always with us.”<sup>1</sup> In the *Yi/xia* (Barbarian/Han Chinese, 夷/夏)<sup>2</sup> distinction, as perceived in Chinese prehistoric civilization, *Xia* mainly refers to the Han Chinese people, who lived in the central part of China, while *Yi* refers to the barbarians living in the eastern and northern parts. It is also important to note that the *Yi/xia* transformation was also identified by Confucius when he was compiling *Spring and Autumn Annals*, a book that recorded the prehistory of China. He believed that the *Xia* could culturally transform the *Yi* but it was not possible for *Yi* to transform *Xia*. This notion has long shaped the cosmopolitan understanding of cultural China, until it was challenged by the invasion from Western powers in the late Qing dynasty.

As a defining element of Chinese modernity, nationalism was awakened in the face of the Western powers. Since the late Qing dynasty, China has encountered a series of crises in which the relations between East and West, tradition and modernity, people and the nation, appeared as predominant issues. After China’s humiliating defeat in the Second Opium War (1856–1860), the Chinese intellectuals began to take notice of the serious impending threat from the West. After the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, a watershed event in modern Chinese history, a new generation of nationalist revolutionaries grew up, determined to overthrow the Qing dynasty. It was in this period of national crisis that a sense of Chinese nationalism was evoked and reinforced. It was also during this period that the traditional terminology along the line of the “*Yi/xia*” differentiation was challenged.

Later, in the May Fourth era, as once the first and foremost motivation, the nationalistic drive inevitably led to the radical rhetoric of anti-traditionalism and the polarized discourses of cosmopolitanism. On the one hand, sparked by a sense of national crisis and the desire to build a prosperous China, modern Chinese intellectuals began to doubt the self-sufficiency of Chinese culture. Chinese traditional language, literature and culture were all victimized as being backward and hence hindering the modernization of China. The most revealing example of this rhetoric of radical anti-traditionalism, sometimes referred to as iconoclasm, can be seen in the debate of “*Zhuang Zi and Wen Xuan*”, which I will discuss in greater detail in Chapter 3. On the other hand, in the rigid power relations between “inferior” China and the “superior” West, the discourse of cosmopolitanism denotes the learning of the new scientific and technological knowledge from the West in order to save the nation. Although the discourse of Westernization, as advocated by Hu Shi, was not necessarily supportive to the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> For more information, please see Li Zonggui, *Between Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the Modernization of Chinese Culture*, pp. 188–189.

discourse of iconoclasm promoted by Lu Xun, these two discourses both asserted the polarity between China and the West, tradition and modernity. In these paradigms of binary opposition, which inevitably prioritized one over the other, the way to fulfil Chinese modernity usually carried a sense of self-denial.

The historical context of the early years of 1930s China was shaped by the struggles between the Nationalist Party, on the right wing, and the Communist Party on the left. They both strove for dominance in literary and cultural lines in order to serve political and ideological purposes. On 18 April 1927, the Nanjing Nationalist Government was founded and became the only legitimate government of China, marking the beginning of the “Nanjing Decade” (1927–1937). Meanwhile, the same decade saw the determined efforts of Communist writers to seize leadership on the literary scene. The Chinese League of Left-wing Writers (中国左翼作家联盟, abbreviated to Left League) was founded in 1930 in Shanghai, China. Its membership included a number of influential writers at that time in China, including Lu Xun, Mao Dun (茅盾, 1896–1981), Ding Ling (丁玲, 1904–1986) and some other writers. Despite the influential part that Lu Xun played in Chinese literary scene, Qu Qiubai (瞿秋白, 1899–1935), a member of the Communist Party, assumed the real leadership of the Left League.

The Nationalist Party and the Communist Party resorted to different approaches in their power struggles. Levenson has discussed their different strategies through their different interpretations of people, a term that can be translated as both *minzu* (people in organic national synthesis) and *renmin* (people in abstract class analysis).<sup>1</sup> The Nationalist Party referred to *minzu* in a nationalist approach, and they attacked the Communists as anti-nationalists, who merely followed instructions from the Soviet Union. The Communist Party applied a different approach, defining the people as *renmin*, “not organic collective life but a collectivist abstraction – and not single and self-contained but cosmopolitan”.<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that, although the notion of *renmin* was not restricted to a certain nationalist community, it was based on the Communist doctrine of class analysis, in which *renmin* referred to the proletariat while the bourgeoisie were the enemy of *renmin*. This class-based stratification enabled Chinese Communists to be cosmopolitan and anti-imperialist at the same time. However, it also brought about the rigid relation between people and nation.

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph R. Levenson, *Revolution and Cosmopolitanism: The Western Stage and the Chinese Stages*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Although turning out to be cosmopolitan, both in theory and practice, Communist ideology adhered to a class-based structure in which people would be labelled either bourgeois or proletarian. Meanwhile, socialist realism,<sup>1</sup> which was borrowed from the Soviet Union, became the slogan of the Chinese Communist leftists and the exclusive paradigm of proletarian literature. Literature was manipulated as an instrument for political and ideological propaganda to serve the proletarian revolution. With the founding of the Left League, the revolutionary cosmopolitanism of Chinese Communists became the dominant discourse in China.

From the above discussion of the historical context in early modern China, a dominant discourse of Chinese modernity can be outlined: the May Fourth paradigm of nation survival and the discourse of radical anti-traditionalism brought about by the discourse, as well as the revolutionary cosmopolitanism advocated by the Chinese Communist left-wing camp. It is against this dominant discourse that I propose *Xiandai zazhi* as an alternative.

#### **1.4. My Perspective of an Alternative Vision of Chinese Modernity**

This section will provide a summary of the existing scholarship that has informed me in my own project of studying *Xiandai zazhi* and its alternative vision of Chinese modernity. My research interest in *Xiandai zazhi* stems from scholarly writings on the literary texts that have been neglected by the May Fourth paradigm, summarized by Michel Hockx as “a representation of a style that is culturally repressive, that actively discredited and marginalized other styles of writing, and that laid the foundation for the institutionalized repression of alternative styles under the post-1949 Communist regime”.

In terms of engaging with studies of the “repressed” texts, David De-wei Wang’s<sup>2</sup> widely cited work on late Qing fiction serves as an excellent model. He has examined four genres of late Qing fiction: depravity romance, chivalric/court-case cycles, grotesque exposé and science fantasy, all of which have either been treated in pejorative terms or simply been neglected. Through this comprehensive study, Wang provides a rethinking of the nature of Chinese literary and cultural modernity. He argues that signs of reform and innovation in Chinese literature can be discerned long before the May Fourth era, and that as China entered

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<sup>1</sup> Socialist realism is used by Chinese Communists to define a literary style pertaining to real life, especially the class struggles between the proletariat and bourgeois, rather than portraying individual emotion or the self-styled elite.

<sup>2</sup> Wang, Der-wei. *Fin-de-Siecle Splendor: Repressed Modernities of Late Qing Fiction, 1849-1911*.

the late Qing period, it was already developing its own complex forms of modernity in literature. However, these alternative genres of Chinese literary modernity were “repressed”, as Wang puts it in the title of this book, by the May Fourth generation, who advocated total Westernization and radical iconoclasm.

The rediscovery of “repressed modernities” helps to unveil the multiple visions of Chinese literature and Chinese modernity at large. In the book *The Revolution and Form*, Chen Jianhua has pointed out that “for the literary studies in this era [the 1930s], we need to call for double or even multiple perspectives to observe the conflict, influence and interaction among the various ‘revolutionary’ discourses in literature”.<sup>1</sup> Chen also points out the challenges in understanding the “social text” of the period of the 1920s and 1930s. Since literary criticism has been dominated by the “canonical” discourse of the May Fourth paradigm for a very long time, the cultural historiography and ideology in the Republic Era remain quite unknown.<sup>2</sup> Similar views have been proposed by Michel Hockx, who casts a historical and interdisciplinary light on Chinese literary societies and literary journals from 1911 to 1937, to examine how they functioned and fitted into the interaction and competition between different “new literature” working “styles”. Inspired by these pioneering studies on the literature and culture in Republican Era China, my study of *Xiandai zazhi*, also a neglected text of this period, focuses on those of its literary and cultural practices that serve as an alternative to the dominant discourse of the left-wing camp in the 1930s. As a leading literary journal, which advocated contemporaneous cosmopolitanism and also a liberal attitude towards Chinese tradition and modern literature, *Xiandai zazhi* is worthy of investigating here as an important “social text”.

My historical reading of *Xiandai zazhi* as offering an alternative vision of Chinese modernity begins with my curiosity in looking into the differences between the journal and the left-wing camp. During the 50-year neglect of *Xiandai zazhi*, the most insightful study of the journal and its editor Shi Zhecun appeared from overseas. It was C.T. Hsia who considered *Xiandai zazhi* and Shi Zhecun as “independent”. Hsia’s *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, published in 1961 in America, is epoch-making in introducing the literary movements of the 1930s and 1940s in Mainland China to the West, and has been an important textbook for the studies of modern Chinese literature ever since. He affirmed the significance of *Xiandai zazhi* by saying that “upon the demise of *The Short Story* [*Xiaoshuo yuebao*, 小说月报] in 1932, a

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<sup>1</sup> Chen Jianhua, *Geming yu xingshi: Mao Dun zaoqi xiaoshuo de xiandaixing zhankai, 1927–1930* (Revolution and Form: A Modernity That is in the Earlier Novels of Mao Dun, 1927–1930), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11.

literary monthly appeared in Shanghai which seemed likely to become its worthy successor”.<sup>1</sup> He defined Shi Zhecun as an “independent writer”, and highly evaluated his contribution to a politics-free journal in the 1930s by saying that “under his wise critical guidance, *Les Contemporains*, while eclectic in its choice of contributors, promoted a serious and politically independent literature”.<sup>2</sup> Although Hsia does not go into much depth on *Xiandai zazhi*, his argument is thought-provoking because he not only rediscovered *Xiandai zazhi* as a leading journal but also recognized its “independent” stance. What remains unclear is how “independent” and “eclectic” should be understood in the historical context in 1930s China. Seen from the perspective of political positioning, *Xiandai zazhi* was “independent” in the way that, as a bookstore-sponsored journal, it had no political or party affiliation. The assertion that *Xiandai zazhi* was “eclectic” is even more worth re-examining because *Xiandai zazhi* was misinterpreted as a “fence-sitting” journal in the debate of the “Third Category Men”. In defining *Xiandai zazhi* as “independent”, Hsia has touched upon its divergence from the dominant discourse. As I will argue in Chapter 4, to be “eclectic” was not to stay in a middle position, with the Nationalist Party as the Right and the Chinese Communist Party as the Left, as the notorious title “Third Category” indicated. With its adoption of a tolerant approach, *Xiandai zazhi* demonstrated an alternative view towards people and literature, and this is what I will uncover and analyse in this thesis. However, as an epoch-making work in studying modern Chinese literary history, Hsia’s work was not introduced to Mainland China until during the post-Mao era. *Xiandai zazhi* remained barely known until modernism was rediscovered in Mainland China and became the most popular theory, both in literature and in culture.

Leo Lee was the first person to unfold the heterogeneous features of *Xiandai zazhi* as an important text source for the study of Chinese modernity in the 1990s. In *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945*, Lee “take(s) an insider’s point of view by reading primarily Chinese materials – literary journals, newspapers, as well as works by individual authors and scholars – in order to construct a picture of Shanghai’s urban culture at the height of its splendor”.<sup>3</sup> Through such research on print culture and daily life in Shanghai, he is attempting to explore the inner logic of Chinese modernity. Lee emphasizes the significance of print culture in the construction of Chinese modernity and analyses how the books and journals available in Shanghai inspired people and made modernism possible in

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<sup>1</sup> Hsia, C.T., *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction, 1917–1957*, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Lee, Leo Ou-fan, “Preface” in *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945*, p. 1.



the 1930s. *Xiandai zazhi* was cited as an important text source for reaching the artistic frontiers of the Western avant-garde.

The journal's French title, *Les Contemporains*, while conveying an exotic foreign flavour, made a pointedly elitist and vaguely avant-gardist reference: it inscribes a collective self-image of Shi's group as people who saw themselves as "moderns" (as the Chinese title "Xiandai" so clearly indicates) and who also claimed to be "contemporaries" of world literature.<sup>1</sup>

This statement inspired me in exploring the editing practice of contemporaneous cosmopolitanism in *Xiandai zazhi*. By claiming to be coeval with the West, *Xiandai zazhi* acted as a confident participant of modernity. It offered us a valid approach to overcoming the rigid dichotomy of East and West, in which the former was always set against the latter. Applying cosmopolitanism as the principle of its translation, *Xiandai zazhi* succeeded in displacing the dichotomy with an all-embracing strategy. As Shi Zhecun put it, in terms of his understanding of the scope of modern Chinese literature:

There are no imported goods as such in the field of literature. All those written in Chinese language by Chinese people are Chinese literature. Even if it is about foreign people, it is still Chinese literature. Literature can only be evaluated as good or bad, but not differentiated as local or imported.<sup>2</sup>

The strategy of examining Chinese modernity through the study of urban Shanghai is also applied in Shih Shumei's analysis of Chinese modernism in the early 20th century. Engaging critically with theories of modernism, post-colonialism and cultural studies, Shih Shumei contextualizes Chinese modernism in the semi-colonial cultural and political background of Republican China. She has cited Edward Said's theory of imperialism and Orientalism and yet goes beyond it by delineating the specific context of China in the early 20th century as being semi-colonial. Based on this, she puts forward her main argument that Chinese intellectuals at that time applied a strategy of bifurcation, which enabled them to displace the colonial West with an imagined cosmopolitan West. It is with this strategy that Chinese intellectuals in the early 20th century translated Western literature and culture into Chinese and also imagined a Chinese modernity. I mentioned in Section 1.3 that the rise of nationalism in China is related to the history of imperialist invasion and colonialism in modern China. Shih's theory of "bifurcation" helps to explain the reason why Chinese modern intellectuals could embrace the Western literature and culture when they were in the face of imperialist invasion. I will develop this strategy in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 when I

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> "Zhongguo xiandai zhuyi de shuguang" (The Dawn of Chinese Modernism), in Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de Jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), p. 169.

discuss the confident subjectivity of translating and writing about the Western Other in *Xiandai zazhi*.

Of particular importance to my framework of alternative vision of Chinese modernity are Susan Daruvala's study of Zhou Zuoren's aesthetic approach to Chinese modernity and Qian Suoqiao's research on Lin Yutang as a liberal cosmopolitan representing a middling Chinese modernity. They both chose to study Chinese modernity from the perspective of texts that have been ignored, neglected and delegitimized by the Chinese dominant discourse on literature. Daruvala presents a historical and cross-cultural reading of Zhou Zuoren (周作人, 1885–1967), a modern Chinese writer who “represented the humanistic strand of thinking concerned with defining an ideal life”<sup>1</sup> in the early 20th century, when the May Fourth intellectuals, and later the Chinese left-wing camp, believed that literature should serve as a propaganda tool in the Chinese revolution and national survival. Daruvala focuses on Zhou Zuoren's aesthetic choice and his promotion of the essay as the form “most suited to expressing a writer's individuality”.<sup>2</sup> The tension between national enlightenment and individual self-expression will also be analysed in my study of *Xiandai zazhi*. My study of *Xiandai zazhi* from the perspective of cosmopolitanism has been greatly informed by Qian Suoqiao, who pioneered a book-length analysis of Lin Yutang and an alternative Chinese modernity that featured in liberal cosmopolitanism. Qian insightfully points out that:

to arrive at a mature modern Chinese culture one must go beyond the negative “national soul” of Lu Xun and replace the Nietzschean/Hegelian superman subject of hyper pessimism and revolutionary linearity<sup>3</sup> with a confident cross-cultural critic capable of drawing out strategies of cultural integration from both Chinese and Western cultural resources.<sup>4</sup>

This cosmopolitan scope is of particular importance in identifying the editing practices of contemporaneity and the cosmopolitanism of *Xiandai zazhi*. As I illustrated in the previous section, the revisionist approach in modern Chinese literary and cultural studies will not be overcome without a critical redefining work on Lu Xun. Susan Daruvala and Qian Suoqiao have offered us some very valuable insights into Chinese modernity in their understanding of Lu Xun and his contemporaries.

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<sup>1</sup> Daruvala, Susan, *Zhou Zuoren and an Alternative Chinese Response to Modernity*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> According to Qian Suoqiao, the Nietzschean/Hegelian subject was a doubly negative subject based on radical iconoclasm and relentless self-critique. See Qian Suoqiao, *Liberal Cosmopolitan: Lin Yutang and Middling Chinese Modernity*, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

I also discuss the temporal dimension of Chinese modernity that was demonstrated in the cultural attitude of the contemporaneous cosmopolitanism of *Xiandai zazhi*. Leo Lee points out that the quest for *jin*, or “now”, was an important feature in Chinese modernity:

Thus, we find in this new historical outlook an emphasis on, even a mystical apotheosis of, the moment “now” as the pivotal point marking a rupture with the past and forming a progressive continuum toward a glorious future.<sup>1</sup>

This notion of “*jin*” (the moment of “now” and the consciousness of being new) was also integrated in the editing practices of *Xiandai zazhi*. On the basis of this cross-cultural research framework, I chose to first investigate *Xiandai zazhi* from the perspective of cosmopolitanism, in both its translation and introduction of Western literature. The cosmopolitan practices in *Xiandai zazhi* not only indicate an all-embracing attitude towards Western literature and culture, but also imply a consciousness of being contemporaneous with the world, in which China is not a follower but a participant of modernity.

Shao Jian, in his study of Hu Shi and Lu Xun, two leading intellectuals in the 20th century in China, lists and analyses the differences between these two figures and points out that it is being tolerant or not that provides the definition of liberals. In the textual space that *Xiandai zazhi* built in the 1930s, Chinese tradition, which was denounced by the dominant left-wing discourse, was rediscovered and re-evaluated with an open mind. *Xiandai zazhi*, in which Imagist poetry<sup>2</sup> was translated and poems with traditional Chinese features were published, and which actively engaged in the polemics over “*Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*” and the “familiar essay”<sup>3</sup>, did reveal an alternative vision of Chinese modernity by corresponding to the modern world while also being open-minded towards Chinese tradition. In addition, this journal emphasized individual expression. By asserting the value of Chinese traditional culture and respect for ordinary individuals, *Xiandai zazhi* proved to be tolerant and liberal in its understanding of Chinese modernity.

## 1.5. Thesis Structure

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, Leo Ou-fan, “In Search of Modernity: Some Reflections on a New Mode of Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Chinese History and Literature”, in Cohen, Paul A. and Goldman, Merle (eds), *Ideas Across Cultures: Essays on Chinese Thought in Honor of Benjamin I. Schwartz*, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> It is a poetry school arose during 20<sup>th</sup> century. The imagists focus on images as their primary subject. I will discuss this term in Chapter 3.

<sup>3</sup> Familiar essay, in Chinese 小品文, is a short prose characterized by the depiction of personal feelings or thoughts. It is regarded as bourgeois and irrelevant by the dominant discourse in the early 1930s.

Organized around the theme of rethinking Chinese modernity, my thesis will be organized into five chapters. In this introductory chapter, I have so far provided a brief account of *Xiandai zazhi* and a literature review consisting of a discussion of Western theories of modernity and a historical reading of Chinese modernity in relation to nationalism, cosmopolitanism, tradition and Chinese left-wing discourse. In doing so, I would argue that the journal's alternative vision of Chinese modernity in 1930s China was constructed through four aspects: first, a cultural attitude of contemporaneous cosmopolitanism; second, a more balanced and open-minded approach towards Chinese tradition; third, a tolerant attitude, alternative to the left-wingers' class analysis of people and literature; and fourth, a fluid Chinese subjectivity constructed in cosmopolitan writing practice. Each will be explored in detail in the following chapters.

Chapter 2 will be devoted to an analysis of translations and introductions featuring contemporaneous cosmopolitanism in *Xiandai zazhi*. I argue that this all-embracing strategy provided a textual space for cosmopolitanism, in which the dichotomy between the West and China could be overcome in literary and cultural senses. The West, which had been put forward as a superior and unreachable model for China in the earlier New Culture Movement, was seen by *Xiandai zazhi* as being contemporaneous to Chinese modernity. The last three "Revolutionized Issues", which have often been ignored by those who have studied *Xiandai zazhi*, will be included in Chapter 2 to serve as a comparative study against the first 31 issues.

In Chapter 3, the relationship between tradition and modernity will be studied. I will study Chinese tradition in both the global and the local contexts, which will help to identify the irony that the Westerners were seeking new models and images from Chinese traditional culture while Chinese contemporaries were doing quite the opposite. It is in this search for Western modernity and the rejection of Chinese tradition that a dominant discourse of anti-traditionalism in the 1930s can be outlined. In contrast, *Xiandai zazhi* demonstrated an open-minded and tolerant attitude towards Chinese tradition, which could be implied by its publication of poems with Chinese characteristics and familiar essays, and also its translation and introduction of Imagism.

Chapter 4 will be devoted to a study of the tensions between the rigid left-wing camp and *Xiandai zazhi*, through which an attitude of tolerance from *Xiandai zazhi* can be traced. Although turning out to be cosmopolitan, both in theory and in practice, the Communist ideology adhered to a class-based structure in which people were stratified into either the bourgeois class or the proletariat. I will explore in the first section the polemic over "Third

Category Men”, to locate the tension between the exclusive left-wing camp and “tolerant” liberals such as Shi Zhecun. The debate over *Dazhongyu*, or “mass language”, in the 1930s will then be explored to illustrate their difference in viewing individual people.

Chapter 5 will focus on cosmopolitan writing practices in *Xiandai zazhi*, from the perspective of the relationship between self and Other. I will try to provide a cross-cultural analysis of the cosmopolitan writing practice, in which a transformative Chinese subjectivity can be identified. This will be carried out by means of a study of the translation and introduction of Pearl S. Buck and the Chinese short stories writing about the “Other” and yet blurring the boundary between self and Other. Three essays concerning Buck, which were published in *Xiandai zazhi*, and four sub-categories of the works of Chinese writers will be discussed in this chapter.

### 1.6. Note for Readers

I will refer to each specific issue by both the volume and issue number. For example, 1: 1 means the first issue of Volume One. The table below shows the time of publication of each issue. The time is given in a month/year format.

Volume 1	Volume 2	Volume 3	Volume 4	Volume 5	Volume 6
1:1 (05/1932)	2:1 (11/1932)	3:1 (05/1933)	4:1 (11/1933)	5:1 (05/1934)	6:1 (11/1934)
1:2 (06/1932)	2:2 (12/1932)	3:2 (06/1933)	4:2 (12/1933)	5:2 (06/1934)	3-months
1:3 (07/1932)	2:3 (01/1933)	3:3 (07/1933)	4:3 (01/1934)	5:3 (07/1934)	Suspension
1:4 (08/1932)	2:4 (02/1933)	3:4 (08/1933)	4:4 (02/1934)	5:4 (08/1934)	6:2 (03/1935)
1:5 (09/1932)	2:5 (03/1933)	3:5 (09/1933)	4:5 (03/1934)	5:5 (09/1934)	6:3 (04/1935)
1:6 (10/1932)	2:6 (04/1933)	3:6 (10/1933)	4:6 (04/1934)	5:6 (10/1934)	6:4 (05/1935)

All the Chinese articles published in *Xiandai zazhi* and quoted in this thesis are translated by the author of this thesis. A footnote will be given if the translation is cited from other scholarly writings. The Chinese names and proper terms are transliterated in Chinese Pinyin, and for all of them Chinese characters are also provided.

## Chapter 2.

### Contemporaneity and Cosmopolitanism: Translating and Editing Practices of *Xiandai Zazhi*

#### 2.1. Introduction

I have argued in Chapter One that, as its French title, *Les Contemporains*, indicates, that *Xiandai zazhi* had a clear preference for contemporary literature and an ambitious goal to be coeval with the West, rather than merely focusing on the Modernist School as an emerging literary and artistic fashion, as it was conceived in the 1980s. *Xiandai zazhi* was open-minded to embrace a contemporaneous world literature, and therefore, the “Modernist School”, which happened to be the dominant literary trend in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the West, naturally formed a main part in the translation and introduction of western literature in *Xiandai zazhi*. This Chapter will study the cultural attitude of contemporaneous cosmopolitanism in *Xiandai zazhi* through a detailed exploration into its translating and editing practices.

Section 2.2 and 2.3 will be devoted to a thorough analysis of the translating and editing practices featuring contemporaneity and cosmopolitanism. These two features of *Xiandai zazhi* were interrelated with each other, and together they could offer a better understanding of what being “Modern” really meant in the 1930s in *Xiandai zazhi*. Given the historical context that the latest literary fashion at that time was the Modernist School, many of the translations as well as writings in *Xianai zazhi* turned out to have Modernist characteristics. However, *Xiandai zazhi* did not focus exclusively on the Modernist School. Rather, it embraced all “modern” things in a cosmopolitan way, which could be demonstrated in its translations of world literature from a wide range of more than 15 countries. Another notable fact is that great attention was given to Leftist literature in the Soviet Union that was not Modernist but still was an important contemporaneous influence at that time throughout the world. Despite the fact that Leftist literary ideology was adopted and followed by Chinese Communists in the 1930s and became a dominant avenue for accessing literature, the translation of Soviet Leftism in *Xiandai zazhi* could not be seen as exclusively catering for the Chinese left-wing camp, but adhering to its cultural attitude of contemporaneity and cosmopolitanism. From the works of different literary genres and from different nations and regions, the readers of *Xiandai zazhi* could find a textual world of Western literature that went beyond national boundaries.

To arrive at a complete view of the features of *Xiandai zazhi* and its significance in offering an alternative vision of Chinese modernity, a comparison of the first 31 issues under the editorship of Shi Zhecun and Du Heng and the last 3 issues edited by Wang Fuquan will be given in Section 2.4. As I have pointed out in Chapter 1, Wang Fuquan was believed to be appointed by the Nationalist Party, and the last three issues were “Revolutionized” by him, from a cosmopolitan literary journal to a comprehensive journal with nationalism as its fundamental guideline. Through an investigation of the themes of national salvation and enlightenment in the last three issues, the significance of the first 31 issues of *Xiandai zazhi* edited by Shi Zhecun and Du Heng may be better understood.

## **2.2. Translation and Editing Practices Featuring Contemporaneity**

In this section I first study the special columns as an important strategy of introducing contemporaneous world literature in Chinese, followed by a discussion on latest foreign journals as the sources of the translated introductory essays. As discussed previously, “Xiandai” in the context of *Xiandai zazhi* conveyed a sense of reaching the contemporaneous frontiers of world literature. In the “Editor’s Afterword” in the first issue of *Xiandai zazhi*, Shi Zhecun clearly stated that since the journal is named *Les Contemporains*, he would make every effort to justify its reputation in translating contemporary world literature. “For each and every issue of this journal, I hope to introduce some works of modern and contemporary writers for the readers.”<sup>1</sup> In addition to the translation of literary works from the West and Japan, both the introductory essays written by Chinese and the translated ones were published in *Xiandai zazhi*. These introductory essays were usually collected in special columns of which the titles were slightly altered in different issues. Moreover, introductory essays which were originally published in the latest literary journals in the West and Japan were translated and published in *Xiandai zazhi*. It should be also pointed out that Shanghai as an international city in 1930s in China provided the editor and the contributors with access to the recently published Western journals and works imported to Shanghai. Located in Shanghai, *Xiandai zazhi* could provide its Chinese readership with the most up-to-date and contemporaneous information on literature from all over the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Bianji zuotan” (Editor’s Afterwords), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 1 (May 1932), pp. 197–198.

### 2.2.1. *Special columns of introductory essays: role and impact*

Sometimes *Xiandai zazhi* also carried pre-20th century literature and these works were often introduced by means of special sections for commemoration, such as “the Pictorial of A-Hundred-Year Memorial Elegy for Goethe” (1:3), and the Special Section for “A-Hundred-Year Memorial Elegy for Scott” (2:2). However, the main focus of *Xiandai zazhi* is on modern and contemporary literature in the early 20th century, especially after World War I. Even in special sections which were not regular special columns of *Xiandai zazhi*, a clear consciousness of being contemporaneous with the West can be identified. Examples can be found in Issue 2:2 (December 1932), in which two special sections were published. One was about John Galsworthy, who had been awarded the Nobel Prize in 1932, the same year of publication of this issue, and the second one was for Walter Scott, who had died in 1832, precisely 100 years before. In these two special sections the editor selected some works and manuscripts of these two writers, as well as some review essays and pictures. In a timely and vivid way these two famous writers were introduced into China.

Regular special columns were established for the same purpose: to keep readers informed of notable figures and events from the West and Japan. In the first 31 issues of *Xiandai zazhi*, Shi Zhecun established several special columns, such as “Yiwen qingbao” (Art and Literature Information, 艺文情报), “Wenyi yihua” (Chitchat on Literature and Art, 文艺逸话), “Wenyi Zalu” (Notes on Literature and Art, 文艺杂录), etc. Table 2.1<sup>1</sup> below lists the main columns through which *Xiandai zazhi* almost simultaneously introduced works, figures and events from the West and Japan into China.

The Title of the Column	The Issues (Volume: Issue)
Bali yuwen yihua (Chitchat on Art and Literature in Paris)	1: 1, 1: 2, 1: 3, 1: 6
Yiwen qingbao (Art and Literature Information)	1: 1-1: 6

<sup>1</sup> The statistics in Table 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 are based on the first 31 issues of *Xiandai zazhi*, with the No. 5:6 issue excluded. Since the No. 5:6 was a Special Issue on Modern American Literature, including 18 introductory essays on modern American writers, literary theorists, and critics, together with the translations of 16 modern American fictions, 1 short drama, 30 poems, 7 prose items, 1 introduction of the literary journals in America and 1 collection of biographical accounts of modern American writers. It will be further discussed in Section 2.3.2.



Xiandai wenyi huabao (Pictorial for Modern Literature and Art)	2: 3-2: 6, 3: 1-3: 6, 4: 1-4: 6
Jieshao ji wenyi tongxin (Introductions and Correspondent's Report on Literature and Art)	3: 1, 3: 2
Jieshao (Introductions)	4: 2, 4: 5, 5: 2, 5: 3
Lunwen ·jieshao (Essays and Introductions)	4: 6
Jieshao ·fanyi (Introductions and Translations)	5: 1
Jieshao ·yanjiu (Introductions and Research)	5: 4, 5: 5
Wenyi zalu (Notes on Literature and Art)	5: 1-5: 5

Table 2.1: Special Columns in *Xiandai zazhi*

Table 2.1 shows that there were 9 special columns which ran through the first 31 issues of *Xiandai zazhi*. At least one special column was provided in almost each and every issue, except for Issue 2: 1, 2: 2, 5: 6, and 6: 1. Both Issue 2: 1 and 6: 1 were designed as “Expanded Issues on Writing”, so there were no translations or introductory essays included. It has been mentioned earlier that Issue 2.2 carried two Special Sections on Scott and Galsworthy, which in a way served as two special columns. No 5: 6 Issue was a “Special Issue on Modern American Literature” which appeared in totally different column design from the other 30 issues. It is evident that special columns were attached great importance in *Xiandai zazhi*, although they were not always coming in a fixed title.

As two regular Special Columns in the first volume of *Xiandai zazhi*, “Chitchat on Art and Literature in Paris” appeared in Issue 1: 1, 1: 2, 1: 3, 1: 6, and “Art and Literature Information” ran through all six issues of Volume One. “Chitchat on Art and Literature in Paris” consisted of 10 short articles concerning the latest news and events in art and literature from Paris. The first article, entitled “The Age of Cocktail” (“Cocktail” is in English in the original text), defined post-war Paris as a flashy and mixed society where metros, Cubist paintings, typewriters, Bolsheviks, football, boxing, the wireless, aircraft and Freudianism had all

appeared, making a “cosmopolitan Paris”<sup>1</sup>. As the author explains in this article, “cocktail” can be used to define the main feature of this “cosmopolitan Paris”: to embrace different artist flavours from within and out of Paris and also to welcome people of different background. The second article introduced two new artistic and literary trends in France, Dadaism and Surrealism, and the rest of the articles all similarly focused on the newest figures, works and events in Paris.<sup>2</sup> Covering a wide range of topics, “Art and Literature Information” was very similar to a short newspaper bulletin, with headlines giving an overview of the content. For example, there are five short articles in this column in Issue 1: 5. “African Americans Heading for Russia for Film Acting” was originally reported in Reuters that twenty-two African Americans were invited to Russia to act in a film that depicted the working and living conditions of African Americans. The second article found its source in the news from “Guomin she” [National News Agency, 国民社]. It was reported that on 4<sup>th</sup> September, the wireless in Warsaw was interrupted by a piece of music that was composed by a dead German musician. The next three articles respectively reported that a Russian violin player went to China, that the writer John Dos Passos was popular in the Soviet Union, and that a Russian film director had a plan for a new film.<sup>3</sup> It can be seen from the short articles published in the column “Art and Literature Information” that *Xiandai zazhi* not only shared some similarities to newspapers in providing the latest information to readers, but was also cosmopolitan in its outlook.

In Volume 2, “Pictorials for Modern Literature and Art” was newly set up to provide pictures of the most recent events and figures of world literature. When interviewed by Shen Jianzhong in 2001 on the features and characteristics of *Xiandai zazhi*, Shi Zhecun specified “Pictorials for Modern Literature and Art” as one of the most important characteristics of *Xiandai zazhi*.

I place great emphasis on the Pictorial Section which was originally called “Picture Reporting” and was well received by the readers. From the Second Volume on, a Special Column “*Xiandai wenyi huabao*” [Pictorial of Modern Literature and Art] was set up to carry some valuable and interesting pictures and paintings from past and present, home and abroad. It featured recent information of writers from both China and foreign nations, with manuscripts and photos. The editors responsible for this section were trying to get pictures that had never been published in other journals before.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Xuan Ming, “Bali yiwen yihua” (Chitchat on Art and Literature in Paris), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 1 (May 1932), p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 169–172.

<sup>3</sup> “Yiwen qingbao” (Art and Literature Express), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 5 (September 1932), pp. 732–735.

<sup>4</sup> Shen Jianzhong ed., *Shiji laoren de hua: Shi Zhecun juan* (Words of Centenarians: The Volume of Shi Zhecun), p. 59.

In the pictorial column, the pictures of both Chinese and Western writers were collated together, enabling the boundaries between China and the West to be put aside. The features of both contemporaneity and cosmopolitanism can be identified in this section of “*Xiandai wenyi huabao*”. In Issue 2: 4, the pictures of Lu Xun’s speech in Beiping Normal University were collated with those of the Prix Goncourt in France. In Issue 2: 6, two pictures of Roushi (柔石, 1902-1931), who had been murdered in 1931, were put together with a woodblock print, “Sacrifice”, by Käthe Kollwitz, and there were also some photos in remembrance of Richard Wagner in this column.

In Issue 1: 4, launched in August of 1932, Shi Zhecun announced that he had a plan to form a network of literary correspondents in six countries: the UK, France, Germany, the USA, the Soviet Union, and Japan. Shi Zhecun did not mention why he chose these six in particular, but it could be assumed that these six countries were among the most modernized and developed at that time in the world. In his letters to Dai Wangshu, who was at that time studying abroad in France, Shi mentioned this plan and nominated Dai as the correspondent for France.

From the First Issue of Volume Three, I would like to add a section of “Correspondence Reports on Literature”. I have nominated Xiong Shiyi as correspondent for England, Feng Zhi for Germany, Luo Kaifei for USA, Gu Fei for Japan, Geng Jizhi for Soviet Union and you for France. Please prepare and post an article every month for this column.<sup>1</sup>

Shi Zhecun succeeded in carrying out part of his plan, as there were in total three correspondence reports from Japan, the UK and France published in *Xiandai zazhi*. In Issue 3: 1, a special column called “Jieshao ji wenyi tongxin” (Introductions and Correspondent’s Report on Literature and Art, 介绍及文艺通信) was newly set up in *Xiandai zazhi*. Chicago poet Carl Sandburg and French writer Raymond Radiguet were introduced in “Introduction”, and the sub-section “Guowai wenyi tongxin” (Correspondent’s Report on Foreign Literature and Art, 国外文艺通信) was composed of the “Correspondent’s Report from Japan” by Zhu Yunying (朱云影) and the “Correspondent’s Report from England” by Fei Wei (费薇). In “Correspondent’s Report from Japan”, Zhu summarized the contemporary Japanese literary scene as “lonely” because it had been taken over some literary trends which were erotic and absurdist and nonsense (nonsense is in English in the original text). The author then proceeded to discuss the Facist literary group which hardly produced any works of literary merits, as Zhu pointed out, and the Proletarian group that had been great suppressed while at

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Zhi Dai Wangshu (San)” (A Letter to Dai Wangshu, No.3), in Chen Zishan and Xu Rulin eds., *Shi Zhecun qishi nian Wen Xuan* (A Collection of Shi Zhecun’s 70-year Writing Career), p. 952.

that same time witnessed new talent emerging, as well as Artist group which managed to survive between the forementioned two. “Correspondent’s Report from England” introduced some of the recent events in the British literary field, including the publication of the compact edition of the Oxford Dictionary of English, London’s welcome for the book *Ann Vickers*, which was newly written by an American novelist, Sinclair Lewis, and news that the secretary of the London Writers Association, J. H. Thring, had published his new book “The Marketing of Literary Property”, for which Bernard Shaw had written a preface.

In Issue 3: 2, an introductory article entitled “The Drama Festival in Moscow” was published under the same section “Introductions and Correspondence Reports on Literature and Art” as in the previous issue. In “The French Correspondent’s Report” written by Dai Wangshu, the author pointed out that German intellectuals were enduring great suffering under Hitler’s rule at that time. Faced with this situation, the French Literature and Art Association convened to protest against the rule of German fascism. André Gide attended this meeting and made a speech in which he professed that all the working classes from all over the world should be united together. This correspondence essay was a timely and up-to-date introduction of the situation of the French literary scene to China.

Shi Zhecun’s grand plan of correspondents’ reports from Western nations was not completely fulfilled since the special column only appeared in Issue 3: 1 and 3: 2, but the translation and introduction of contemporaneous world literature were still published in *Xiandai zazhi* in several different sections. In the section named “Jieshao” (Introductions, 介绍) which was newly set up in Volume 4, modern American poet Vachel Lindsay was introduced. Some new talents in Chinese literary fields and seven poets of Imagism were also introduced with details under this section. In Volume 5, the introductory section evolved into “Wenyi zalu” (Notes on Literature and Art, 文艺杂录). It was quite similar to the column of “Chitchat on Literature and Art” in Volume 1, but focused more on the issues from within literature itself. In this introductory section, there were articles on the latest information about literature in Italy, Soviet Russia, Spain and the UK, as well as articles on post-war French literature, the recent Nobel Prize-winner John Galsworthy, an English novelist and playwright, and newly-emerging literary trends such as New Romanticism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Futurism, and American Imagism. This strategy not only demonstrated a cultural attitude of cosmopolitanism in *Xiandai zazhi*, but also helped to construct a contemporaneous textual space of world literature for Chinese readership.

### 2.2.2. Latest foreign journals: sources for the translations of contemporaneous world literature

The feature of contemporaneity will be evinced in a further investigation into the sources of the original texts of the translated introductory essays published in *Xiandai zazhi*. Table 2.2 below lists all the translations of introductory essays published in *Xiandai zazhi*. The original essays covered a wide range of topics, including literary figures, events, and theories from different nations, which will be further studied in Section 2.4.2. What will be discussed in this section is the strategy of translating the introductory essays very recently published in latest foreign journals and having them published in *Xiandai zazhi*.

Nation/ Region	Key Words (Volume: Issue)	Num -ber
Soviet Union	Gorky's short stay in Sorrento (1: 2), An Interview with Alexis Tolstoi (1: 6), Marx, Engels and Literary Trend of Realism (2: 6), Gorky in Tsarist Russia (3: 1), Leo Tolstoy's love stories and his <i>Family Happiness</i> (3: 3), The shifting in Russian art (3: 5), Socialist realism (3: 6), Humor Literature in the Soviet Union (5: 2), Sergei Yesenin and the School of Imagist Poetry in Russia (5: 3)	10
France	Post-war French Literature (1: 4), A Literary Coast in France (1: 4), Raymond Radiguet (3: 1), The debate between Rousseau and Encyclopédiste (5: 4)	4
UK	Bernard Shaw's Stay in Moscow (1: 3), Bernard Shaw's Dramas (3: 6), Latest Trends in English Fiction (5: 5)	3
Italy	An interview with Marinetti (1: 3), Current Italian Literature (1: 4), Latest Trends in Italian Fiction (5: 4)	3
Germany	Heinrich Heine and Revolution (4: 1), Pierre Baudelaire and His Pathology (4: 6), Latest Trends in German Fiction (5: 2)	3
Spain	An interview with Baroja (3: 2), Latest Trends in Spanish Fiction (5: 3)	2
USA	Latest Trends in American Fiction (5: 1)	1
Norway	An Interview with Knut Hamsun (5: 1)	1
Estonia	An Introduction to Modern Estonian Art and Literature (2: 6)	1
Korea	A Brief History of the Literary Movement in Korea (3: 5)	1

Non-National-specific	The Euro-American Journals in 1932 (1: 4), New Romanticism (1: 5), New Schools of Poetry in Britain and America (2: 4), East, West and the Novel (2: 5), Questions on the Methodology of the Study of Literary History (3: 2), Some Events of the International PEN (3: 6), Agreement and Disagreement in Art (5: 1), Where is Poetry Going (5: 2), A Faith Worth Dying For (5: 5), A Brief Introduction to Esperanto Literature (5: 5)	10
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Table 2.2: Translation of 39 Introductory Essays

To translate essays from their original sources in foreign journals was a common practice of *Xiandai zazhi*. In the first 31 issues of *Xiandai zazhi*, a total number of 39 introductory essays written by foreign writers or critics were translated into Chinese. Recurring in the titles of these essays are words like “latest,” “modern,” “new” and “emerging”. All these words demonstrated the journal’s preference in translating world literature in a timely and contemporaneous way. Out of the 39 translated essays, 18 were clearly stated to have been originally published in a foreign journal. Chinese translators got most of these original texts from reading the foreign journals that were exported to/available in Shanghai at the time, such as “Fortnightly Review” (American) “Living Age” (British), and the Japanese journal “Serpent”. Examples can be found in the introductory essays translated by Zhao Jiabi and Gao Ming.

Zhao Jiabi, an important translator and critic in modern China, translated and published five essays on the development of modern fiction in the following nations: USA (5: 1), Germany (5: 2), Spain (5: 3), Italy (5: 4), and the United Kingdom (5: 5). “The Development of Modern American Fiction”, the first in this series of translations, was written by Milton Waldman. The essay delineated the historical development of American fiction, from the time when it was taken as a branch of English literature, to its independent route to success. Sinclair Lewis, Joseph Hergesheimer, Willa Cather, and William Faulkner were analyzed in detail and considered the best examples of an independent and distinctive American literature. It is possibly from this essay that Chinese readers began to know William Faulkner for the first time. The other four introductions to the development of modern fiction in Germany, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom were all translated from essays recently written by famous critics from the West, offering fresh literary figures and their works to Chinese readers.

The above-mentioned five essays on Euro-American fiction translated by Zhao Jiabi were selected from the same journal, “Fortnightly Review”. Chosen from the issues published from

December 1933 to April 1934, the essays were translated and published in *Xiandai zazhi* between May and September of 1934, showing the success of *Xiandai zazhi* in translating and introducing a contemporaneous world literature into China.

Gao Ming, another important translator and critic who had a great command of Japanese language and literature, translated many essays from Japanese into Chinese. In “Euro-American Literary Journals in 1932” which was translated from a Japanese monthly journal, “Serpent”, Gao listed and analyzed the journals in France, the USA, the Soviet Union, the UK and Germany. The year 1932 was named as the “Year of Journals” in China, and this introduction of Western journalism was significant in connecting China to the Western world. The original essay was published in the April issue of “Serpent” in 1932, and the Chinese translation by Gao Ming was published in the August issue in *Xiandai zazhi*. A four-month time lag was quite impressive concerning the war situation in China and the time needed for translation. In this sense, *Xiandai zazhi* did manage to be contemporaneous with the West and Japan in terms of translation and the introduction of world literature. Another essay translated from Japanese by Gao Ming was “The Newly-Emerging Poetry Schools in England and America”<sup>1</sup> which was published in Issue 2: 4 in February, 1933. This essay conducted a thorough introduction to the new poetry schools in England and America, including, to a large extent, modernist poets but not limited to those, as it also included, for example, African-American poets. In *Xiandai zazhi*, a cultural attitude of cosmopolitanism was embedded in this consciousness of being contemporaneous with the West.

As the entry point of cross-cultural activities in the 1930s in China, the metropolitan city of Shanghai facilitated this contemporaneous translation in *Xiandai zazhi*. Leo Ou-fan Lee has pointed out that the physical environment and facilities of a semi-colonial metropolitan Shanghai provided Shi Zhecun and other contributors to *Xiandai zazhi* with the opportunity to have immediate access to knowledge of the West.

Given Shanghai’s resources, it was possible not only to find up-to-date editions of Western literary works in their original languages and/or in English translation but also for a literary editor such as Shi Zhecun to build up his personal collection of selected titles.<sup>2</sup>

Shi Zhecun’s own words verified Lee’s view of the significant role the availability of the latest Western literary works had played on the editing practices of *Xiandai zazhi*. “Generally

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<sup>1</sup> Gao Ming, “Yingmei Xinxing Shipai” (“The Newly-Emerging Poetry Schools in England and America”), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2:4, pp. 550–566.

<sup>2</sup> Lee, Leo Ou-fan, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945*, p. 125.

speaking, I read all the accessible literary journals and books in the original languages from all over the world (to be acquainted with the recent information on Western literature).”<sup>1</sup> In this sense, *Xiandai zazhi* was a product of Shanghai’s social reality and the evolving urban culture. Based on his study of Shanghai print culture, Lee firmly believes that “Without the city’s physical environment and facilities it would have been impossible for Shi and his Shanghai ‘contemporaries’ to create—or even imagine—a modern literature of their own”<sup>2</sup>.

### **2.2.3. Contemporaneity: an attempt to be coeval with the West**

The translating and editing practices of contemporaneity made *Xiandai zazhi* successful both in literary values and business profits. According to Shi Zhecun, this journal was very popular among university students who were studying foreign literature because in their four-year education, they merely “kept reading Dickens and Shakespeare”<sup>3</sup>. Wu Fuhui (吴福辉, 1939-) applies the theory of literary production to his study of the periodicals of Shanghai School in the 1930s, and argues that commercial profit was one of the major drive for the flourish of literary periodicals in Shanghai. For *Xiandai zazhi*, as he indicates, the editing principle of translating and introducing the contemporaneous literature was to attract readers and to compete with other journals.<sup>4</sup> Business profit was one of the objectives of *Xiandai zazhi*. It was one of Hong Xuefan and Zhang Jinglu’s ideas that through the publication and circulation of this journal, Xiandai Bookstore would possibly be able to sell more books. However, placed in the historical background of the 1930s, when intellectuals began to rethink the rigid May Fourth discourse, we can envision some new perceptions.

First of all, *Xiandai zazhi* inherited the quest for “newness” in the “West-learning” which was one of the primary goals of the May Fourth Movement, but endeavoured further to be contemporaneous with the West. What is new may not be what is contemporaneous. Things that have not been introduced into China can be considered new, but this newness did not necessarily carry with it the sense of timeliness. It is true that *Xiandai zazhi* was renowned for its translation and introduction of Modernism in China, but the notion of “Xiandai”, or “being modern” as indicated in this journal was definitely a different concept from just being

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<sup>1</sup> Shen Jianzhong ed., *Shiji laoren de hua* (Words of Centenarians: The Volume of Shi Zhecun), p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Lee, Leo Ou-fan, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945*, p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Da Liu Huijuan wen: wei zhongguo wentan caliang ‘xiandai’ de huohua” (Shi Zhecun’s Answering Liu Huijuan’s Questions: Striking a Spark of “Modern” for Chinese Literary World), in Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), p. 179.

<sup>4</sup> Wu Fuhui, “Zuowei wenxue shangpin shengchan de haipai qikan” (Periodicals of Shanghai School as Literary Commercial Products), in *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan* (Chinese Modern Literary Studies), 1994, No. 01, pp. 1–15.



“Modernist”. As pointed out in Section 2.2, the “Modern School” of *Xiandai zazhi* embraced a modern world in general and contemporaneous world literature in particular. In order to present the latest information on world literature in China, special columns were set up for prompt introduction of world literature and the latest journal essays were translated into Chinese and published in *Xiandai zazhi*.

Second, *Xiandai zazhi* presented a sense of confidence in translating contemporaneous world literature and culture into China, for the claim to be coeval with the West indicated the equal position between China and the West. A progressive perspective of Chinese modernity tends to believe that Chinese literature and culture was temporally and historically lagging behind its Western and Japanese counterparts. Ever since the late Qing dynasty, the need to catch up with the latest trend in the West has legitimized the earning of cultural capital in China. If the translation of Western literature symbolizes cultural capital in modern China, *Xiandai zazhi* stepped into the furthest frontier of Westernization by proclaiming to be contemporaneous and coeval with the West. It was not in a desperate game of catching up, but rather declaring its coevality with the world. The anxiety of facing Western modernity was therefore replaced by a confident gaze out over the world.

### **2.3. Translation and Editing Practices Featuring Cosmopolitanism**

The feature of contemporaneity in *Xiandai zazhi* was interrelated with its cultural attitude of cosmopolitanism. As the title *Xiandai zazhi* suggested, this journal was embracing everything that is modern, or more specifically speaking, contemporaneous. The latest literary works, figures and events were translated and introduced in *Xiandai zazhi*, no matter whether it was from a modernized nation such as Japan or America, or a less developed country like Romania. As long as it was contemporaneous, it would have the potential to appear in *Xiandai zazhi*. In other words, this consciousness of being contemporaneous with the West also involved an all-embracing attitude of cosmopolitanism, and this feature of cosmopolitanism will be discussed in the following part.

Leo Ou-fan Lee has cited *Xiandai zazhi* as an important text source to help China reach the artistic frontiers of the Western avant-garde, and argues that in the 1930s in Shanghai *Xiandai zazhi* was a pioneer in looking outside for modern literature and art in the West and then introduce them into China.

Instead of colonial mimicry, I see this phenomenon of Chinese writers eagerly embracing Western cultures in Shanghai's foreign concessions as a manifestation of a Chinese cosmopolitanism, which is another facet of Chinese modernity.<sup>1</sup>

He has emphasized the significance of print culture in the construction of Chinese cosmopolitanism by saying that “this massive translation and production of texts served to constitute the very cultural space in which the implications of cosmopolitanism must be measured”<sup>2</sup>.

Generally speaking, the most recent literary works and the latest literary trends from more than 15 nations were translated and introduced in *Xiandai zazhi*, forming a textual space in which the translating and editing practices of cosmopolitanism could be identified. Special attention will be paid to a depoliticized perspective in the translation and introduction of Leftist literature and theory. I will argue that this all-embracing attitude of cosmopolitanism not only offered some alternative insights into the nationalist boundaries between China and Western/Japanese nations, but also acted as a depoliticized stance against the exclusive and rigid discourse of Chinese communist left-wing discourse in 1930s China.

### **2.3.1. Nations and genres: An all-embracing translating strategy**

In this literary journal featuring cosmopolitanism and contemporaneity, most recently published writings of different literary genres were translated into the Chinese language and often attached with a brief introduction of the author and the works. Meanwhile, introductory essays originally published in foreign periodicals were also translated in *Xiandai zazhi*. In addition, some Chinese scholars wrote essays to introduce the West and Western literature and culture. The following three tables show respectively the statistics of these three strategies of introducing a world literature into China.

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, Leo Ou-fan, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945*, p. 313.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 314.

Nation/ Region	Genre: Number	The authors whose works have been translated in <i>Xiandai zazhi</i>	Number
France	Fiction: 8 Poetry: 16 Prose: 1	F: Guillaume Apollinaire, P. de Nolhac, Paul Vaillant- Couturier, Julian Green, Han Ryner, Raymond Radiguet, Valery Larbaud, Marcel Arland P: Pierre Reverdy (5) <sup>1</sup> , Remy de Gourmont (11) Prose: Paul Vaillant-Couturier	25
USA	Fiction: 2 Poetry: 17 Drama: 1 Prose: 1	F: Willa Cather, James S. Allen P: Hilda Doolittle (3), Evelyn Scott (2), Amy Lowell (2), Carl Sandburg (9), Vachel Lindsay D: John Reed Prose: Pearl S. Buck	21
Japan	Fiction: 11 Poetry: 6 Prose: 2	F: Iketani Shinzaburou, Shiga Naoya, Juichiya Gisaburo, Kobayashi Takiji, Yokomitsu Riichi, etc. P: Tano Ryuichi, Gotou Karane, Inui Naoe, Otsuka Yoshinori, Okamira Sumako, Tanaka Huyuji Prose: Iketani Shinzaburou, Juichiya Gisaburo	19
UK	Fiction: 2 Poetry: 7 Drama: 2 Prose: 4	F: John Galsworthy, etc. P: W. B. Yeats (7) D: John Galsworthy, G. Bernard Shaw Prose: George Gissing, E. V. Lucas, Somerset Maugham, etc.	15
Spain	Fiction: 3 Prose: 11	F: Ramón P érez de Ayala (2), P ó Baroja Prose: Asuolin (11)	14
Soviet Union	Fiction: 8 Prose: 5	F: B. Garin, Aleksey Tolstoy, Biyussov, M. Gorky, etc. Prose: Ilya Ehrenburg, Aleksey Tolstoy, M. Gorky, etc.	13
Italy	Fiction: 3 Poetry: 8	F: Bontempelli, Morino Moretti, Giovanni Verga P: Gabriele D'Annunzio (8)	11

<sup>1</sup> In Table 2.3 the number in the brackets beside the name of the author indicates the number of works that were published in *Xiandai zazhi*.

Hungary	Drama: 1 Prose: 1	D: Ferenc Molnar Prose: Ferenc Molnar <sup>1</sup>	2
Romania	Fiction: 1	F: I. Al. Brătescu-Voinești	1
Estonia	Fiction: 1	F: A. Gailit	1
Belgium	Fiction: 1	F: Maurice des Ombiaux	1
Austria	Fiction: 1	F: A. Schnitzler	1

Table 2.3: Translation of 124 Works of World Literature

Judging from the table 2.3 above, 124 pieces of writing from 12 nations were selected to be published here. Besides such well-established nations as the UK and France, readers could also get information on newer national literatures such as that of the USA, as well as those nations that had been rarely mentioned in China before, including Romania, Estonia and Belgium.

Of the four nations with the most works translated in *Xiandai zazhi*, the UK and France had long been among the most popular and important nations for their literary legacy, canonical works, and literary creativity and productivity. As early as the late Qing dynasty when Lin Shu translated a number of English and French novels into Chinese, literature from these two nations was greatly welcomed by Chinese readers. In the 1930s in China, *Xiandai zazhi* focused more on modern and contemporaneous works and writers from these two nations. Guillaume Apollinaire is considered one of the forefathers of surrealism in France in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. John Galsworthy and W. B. Yeats were both contemporary writers of worldwide reputation in this period.

Paul Vaillant-Couturier was a French writer, journalist, and at one time the chief editor of a communist newspaper in Paris. Lee Oufan has pointed out that from a leftist point of view, “the decade from 1927 to 1939 was also the period in which a cosmopolitan atmosphere prevailed in Shanghai almost by default, because the more conservative nationalism in both Japan and China had ironically facilitated the growth of a loose alliance of left-wing intellectuals against Japanese imperialism in Asia and fascism in Europe, which the urban

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<sup>1</sup> The translator Xu Xiaocun attributed the text to Mo Na (莫纳), without providing more detailed information of who the author is. Considering that it is the usual practice for *Xiandai zazhi* to accompany one or more piece of writing to what has already been included in the same issue, it is reasonable to assume that 莫纳 is the same person as Ferenc Molnar whose play was also translated and published in the same issue of *Xiandai zazhi*.

wing of the underground CCP Exploited to its great advantage.”<sup>1</sup> It is in this context of leftist internationalism that Vaillant-Couturier paid a visit to Shanghai to attend the “Anti- War Conference of Far East” which, according to Shi Zhecun’s account, was held on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1933 in Shanghai by “World Anti-imperialist War committee”. The conference was held behind the scenes, but Shi Zhecun and Du Heng were able to visit Vaillant-Couturier in his hotel on October 3<sup>rd</sup> and asked him to write a short essay for *Xiandai zazhi*. The essay, entitled “To Chinese Intellectuals”<sup>2</sup>, was later translated and published in the November issue of *Xiandai zazhi* in 1933. The interview with—and the essay by—Vaillant-Couturier were very successful examples of the editing practice of contemporaneity and cosmopolitanism in *Xiandai zazhi*. The editors made every effort to include all the events and figures in the journal, and, at the time, they attempted to publish them in a timely way. The attention given to the work of Paul Vaillant-Couturier is also typical of the interest in Leftist Communism by *Xiandai zazhi*, which will be further elaborated later in section 2.3.3. As I will argue, the interest in and inclusion of Communist Leftist literature in *Xiandai zazhi* was not because the discourse of Leftism which was increasingly prevailing in 1930s, but because Communist Leftism was among the most contemporaneous ideology at that time in the world.

Compared to English and French literature, the history of American literature is relatively short, but its writers and works turned out to be extremely modern, creative, and extraordinary. There is a total number of 21 pieces of American literary work published in *Xiandai zazhi*, with all the four basic literary genres included. More importantly, a Special Issue of Modern American Literature was launched as Issue 6 of Volume 5 in *Xiandai zazhi*, which gives a comprehensive introduction to almost all the modern American writers and their works, such as Jack London, O. Henry, Theodore Dreiser, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, etc. It could also be inferred from this list that Modernism was never the only focus of *Xiandai zazhi*, for at least O. Henry was a typical modernist.

Ranked third in terms of the number of works translated in *Xiandai zazhi*, Japanese modern literature was definitely one of the focuses of this journal. Given the context that China was engaged in the War of Resistance against Japan and *Xiandai zazhi* was founded right after the Battle of Shanghai in 1932, the large number of translations of Japanese literary works was especially revealing of its cultural attitude of cosmopolitanism. There were even some short

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, Leo Ou-fan, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945*, pp. 321–322.

<sup>2</sup> Fan Shi tr. Vaillant-Couturier, “Gao zhongguo zhishi jieji—wei ‘Xiandai zazhi’ zuo” (To Chinese Intellectuals—For *Les Contemporains*), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4:1 (November 1933), pp. 9–10.

stories composed by Chinese writers but from the perspective of Japanese people involved in this war published in *Xiandai zazhi*, which demonstrated a unique feature of the cosmopolitanism of *Xiandai zazhi* and will be analyzed later in Chapter Five.

In addition to these four major nations with the biggest number of literary works translated in *Xiandai zazhi*, works from Spain, the Soviet Union, Italy, etc. were also included in this journal. All of these translations worked together to contribute to a cosmopolitan literary map of China in the early 1930s.

It is evident that a cultural attitude of cosmopolitanism was applied to the translating and editing practices of *Xiandai zazhi*. Although Shi Zhecun did not elaborate on cosmopolitanism when he was acting as the editor of *Xiandai zazhi*, he expressed the same idea later in 1946 in the Inaugural Editorial of his journal, *Huoshidai* (Living Age)<sup>1</sup>.

Living in this age, we could no longer be able to live a traditional life or keep segregated and primitive. Each and every breath of us is closely connected with people in other places. Only by understanding the whole world can we maintain a proper position on the earth.<sup>2</sup>

In order to “understand the whole world”, in *Xiandai zazhi*, Shi Zhecun applied an all-embracing editing principle of translating and introducing a contemporaneous literary world into China, which revealed his belief that China and other nations were living in the same “Living Age”, the title of another journal edited by Shi Zhecun in the same period, and only in the way of cosmopolitanism can people from different nations understand each other.

### **2.3.2. Introductory essays: the grand plan for systematic translation and introduction**

A cosmopolitan editing strategy means that readers not only had access to recently published literary works, but could also get an overview of literary developments and trends from the introductory essays which included both the translations and the writing of Chinese writers and critics. There were 67 introductory essays published in *Xiandai zazhi*, with 39 translated from the West and Japan and 28 written by Chinese authors. Brief information on both categories is listed in Table 2.2 and in Table 2.4 below.

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<sup>1</sup> “Living Age” (活时代) was a translation journal co-edited by Shi Zhecun and Zhou Xuliang (1905–1984). It only runs three issues, respectively launched on April 10, April 25, May 10 of 1946. For more details on this journal, please see Wang Yuping, *Xiandai zhihou: Shi Zhecun 1935-1949 nian chuanguo yu sixiang chutan* (After *Xiandai*: On Shi Zhecun’s Writing and Literary Theory from 1935 to 1949), pp. 75–77.

<sup>2</sup> Shi Zhecun, “*Huo Shidai fakanci*” (Inaugural Editorial of *Living Age*), in Shi Zhecun, *Shi Zhecun xuba* (A Collection of the Forewords and Afterwords of Shi Zhecun), p. 19.

It has been pointed out in Section 2.3.2 that the translated introductory essays were published in a timely and prompt manner. Another feature was the extensive topics that they covered, which helped to present a holistic view of world literature. Most of these essays were originally written by Western writers and critics, such as Mario Praz, Luigi Pirandello, Richard Lewinson, Jakob Wasserman, and Aldous Huxley. The themes and contents of these essays covered a wide range of topics, including interviews with recent writers, the introduction of recent works, as well as overviews of recent literary trends in the world.

Through a closer reading of the translated introductory essays, one will easily find that these essays covered a large number of translated works from a wide range of nations, including not only the UK and France, which have long been highly regarded in terms of literature and art, but also the USA, a nation with a relatively short history. Literature of the Soviet Union, which was exerting great influence upon China's literary and cultural scene, had drawn close attention from the editors of *Xiandai zazhi*, and literature from those nations that were, at that time, regarded as inferior and secondary as compared to the forementioned national literature, like Estonia, Norway and Korea, had nonetheless also been included.

The role the introductory essays played to serve the grand plan for systematic translation and introduction is better demonstrated in those written by Chinese authors. The national origins and the key issues are listed in Table 2.4 below.

Nation/ Region	Key Words (Volume: issue)-Author	Number
UK	W. B. Yeats (1: 1)-An Yi, On John Galsworthy (2:2)-Su Wen, A List of the Works of John Galsworthy (2: 2)- Xi Hui, The 100 <sup>th</sup> Ceremony of Scott (2: 2) -Ling Changyan Bernard Shaw (2: 5) -Zhao Jiabi A Correspondent's Report from England (3: 1)-Fei Wei	6
Soviet Union	The Circle of Theatres in Moscow (3: 2)-Ye Lingfeng Ivan Turgenev (3: 6) -Shen Duanxian Socialist Realism (4: 1) -Zhou Qiyong Theatre in the Soviet Union (4: 2) -Su Wu Ivan Bunin (4: 3) -Zheng Zhong Anatoly Lunacharsky (4: 4)-Li Junliang	6

USA	The Chicago Poet Carl Sandburg, (3: 1) -Shi Zhecun Pearl S. Buck and Her Protagonist, Wang Long (3: 5) -Zhao Jiabi John Dos Passos (4: 1) -Zhao Jiabi Vachel Lindsay (4: 2) -Xu Chi An Interview with Pearl S. Buck (4: 5)-Zhang Boyu	5
France	Guillaume Apollinaire (1: 1) -Chen Yuyue Pierre Reverdy (1: 2) -Yue Julian Green (1: 5) -An Hua A Correspondent's Report from France (3: 2) -Dai Wangshu The Love Stories of Balzac (5: 4) - Guo Jianying	5
Spain	Ramón Pérez de Ayala (1: 1) - Jiang Si	1
Japan	A Correspondent's Report from Japan (3: 1)-Zhu Yunying	1
Misce-llaneous	Ex Libris (4: 2) -Ye Lingfeng The Literary Scene in Euro-America in 1933 (4: 5) -Gao Ming Seven Poets of Imagism (4: 6) -Xu Chi The Poems of Futurism (5: 3) -Gao Ming	4

Table 2.4: 28 Introductory Essays by Chinese Authors

It shows that there are in total 28 introductory essays about foreign literature published in *Xiandai zazhi* that are written by Chinese writers and critics. These essays often served as the complementary texts to the translated works of a foreign writer so that the readers would be able to get a complete and systematic view of works and writers from outside of China. A systematic format of translated works in *Xiandai zazhi* could be identified from the fact that introductory essays and literary works often supplement each other, which was an important strategy to present a comprehensive view of world literature.

This strategy could be first demonstrated from the “Translator’s Note” attached to many of these translations of introductory essays with information on the author and the source of the original essay. The translation of Western literature in *Xiandai zazhi* turned out to be organized in a systematic way. The works and introductory essays in this journal were not randomly selected. Rather, it appeared with a well-planned translation programme.

In the “Editor’s Diary” in Issue 2: 6, Shi Zhecun stated his design for a systematic format of translations in *Xiandai zazhi*.



We have received many translations, some of which are merely a translated work without any brief introduction of the author, or an introductory article randomly picked up from an old book. These translations will not be published for being unorganized. What about our previous issues? The same problem exists in some works that have been published before. I hope that from now on we will receive some well-organized translations. It is better for a translated work to be attached with an introduction of the author and for an introductory essay of a nation or a literary school to be attached with a piece of related writing.<sup>1</sup>

Still in this “Editor’s Diary”, Shi Zhecun spoke highly of Fu Ping, who had sent two pieces of translation to *Xiandai zazhi*, “An Introduction to Modern Estonian Art and Literature” together with a short story by an Estonian writer, A. Gailit. In fact, Shi Zhecun was underestimating *Xiandai zazhi* here because the systematic format of translation and introduction had been applied to this journal before he pointed out this problem. In Issue 2 of Volume 2 there was a Special Column set up to celebrate John Galsworthy’s winning of the Nobel Prize. “Quality”, a short story, and “The Sun”, a play, were published in this issue. To supplement the above-mentioned two translated works, “On John Galsworthy” by Su Wen and “A List of the Works of John Galsworthy” by Xi Hui were published in the same column. Likewise, in Issue 5 of Volume 2, a translation of Bernard Shaw’s drama, “Annajanska”, translated by Xiong Shiyi, was accompanied by an introductory essay about Bernard Shaw written by Zhao Jiabi.

This strategy of systematically translating Western literature was best revealed in “The Special Issue on Modern American Literature”. This Special Issue began with an introduction in which Shi Zhecun<sup>2</sup> stated his plan to compile one Special Issue for each volume of *Xiandai zazhi* and that the Special Issue on Modern American Literature was just a start. This Special Issue on Modern American Literature would be divided into nine sections. In the first section were four introductory essays respectively on American fiction, plays, poetry and literary criticism. In Section Two, literary theories of Irving Babbitt, Ludwig Lewisohn and V. F. Calverton were translated. Section Three was composed of 11 essays, introducing several recent writers, including Jack London, O. Henry, Ezra Pound, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, etc. Then the following four sections carried 16 short stories, one play by Eugene O’Neill, a selection of modern American poems and then five pieces of prose. The eighth section included two essays on American literary periodicals and the biographies of modern American writers, and the last section consisted of a wide range of miscellaneous topics

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Shezhong riji” (The Editor’s Diary), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 6 (April 1933), pp. 884-885.

<sup>2</sup> Based on Shen Jianzhong’s interview with Shi Zhecun, we know that “The Introduction to the Special Issue of Modern American Literature” was drafted by Shi. See Shen Jianzhong ed., *Shiji laoren de hua: Shi Zhecun juan* (Words of Centenarians: the Volume of Shi Zhecun), p. 66.

within American literature. This massive introduction to Modern American literature “was unprecedented in its systematic, comprehensive effort to cover American literature”<sup>1</sup>.

### ***2.3.3. Translation of Leftist literature and theory: a de-politicized attitude***

As can be seen from Table 2.2, the Soviet Union is ranked first in the number of translated essays, with 10 essays published in *Xiandai zazhi*. For France, which was ranked second in this list, there were only four essays published, much fewer than those from the Soviet Union. For the rest of the nations, far fewer essays (only one to three) were published in *Xiandai zazhi*. Literary works and theories from the Soviet Union are the leading group published in this journal and are thus worth further analysis here. In fact, an interest in translating communist literary works and theories could be identified in some literary societies and journals founded by Shi Zhecun and his friends before *Xiandai zazhi*. From 1928 to 1931, Shi Zhecun, Dai Wangshu and Liu Na’ou had successively operated three bookstores in Shanghai, from which they published literary journals like *Trackless Train* (*Wugui lieche*, 无轨列车, 1928), *La Nouvelle Littérature* (*Xinweiyi*, 新文艺, 1928-1930), and also some Collections of “Scientific Theories of Literature and Art” (*Kexue de yishulun congshu*, 科学的艺术论丛书, 1929-1930), which were books on Marxist literary theories from the Soviet Union and translated from Russian mainly by Lu Xun, Feng Xuefeng, etc. During the publication of this series of books about “Scientific Theories of Literature and Art” and even the whole period during the management of these bookstores, Shi Zhecun and Liu Na’ou were highly inspired by Feng Xuefeng, an important Chinese communist, both on the literary scene and in the Chinese Communist Party.<sup>2</sup> The friendship between Shi Zhecun and Feng Xuefeng has been employed by some “revisionist researches” on Shi Zhecun and *Xiandai zazhi* to prove that Shi Zhecun was a fellow traveller of the communist leftists in China and *Xiandai zazhi* was a left-wing journal. It is true that Shi Zhecun was interested in Soviet literature and literary theories, but *Xiandai zazhi* was not a Left-wing journal.

This narrow scope of revisionist thinking is limited because it is still a politicized discourse on literary criticism. In 1983, Shi Zhecun composed an essay for his “last old friend—Feng

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<sup>1</sup> Shih Shumei, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937*, p. 252.

<sup>2</sup> For more information, please refer to “*Women Jingying Guo Sange Shudian*” (We Have Operated Three Bookstores), in Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de Jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), pp. 12-25. For related studies, please refer to Jin Li and Shih Shumei on their studies of *Xiandai zazhi* and Shi Zhecun.

Xuefeng”<sup>1</sup>, in which he recorded his reminiscences of Feng, who had become his close friend since the late 1920s. It is a strong, and yet different, interest in literature that was the basis of their friendship. In the 1930s Feng Xuefeng became member of the Left League, and played an active part in the Left-wing camp. As to the reason why Shi Zhecun and Liu Na’ou chose to publish a collection of literary theories of Marxism when they were running a bookstore named “Water Foam” (*Shuimo*, 水沫), it is also explained in this essay that literary works and theories of the Soviet Union that had been very rarely translated were considered actually “new” and pioneering in China in the early 1930s. This consciousness of being modern and avant-gardist could also be felt in the title of “Frontline Bookstore” (*Diyixian shudian*, 第一线书店), later closed because of censorship from the Nationalist government and then replaced by “Water Foam”.

By close reading of all the issues of *Xiandai zazhi* and a thorough study into its editing practices, I argue that ideology was never the criterion of selecting papers to be published in *Xiandai zazhi*, and that Leftism from the Soviet Union was introduced because it was believed to be a modern theory, like Imagism or Dadaism. In other words, this passionate translation of left-wing literature was not due to political or ideological considerations, but a demonstration of the editing practice of contemporaneity and cosmopolitanism of *Xiandai zazhi*. In Shi’s later years, when asked about the translation of Leftism in *Xiandai zazhi*, he replied, “we didn’t apply political views to see left-wing theories and the literature of the Soviet Union. Rather, we took it as a new-emerging modern trend.”<sup>2</sup> In fact, in the 1920s and 1930s when Communist Leftism had not yet become the national ideology of China, it was quite popular among Chinese intellectuals as a modern theory that featured in its cosmopolitan vision and anti-imperialistic stance. “From the early 1920s to the mid 1930s, scholars who studied Soviet Union Literature from all over the world all took it as the left-wing branch of Modernist School.”<sup>3</sup> It is, therefore, understandable that *Xiandai zazhi*, a literary journal making an effort to translate a contemporaneous West into China, would pay great attention to the works and theories of Leftism. As is stated in the Inaugural Editorial of *Xiandai zazhi* drafted by Shi Zhecun, all the works that had the intrinsic value of literature itself and the feature of contemporaneity would have had the potential to appear in *Xiandai zazhi*. The criterion for

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Zuihou Yige Laopengyou—Feng Xuefeng” (My Last Old Friend—Feng Xuefeng), in Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de Jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), pp. 122–130.

<sup>2</sup> Shi Zhecun, Shi Zhecun, “Da Liu Huijuan wen: wei zhongguo wentan caliang ‘xiandai’ de huohua” (Shi Zhecun’s Answering Liu Huijuan’s Questions: Striking a Spark of “Modern” for Chinese Literary World), in Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), p. 179.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

selecting works to be published in *Xiandai zazhi* was never ideological preference. In other words, the reason why a large number of works and essays of the Soviet Union were published in *Xiandai zazhi* was not that this journal is a left-wing mouthpiece, but that Marxism or Communism was a modern thing in the early 1930s in China.

#### **2.3.4. Cosmopolitanism: an all-embracing cultural attitude**

First of all, the discourse of cosmopolitanism, which was almost equivalent to that of westernization in the historical context of modern China, has long been a predominant facet of Chinese modernity. I have discussed the notion of cosmopolitanism in Chapter One. On the one hand, it was under the threat from the West and Japan that Chinese nationalism was gradually formed. On the other hand, to catch up with the latest trend in the West became the fashion to follow and the essential way towards national survival and nation building. To acquire “new knowledge” and to make “new citizens”, it could be safely argued that the only possibility for China to fulfil its modernity was to learn from the West. What makes *Xiandai zazhi* stand out is its all-embracing attitude. As can be seen from Section 2.3.2 and 2.3.3, the criterion of selecting Western literary works is neither the economic nor political power of a specific nation, nor a specific literary genre or school that was popular in the West. All literary works and trends that were contemporaneous in the 1930s would have the potential to be published in *Xiandai zazhi*. This all-embracing cultural attitude of cosmopolitanism was always one of the most obvious features of *Xiandai zazhi*. Although from May 1933 Du Heng joined Shi Zhecun as a co-editor, cosmopolitanism as an editing principle of this journal was never changed. Shi hoped that through the cosmopolitan literary space built up in *Xiandai zazhi*, people could be informed of recent literary works and literary schools from almost all over the world.

I closely followed the literary development and literary trends from all over the world, and thus I take translating and introducing foreign literature one of the objectives of this journal. In this way I hope that people would be attracted to read this journal and then be informed of the remarkable figures and events in the world literary field.<sup>1</sup>

Shi has also articulated his understanding of literary cosmopolitanism by saying that “literature can only be evaluated as good or bad, but not differentiated as local or imported”<sup>2</sup>. Seeing beyond the nationalist boundary between “local” and “imported”, *Xiandai zazhi*

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<sup>1</sup> Shen Jianzhong ed., *Shiji laoren de hua: Shi Zhecun juan* (Words of Centenarians: the Volume of Shi Zhecun), p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> “Zhongguo xiandai zhuyi de shuguang” (The Dawn of Chinese Modernism), in Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), p. 169.

offered us a valid approach to overcome the rigid dichotomy of China and the West in which the former was set against the latter.

It should also be pointed out that an all-embracing attitude distinguished *Xiandai zazhi* from the dominant Communist discourse, which was almost equally cosmopolitan in 1930s in China, both in theory and practice. Yet propagating international proletarian revolutions, Chinese communist leftists turned to socialist Soviet Union while defying other parts of European nations and America. The divergence between *Xiandai zazhi* and the rigid communist discourse will be further discussed in Chapter 4. Here in Section 2.4.3 I have highlighted a de-politicized attitude in translating leftist literature and theoretical essays in *Xiandai zazhi*. In 1920s and 1930s the theory of communist leftism was a modern theory, just like Imagism or Dadaism. The inclusion of leftism in *Xiandai zazhi* was not for an ideological or political purpose, but for its all-embracing cultural attitude.

#### **2.4. Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism: A Study of the Last Three “Revolutionized Issues” of *Xiandai Zazhi***

Ever since its establishment in May 1932, there had been a total number of 34 issues of *Xiandai zazhi* published on a monthly basis, except for a three-month suspension from November 1934 to February 1935. The first 31 issues were under the editorship of Shi Zhecun and Du Heng while the last three were edited by Wang Fuquan. The last three issues are also believed to have been controlled by the Nationalist Party government.<sup>1</sup> Wang “revolutionized” *Xiandai zazhi*, turning it into a comprehensive journal including “all the institutions of modern times”<sup>2</sup> other than merely on literature.

For most researchers studying this literary journal, only the first 31 issues under the editorship of Shi Zhecun and Du Heng could be considered as *Xiandai zazhi* in the strict sense and thus could be accounted as the data source. The reason for this difference is the distinctive disparity in the essay quality and editing principles of *Xiandai zazhi* in these two different

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<sup>1</sup> In 1984 when Shanghai Bookstore reprinted all the issues of *Xiandai zazhi*, the compilers drafted a “Reprinting Preface” in which they stated that Xiandai Bookstore had been controlled by the Nationalist Party, which designated Wang Fuquan as the chief editor for the following issues. Shi Zhecun also wrote an introduction to this reprinted volume expressing the same view on the last three issues. Based on these two essays I regard the last three issues as essentially the mouthpiece of the Nationalist Party.

<sup>2</sup> Wang Fuquan, “Gexin de hua” (Preface to the “Revolutionized Issue”), *Xiandai zazhi*, 6: 2 (March 1935), p. 2.

phases. The last three “Revolutionized Issues” were neither a literary journal, nor were they following the editing strategy of contemporaneity and cosmopolitanism. Therefore, it is understandable that researchers who investigate *Xiandai zazhi* from the perspective of literary journals or literary societies would just skip the last three issues. For example, in his book-length study of the literary societies surrounding Shi Zhecun and his friends, Jin Li cites and examines *Xiandai zazhi* as a significant journal in the studies of Shi Zhecun in particular and of modern Chinese literary history in general. He has listed and analyzed the history, the main features and the notorious debates related to *Xiandai zazhi*. However, his study only covers the first 31 issues. Although he has mentioned the bankruptcy of Xiandai Bookstore and the final failure of *Xiandai zazhi*, he does not go further into any textual analysis of the last three issues. Likewise, Leo Ou-fan Lee who has made some pioneering researches on *Xiandai zazhi* has shunned the last three issues as well in his *Shanghai Modern*.

It is quite obvious that the last three issues were not of the same high quality as the previous 31 issues, in terms of the selection of articles and journal editing. However, the disparity between these two groups of texts could perfectly serve as a sample for the study of Chinese modernity. A comparison between the two could demonstrate how the first phase of this journal offered an alternative vision of Chinese modernity in 1930s China through its translating and editing practices of contemporaneity and cosmopolitanism. Therefore, in this part I will examine the last three issues of *Xiandai zazhi* in terms of the understandings of Chinese modernity that are different from what has been analyzed in the previous parts of this chapter.

#### **2.4.1. “Revolutionized Issues”: a different journal with the same title**

Despite the fact that the last three “revolutionized” issues continued using the same title and followed some of the basic structures of the first 31 issues, there were apparent differences in terms of journal orientation, target audience, content and also the regular contributors. In other words, although sharing the same Chinese title, *Xiandai*, one could safely argue that the last three issues emerged as a totally different journal. A strong difference can be observed if we compare the first 31 issues of *Xiandai zazhi* with the last three “Revolutionized Issues” which focused more on China, but not China interacting with the whole world. The new *Xiandai zazhi* emphasized Chinese nation building and national enlightenment, which could be especially demonstrated in its articles on natural and social sciences.

The differences between the first 31 issues and the last three can firstly be observed from their front pages with regard to chronology and title. In the first issue of *Xiandai zazhi* which is under the editorship of Shi Zhecun, it is clearly marked on the front page that the publication year of this journal is 1932, clearly a Western chronology. However, when Wang Fuquan took over *Xiandai zazhi*, the dating was changed to the 24<sup>th</sup> Year of the Republic of China. This way of numbering years not only highlighted the calendar in a modern Chinese context, but also implied the identity of *Xiandai zazhi* as a journal of the Republic of China, the only legitimate Chinese government at that time. Therefore, it is understandable that Leo Ou-fan Lee pointed out in his *Shanghai Modern* that these two writers, Xu Langxi and Wang Fuquan, were “presumably designated by the Guomindang”<sup>1</sup>. In addition, the design of the title on the front page was equally “revolutionized”. It has been shown in the previous part that the French title, *Les Contemporains*, not only imparted an exotic foreign flavour, but also indicated a contemporaneous cosmopolitanism that defined one of the most important features of *Xiandai zazhi*. In March 1935 when the “Revolutionized Issue” of *Xiandai zazhi* was launched after the change in the company board and editors’ group, the French title was deleted. Through a careful reading of the last three issues, we may safely argue that the cosmopolitan vision disappeared with the French title. *Xiandai zazhi*, which once provided a consciousness of contemporaneity and cosmopolitanism in its understanding of Chinese modernity, was “revolutionized” into a journal focusing on purely nationalist issues such as concerns about modern China falling behind Western countries and struggling for national survival and enlightenment. I will examine in more details in the following section.

After Wang Fuquan took over *Xiandai zazhi*, he was determined to reform it, turning it from a literary journal into a general one. In the Preface of the first issue under his editorship entitled “Revolutionized Issue”, it was clearly stated that this journal would be reformed into “a comprehensive cultural journal which will combine all the institutions of modern culture”<sup>2</sup>, including economy, politics, law, literature and arts. The authorship of this statement was attributed to the “coterie of our journal office”. *Tongren*, or coterie, a popular literary concept that was used to refer to a group of people who shared the same political stand or literary claims. Coterie has been a literary tradition since the May Fourth era. This term, however, once firmly refused by Shi Zhecun, was now imprudently revived. In the new *Xiandai zazhi*, literature was not the main focus anymore. Rather, it stood with the economy, politics and

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, Leo Oufan, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945*, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> Wang Fuquan, “Gexin de hua” (Preface to the “Revolutionized Issue”), *Xiandai zazhi*, 6: 2 (March 1935), p. 2.

natural sciences on an equal footing, if not in fact subordinate to them. As literature stepped aside and gave way to “all the institutions of modern times”, a contemporaneous cosmopolitanism was replaced by the quest for national survival and enlightenment.

#### **2.4.2. A study of four sections: the discourse on national enlightenment**

The features of the last three issues of *Xiandai zazhi* will be further delineated in the following part mainly through an analysis of the sections of “Xiandai luntan” [Modern Forum, 现代论坛], “Zhengzhi, jingji, wenhua” [Politics, Economy and Culture, 政治, 经济, 文化], “Tongsu xueshu jiangzuo” [Accessible Academic Forum, 通俗学术讲座], and “Guoneiwai tongxin” [Correspondent’ Reports from Home and Abroad, 国内外通信]. The shift of focus could be firstly observed in the “Modern Forum”, which was the first column of the new issues of *Xiandai zazhi*. This “Modern Forum” resembled the column of short review essays that usually appeared as the first section in the previous issues<sup>1</sup> but differed greatly in their focus and content. The short-essay section in the first 31 issues of *Xiandai zazhi* was named “Suibi, ganxiang, mantan” [Essays, Reviews and Chitchats, 随笔, 感想, 漫谈] in Volume 3 and “Wenyi dubai” [Monologue on Literature and Arts, 文艺独白] from Volume 4 and thereafter. The content of this section is reflected in its title: it is mainly for publishing short essays of literary criticism, reviews on recent literary events and figures as well as random thoughts related to literature and culture. As to “Modern Forum”, the focus was changed to social problems and the means of national survival. In the six articles published in this section in the first “Revolutionized Issue”, it is education and enlightenment that are discussed in the articles, their topics ranging from the “Handwritten Character Movement”<sup>2</sup> to books with lower prices or higher discounts, readings of the classics, and nationwide university education.

One of the last two articles argued that modern marriages should go beyond the traditional notion of the patriarchal system and old ethics, and the other focused on “Humor literature”, challenging its role in national survival and self-strengthening. Humor literature had become

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<sup>1</sup> After the first issue of Volume 3, there appeared a fixed column entitled “Essay, Reviews and Chitchats” (随笔·感想·漫谈) which was set up to publish short critical essays concerning literature and culture both in China and the West. The name of this column was changed into “Monologue on Literature and Arts” (文艺独白) from Volume 4 until the first issue of Volume 6. The focus and content was kept as it was in Volume 3. There is no such column in Issue 6 of Volume 5 because this is a “Special Issue on Modern American Literature”.

<sup>2</sup> “Handwritten Character Movement”, in Chinese 手头字运动, was launched in 1935 in Shanghai to promote Simplifying process of traditional Chinese written language.



a heated issue in the 1930s in China since Lin Yutang founded the journal *Analects*, or *Lunyu*<sup>1</sup>. In the short essay by Shao Wen, those in favour of humour were criticized as being sentimental, shortsighted, and living in a world with no ruler<sup>2</sup>. This “world with no one to rule”<sup>3</sup> made a clear allusion to Lin Yutang, who was later mentioned and satirized in this essay too. When promoting humour as a literary and cultural taste, Lin Yutang was highlighting individual expression and personal taste, while the author of this essay criticized humour from the perspective of its supposedly limited value in national survival and self-strengthening. According to the author’s line of argumentation, humour which was promoting leisure and individual self-expression had the least possibility to guide young people to live an active life and to engage in nation-building, and therefore, humour was nothing but games for those with money and leisure. These different assessments regarding humour were reflective of two understandings of Chinese modernity. One focused on individuality and self-expression while the other always took a serious posture, lecturing about national survival and the education of young people.

“Modern Forum” in the second issue of the new *Xiandai zazhi* was a Special Column that focused on the popular movement of “Classics Reading” and “Keeping Chinese Traditional Characters”. It is the relationship between Chinese traditional classics and national enlightenment that was mainly discussed in the nine articles in this section. The arguments of these articles could be basically summarized that it is reasonable to keep (some) Chinese traditional classics and characters if there is really some national essence left within them, but wrong to intend to revive them as a nationwide movement. In the historic moment when China was lagging behind the imperial powers, it is science rather than classics that could save China and enlighten the people. The similar themes of national survival and national enlightenment were repeated in Issue 4 of Volume 6, which turned out to be the last issue of *Xiandai zazhi*.

The different cultural attitudes towards Chinese modernity could be more clearly demonstrated in the sections of “Politics, Economy and Culture”, “Accessible Academic Forum”, and “Correspondent’s Reports from Home and Abroad”. “Politics, Economy and Culture” was the second column after the opening section of “Modern Forum” in the last

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<sup>1</sup> See Qian Suoqiao, “Discovering Humor in Modern China: The Launching of the *Analects* Fortnightly Journal and the ‘Year of Humor’ (1933),” in Chey, Jocelyn and Davis, Jessica Milner eds. *Humour in Chinese Life and Letters*, pp. 191-218.

<sup>2</sup> Shao Wen, “Zouru niujiaojian de youmo” (Humor that has gone awry), *Xiandai zazhi*, 6: 2 (March 1935), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Hu Feng, “Lin Yutang lun” (On Lin Yutang), in *Wenyi bitan* (Essays on Literature and Art), pp. 3–37.

three issues of *Xiandai zazhi*. The table below shows the main content of the articles in these three columns on political issues, economic and social problems, both in China and abroad.

Issue	Column	Title	Author
6: 2	International Politics and Economy	From Compromise between France and Italy to “London Agreement”	Weiming
		Siam Facing the Conflicts between Britain and Japan	Guo Jingzhi
		Features of Current Worldwide Depression	Qian Zefu
	Chinese Economy and Culture	A Critique on China’s Foreign Trade in 1934	Li Yan
		The Key Issues of the Development of Chinese National Economy	Qi Qisheng
		What is the Future of Chinese Print Media?	Fu Yisheng
6: 3	Politics, Economy and Culture	Civil Strife in Greece and Clouds of War in Balkan Peninsula	Guo Jingzhi
		The Increasingly Intensified Currency War	Weiming
		Reconstruction of Chinese Rural Economy and Economic and Technical Cooperation between China and Japan	Qi Qisheng
		A Review of Archaeological Studies in China	Zheng Shixu
6: 4	Politics and Culture	European Reaction to German Announcement of Rearmament	Weiming
		Where Should the Intellectuals Go?	Li Huaqing
6: 2	Accessible Academic Forum	On How to Appreciate Poetry (On Literature and Arts)	Wu Lifu
		On the Value of Works of Literature and Arts (On Literature and Arts)	Shaowen
		“History Makes Heroes” or “Heroes Change History”? (On Social Sciences)	Li Ren
		A World Outlook Derived from the Electron Theory (On Natural Sciences)	Wang Tefu

6: 3	Accessible Academic Forum	Why Is It Necessary to Learn Philosophy? (On Philosophy)	Liu Hongjun
		Literary Talent and Life Experiences (On Literature and Arts)	Wang Jiye
6: 4	Accessible Academic Forum	A Discussion on Social Development (On Social Sciences)	Fang Yufu
		Do Our Brothers Exist on Other Planets — A Study on the Scientific Method of Measuring of Inter-planet Signals (On Natural Sciences)	Wang Tefu
6: 2	Correspondent's Reports	A Random Talk on Education in Japan	Wang Hongfa
6: 3	Correspondent's Reports	The Underlying Tide of Japanese Political Situation	Mingshi
		Sketch of the Rural Areas in Hefei	Yu

Table 2.5: Three Columns of the Last Three Issues of *Xiandai zazhi*

As a comprehensive journal that intended to include all the institutions of modern times, the column titled “Politics, Economy and Culture” was set up mainly for publishing essays on political, economic and cultural issues in China and abroad. There appeared in total 12 essays in this column in the last three issues. As can be seen from the above table, most of the essays were concerned with international political and military situations and the high possibility of a Second World War in the early 1930s. This sense of crisis echoes the ongoing Chinese War of Resistance against Japan. Therefore, a strong sense of national crisis and national survival could be identified instead of a contemporaneous cosmopolitanism in the previous 31 issues of *Xiandai zazhi*.

“Accessible Academic Forum” was another fixed column in the three “Revolutionized Issues”. According to the structural design of this section, academic subjects were divided into four sub-categories: literature and art, philosophy, natural sciences and social sciences. Compared to the first 31 issues, natural and social sciences were increased to such an extent that they were enjoying an equal, if not obviously superior, position to literature and arts. “Accessible” is the keyword in the title of this column that indicates the difference in the target readers of *Xiandai zazhi* in each of its phases. It is clearly articulated in the Inaugural Editorial that *Xiandai zazhi* was intending to contribute to “all those who love literature”. In other words, its target readers are those educated people who love literature, and in early 20<sup>th</sup> century China most people did not have the opportunity to go to school. Given the fact that in the first 31

issues it is those literary works of modern and avant-gardist style that were published, *Xiandai zazhi* was not established mainly for enlightening people or for awakening people's consciousness in order to save the nation. Although national survival and national education were really central issues at that time in China, it was not felt that literature and arts should necessarily undertake this politicized duty. For the last three issues, the target reader was changed into ordinary people, or the masses. It is stated in the Preface to the first "Revolutionized Issue" (Issue 6:2) that this journal would stick to the principles of the scientific method, a critical attitude and accessible means of expression in order that "our journal will be a proper one for young people who are determined to pursue study, no matter whether he is a student or an employee"<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, Wang Fuquan, the editor of the "Revolutionized Issues" of *Xiandai zazhi*, changed it from a literary journal to an "accessible" comprehensive journal for those young people who wanted to pursue knowledge, and when educated they were supposed to undertake the duty of saving China. Compared to natural and social sciences, literature was regarded by Wang as a less effective way to promote social progress. A similar explanation also applies to the section of "Correspondent's Reports from Home and Abroad" which included some introductory essays on educational and political issues of Japan, as well as the serious economic and social problems in Hefei, a city in the middle part of China that used to be prosperous and peaceful.

Belonging to the columns that focused on national enlightenment, we find two more columns in the last three issues of *Xiandai zazhi*: "Fu'nv wenti" (The Women Question, 妇女问题) in Issue 6: 2 and "Qingnian shenghuo daoyin" (A Guide for Young People, 青年生活导引) in Issues 6: 2 and 6: 4. These two columns were especially designed for the questions of women and young people, which were always central issues in Chinese national enlightenment and modernity. Women's liberation and modern identity has long been one of the most essential criteria for Chinese modernity. It is pointed out in the three articles published in this section of "The Women Question" that women were still in an unfavorable position in terms of their social status, occupation and marriage. The key argument could be summarized thus: the current victimized position of Chinese women should be changed and Chinese women should enjoy equal rights with men. This quest to construct a modern identity for Chinese women was related to Chinese nation building and the Chinese project of modernity. The section of "A Guide for Young People" provided advice on how to manage time, how to choose a school, as well as how to maintain integrity and pursue study when they were faced with

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<sup>1</sup> Wang Fuquan, "Gexin de hua" (Preface to the "Revolutionized Issue"), *Xiandai zazhi*, 6: 2 (March 1935), p. 2.

poverty. In essence, this section focused on the education of young people, which was definitely a central issue in Chinese national enlightenment and modernity.

An absence of translation in the last three issues is also worth studying here. In the “Editor’s Afterword” of the first “Revolutionized Issue”, the new editor stated his refusal to publish any translated works in *Xiandai zazhi* by saying that “we do not accept any translated works for any columns at this stage”<sup>1</sup>. The same words were repeated in the following issue in the “Terms and Regulations on Submission”. Wang, the editor, did not explain the reason why translation was excluded in his journal. Considering the role that translation has taken in early modern China, one may assume that this attitude of rejection speaks for the editor’s reluctance to reach out of China. In other words, the rejection of any translation gives another proof of the nationalist stance of this journal. This refusal to accept translations became less strict in the third issue of “Revolutionized Issues”, also the final one of *Xiandai zazhi*. Of the two excerpts of translated works published in this issue, one is a paper on natural sciences entitled “Do Our Brothers Exist on Other Planets”, an introductory essay on the scientific methods measuring signals between planets. In the short note attached to this article, the author said that this was an extract essay from the No. 2944 Issue of the French journal *La Nature*, and the original article was entitled “Signalisation Interplanétaire”<sup>2</sup>. As has been discussed in the previous part, science is one of the most important keywords for the last three issues of *Xiandai zazhi*. *La Nature* was a French journal that aimed at the popularization of science. The frequent translations of the literary works from “Saturday Review” or “Fortnightly Review” in the first 31 issues were all gone. Instead, there was a clear shift of focus from literary works to scientific papers. Science was so important in national survival (needs elaboration) and national enlightenment that even a journal that had firmly stated its refusal to accept translated works would publish this piece of writing.

The second translated article is a translation of two poems by Chen Kui, “On Reading Romeo and Juliet” and “If Life Is a Tree”. The original texts of these two poems were respectively published in the American journals “Poetry” and “The World Tomorrow”. According to the note attached to this translated work, Chen was a young man who was born in the year 1902 in Hunan province of China, and later went to the US to university in 1930. The poems translated here were published in America in around 1928 when he was only 26 years old. In

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<sup>1</sup> Wang Fuquan, “Bianji houji” (Editor’s Afterwords), *Xiandai zazhi*, 6: 2 (March 1935), p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> Wang Tefu, “Xingxing shang you meiyou women de dixiong---qi xinhao ceyan fangfa zhi jiantao” (Do Our Brothers Exist on Other Planets? — A Study on the Scientific Method Measuring of Inter-planet Signals), *Xiandai zazhi*, 6: 4 (May 1935), p. 45.

1927 when Chen was 25, one of the best literary journals in America, “The Dial”, had introduced him as a young and promising poet<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the only translation of literary works that has been published in the last issues of “Revolutionized” *Xiandai zazhi* happened to be written by a young Chinese. Although he received a university education in America and then stayed there, he was still a Chinese young man. A strong sense of nationalism can be perceived through this selection. At the same time, as a young man who was a talented poet, Chen had the potential to be the perfect model for young Chinese students and new employees who were supposed to learn and then struggle to save the nation. In this sense, it is more a nationalistic stance than a cosmopolitan attitude that is revealed in the inclusion of this article in the revolutionized *Xiandai zazhi*.

If translation of Western or Japanese works marks a sense of cosmopolitanism which goes beyond national boundaries in understanding literature and culture, the decreasing importance of translation in the last three issues of *Xiandai zazhi* suggested that the journal chose to look inward from within China. Given the fact that of the two translated works, one was intended for scientific popularization, and the other was written by a young Chinese person, the role of translation for the new “Revolutionized” *Xiandai zazhi* was very much a narrow nationalist take on the May Fourth Movement by way of national survival and national enlightenment, since the New Culture and May Fourth Movement was also very cosmopolitan too, at least in terms of translations.

If we continue to explore the differences between the first 31 issues under Shi Zhecun’s and Du Heng’s editorship and the last three issues “revolutionized” by Wang Fuquan, a possible perspective emerges that the former focused more on individual enlightenment; the latter, on national enlightenment. For an individual person, one could still be “cultured” even if he or she knew nothing about natural or social sciences. However, it is impossible for a whole nation to strive for modernity without any knowledge of science, for science has been the driving force for Western modernity. To fulfil this goal, literature and arts were downgraded in the “Revolutionized” *Xiandai zazhi* while natural and social sciences were now prioritized. In other words, the first 31 issues of *Xiandai zazhi* focused more on individual enlightenment while the last three issues focused on national enlightenment. This difference in the understanding of the role of the journal led to the shift in content. It is this focus of individual enlightenment through a contemporaneous cosmopolitanism of the former *Xiandai zazhi* that defined its alternative vision of Chinese modernity.

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<sup>1</sup> Hu Ding, “Chen Kui yingshi hanyi liangzhang” (A Chinese Translation of Two Poems by Chen Kui), *Xiandai zazhi*, 6: 4 (May 1935), p. 57.

To summarize, *Xiandai zazhi* was originally a literary journal whose contemporaneous cosmopolitanism provided an alternative understanding of Chinese modernity. However, this central and significant vision was abandoned when Xiandai Bookstore fell into the hands of the Nationalist Party and *Xiandai zazhi* came under the editorship of Wang Fuquan. The “revolutionized” *Xiandai zazhi* turned out to be a comprehensive and accessible journal, intending to act as a channel for the cause of national survival and national enlightenment.

In the “Editor’s Afterword” for the Issue 4 of Volume 6, Wang Fuquan seemed to be highly pleased with the success of the reform of *Xiandai zazhi* from a literary journal to a comprehensive one. He was proud of the reprinting of Issue 3, the “Special Issue Against Reading Classics and Saving Traditional Chinese Characters”, and was confident in the future of *Xiandai zazhi*, which could be felt in his outline of the following issues. Unfortunately, the Issue 4 turned out to be the last one. *Xiandai zazhi*, which had been one of the most popular journals in China, ceased publication after May 1935.

## **2.5. Conclusion**

I have argued in this chapter that if *Xiandai zazhi* is to be characterized as a journal of “Xiandai pai” in the early 1930s in Chinese context, it should be understood as “Modern School”, which implies a consciousness of embracing the contemporaneous other and being cosmopolitan. This “Modern School” is different from the “Modernist School”, a particular artistic movement originating in the West and then applauded in China in the 1980s when “Misty Poetry”, fictions of “Magic Realism”, and all other techniques and trends were embraced by young Chinese writers and critics. Starting from a redefinition of the title of “Xiandai pai”, or Modern School, this chapter has examined the translating, introducing and editing practices of the first 31 issues of *Xiandai zazhi* when it was under the editorship of Shi Zhecun and later Du Heng. Based on the examination, I have summarized the features of *Xiandai zazhi* as contemporaneity and cosmopolitanism, and both of them have been substantiated with statistics and analysis.

As two closely interrelated facets of *Xiandai zazhi*, the features of contemporaneity and cosmopolitanism can be seen as two sides of a coin. The first one focuses on a confident look out at the latest frontiers of Western modernity and the second indicates an all-embracing attitude. Together they present a “Modern School” in the 1930s in China which stepped into the frontier of Westernization and embraced all “other” that is contemporaneous.

This contemporaneous cosmopolitanism not only acted as a way to overcome the dichotomy between the West and China, but also presented new insights in overcoming the politicized socio-cultural discourse of national survival. In fact, the discourses of nationalism and cosmopolitanism were both the central elements of Chinese modernity. The last three issues edited by Wang Fuquan have been included in this chapter. Compared with the first 31 issues, the last three ones turned out to be completely different. The cultural attitude of cosmopolitanism was totally abandoned while the anxiety of national survival and strengthening became the prioritized issue. Although cosmopolitanism and nationalism did not necessarily exclude each other in the discourse of Chinese modernity, both of them can be problematic if they became far too politicized. Founded shortly after the Battle of Shanghai in 1932, *Xiandai zazhi* operated in a period when Chinese Communist Party (abbreviated as CCP) in the form of revolutionary cosmopolitanism was gaining power while Chinese Nationalist Party (also known as the Kuomintang of China, abbreviated as KMT) under the banner of nationalism was still dominant. However, *Xiandai zazhi*, sticking to a liberal attitude of cosmopolitanism, offered a way to go beyond the prioritized discourses of revolutionary cosmopolitanism of CCP and nationalism of KMT, when both turned out to be rigid and highly politicized.

By striving to be “contemporaneous” with the West, it seems that *Xiandai zazhi* was stepping into the furthest frontier of Westernization. As has been discussed in the introductory chapter, one potential problem of Chinese modernity is to fulfil modernization at the price of abandoning Chinese tradition, and furthermore, Chinese would be at the risk of losing Chinese subjectivity. How *Xiandai zazhi* dealt with the tension between modernity and Chinese tradition will be studied in Chapter 3. In fact, the all-embracing cultural attitude of *Xiandai zazhi* could be seen as a modern transformation of a very traditional Chinese notion of *tianxia* [all under heaven], which embodies a cosmopolitan perspective in Confucian moral and political thinking. In this respect, it was actually a very Chinese way of understanding modernity.



## Chapter 3.

### Silence and Articulation: Translation of Western Imagist Poems and Transformation of Chinese Traditional Literature

#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the problematic of cultural attitudes towards Chinese tradition in the project of modern Chinese literature and culture in the early 1930s in China, particularly how Chinese traditional literature and culture were forcibly silenced and then implicitly transformed in modern Chinese poetry in *Xiandai zazhi*. As a journal striving to catch up with the newest trends from the West and to introduce them into China in a timely and truthful way, its attitude towards Chinese traditional literature becomes even more intriguing. My basic argument is that *Xiandai zazhi* recognized Chinese tradition as an inseparable constituent of Chinese modernity, which offered an alternative understanding to overcome the dichotomy between modernity and tradition in the early 1930s in China.

The strategy of silence in translating Western Imagist poems will first be examined in Section 3.2 in this chapter. It has been discussed by scholars that Chinese traditional literature and culture had been an important source for Western modernists in the early years of 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, it is noticeable that although Imagist Poetry appeared frequently in *Xiandai zazhi* it was never explicitly stated that the Imagist poets had taken their inspiration from Chinese classical poetry. The connection between the Western Imagist School and Chinese classical poetry was not stated in the translation of Imagist Poetry in *Xiandai zazhi*, and this forms what I would define as a strategy of silence. Based on the textual analysis of the translation and introduction of Imagist Poetry in *Xiandai zazhi*, I propose that when Imagism travelled back to China, Chinese intellectuals, at that time, emphasized the novelty and modernity of Imagism but kept silent on its connections to Chinese traditional literature and culture.

I will also apply the theory of silence and articulation in this section. Studies of silence and articulation in literary and cultural areas often focus on power relations between the dominant groups and the minor ones, in which the latter were usually forced to be silent due to the inability to articulate. Given the historical context of a dichotomized framework between tradition and modernity in the early 1930s, the silence as demonstrated in the translation of Imagist Poetry can be partly explained by the empowered discourse of anti-traditionalism. Chinese tradition, to which Pound, Yeats, Eliot, Williams, and others all turned for literary

models, from the dominant left-wing point of view, was victimized for being feudal and regressive. It is understandable that the reputation of *Xiandai zazhi* could be risked on an explicit appropriation of classical Chinese poetry, but to be silent on the connection nonetheless does not mean to reject Chinese tradition. Rather, to translate the Imagist Poetry, which was clearly linked to Chinese traditional literature and culture, has shown an interest in Chinese tradition. To keep silent was, in a way, to seek possibilities for expression. The strategy of silence in a way makes it possible to translate Imagist poetry without touching upon the issue of tradition. In Section 3.3 I will provide a background reading of the victimizing of Chinese traditional literature in the early 1930s to explain why the strategy of silence was implemented in *Xiandai zazhi*, and in Section 3.4 I will study how Chinese traditional literature was recognized as a natural part of modern Chinese literature and then implicitly transformed into modern poems.

A brief review of the dominant discourse of anti-traditionalism in general and the debate over *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*<sup>1</sup> in particular will help to contextualize the strategy of silence. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Chinese communist left-wing camp was increasingly gaining power among Chinese intellectuals, which culminated in 1930 in the founding of *Zhongguo zuoyi zuojia lianmeng* [the Chinese League of Left-wing Writers, 中国左翼作家联盟, usually abbreviated as Left League, *zuolian*, 左联], a literary association set up to promote proletarian literature of Socialist Realism and serve as a support to communist revolution in modern China. According to the belief in the dichotomy between modernity and tradition, Chinese traditional culture was denounced as being “feudal” and retrogressive, and therefore needed to be abandoned in order to achieve Chinese modernity. The debate over *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*, will be used to locate the tension between the paradigmatic discourse of Lu Xun and the alternative attitude towards Chinese tradition of Shi Zhecun. From my point of view, it is whether a dichotomy or a dialogue should be taken as the basic relationship between modernity and tradition that constituted the divergence of their opinions in this debate. *Xiandai zazhi* was undoubtedly supportive to the fact that China needed to be modernized by learning from outside, be it from the West or the Soviet Union. However, this belief in progression and cosmopolitan openness did not exclude the possible transformation of Chinese traditional culture, nor did it deny the free rights of those who would learn from or utilize Chinese traditional literature and culture.

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<sup>1</sup> These two books were among the most influential classical texts of Chinese literature and culture.

In Section 3.4 I will argue that Chinese tradition was not entirely silenced in *Xiandai zazhi* but was transplanted and transformed in the poetic theory and writing practices of Chinese modern poetry. Although the role of Chinese tradition was not explicitly articulated in the translation of Imagist Poetry in *Xiandai zazhi*, it was implicitly revealed in the creative transformation of tradition in the Chinese poems published in this journal. The Chinese translation of Imagist Poetry as “yixiangshi” [image poem, 意象诗] itself had demonstrated a clear link to Chinese traditional literature. Moreover, the poetic theory and poems with distinctive Chinese traditional characteristics show that in *Xiandai zazhi* tradition was understood as a natural element of Chinese modern literature. It is more of a Chinese subjectivity rather than the Western adaptation that urged *Xianadai zazhi* to utilize tradition in its poetic theory and the writing practices of modern poetry.

To summarize, located in the historical and ideological context and based on a textual study of *Xiandai zazhi*, this chapter will offer a rethinking of the rigid relationship between modernity and Chinese tradition in the early 1930s in China. Starting from the illustration of the silence in the connection between Imagist Poetry of the West and the traditional literature of China, my analysis will be developed mainly in two ways. First, the politicized issue of Chinese tradition made it impossible to clearly articulate the connection between Western Imagism and Chinese tradition. Second, it was unnecessary to articulate. The utility of tradition in *Xiandai zazhi* was not due to Western adoption of it but to a Chinese subjectivity which believed that Chinese tradition was a natural part of Chinese modernity.

### **3.2. “Silence” in Chinese Translation of Western Imagist Poetry in Xiandai Zazhi**

I argue in this section that along with the journal’s translating and editing features of cosmopolitanism and contemporaneity, the translators of Imagism in *Xiandai zazhi* emphasized the novelty and modernity of Imagism while keeping silent on its connections to Chinese tradition.

It has been shown in Chapter 2 that *Xiandai zazhi* was an avant-gardist literary journal in the early 1930s in Shanghai, translating and introducing modern world literature and culture into China in a contemporaneous and cosmopolitan way. In the “Editor’s Afterword” in the first issue of *Xiandai zazhi*, Shi Zhecun clearly stated that he would make every effort to justify the reputation of *Xiandai zazhi* as being “*Les Contemporains*” in translating contemporary world literature. “For each and every issue of this journal, I hope to introduce some works of

modern and contemporary writers for the readers.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, as has been analysed in Chapter One, *Xiandai zazhi* did demonstrate its ability to keep Chinese readers informed of world literature that was appearing almost contemporaneously.

However, things became complicated when they were introducing Imagism, since the Imagists turned to Chinese classical literature as the “other” for novel literary models while at the same time Chinese intellectuals were striving for modernity by learning from the West. A challenge appeared when Western Imagist Poetry was translated and introduced in *Xiandai zazhi*.

### 3.2.1. Chinese Translation of Western Imagist Poetry in *Xiandai zazhi*

It has been frequently discussed in scholarly writings that Chinese literature was a rich and pivotal source of literary models for Western Imagism. As one of the undisputed leaders of Modernism in the West, Ezra Pound, played an influential part in the poetry revolution in European nations and America in the early years of the 20th century. He took a lifelong interest in Chinese literature, language, and philosophy, making traditional Chinese culture a constitutive element of Imagism in the 1910s and 1920s. Pound once pointed out the significance of Chinese literature as new models for Western literature by saying that “the last century rediscovered the middle ages. It is possible that this century may find a new Greece in China.”<sup>2</sup> In 1914 Pound translated the poems of Li Bai (李白, 701-762, acclaimed as the most important poet of Tang Dynasty) and other poets that he found in the notes of Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908). The result was *Cathay*. In *The Pound Era* published in the 1970s in America, Hugh Kenner placed Pound at the centre of the Modernist movement in literature in the early 20th century. He believed that the 14 poems in the original *Cathay* were actually translations which were derived from “detailed notes on the Chinese texts”<sup>3</sup>. As shown in the front page of *Cathay*, the poems collected in this booklet were based on the notes of Mrs. Fenollosa. Probably under the influence of Pound, Yeats, Eliot, Williams, and others all turned to Oriental culture for literary models. As Caren Kaplan argues, “this propensity of occidental ‘Moderns’ to look ‘elsewhere’ for markers of reality and authenticity” is a primary facet of Euro-American Modernism.<sup>4</sup> Qian Zhaoming also identifies the legacy of China in Pound. “Under the impact of Pound’s *Cathay*, there arose in the late 1910s and early 1920s a

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Bianji zuotan” (Editor’s Afterwords), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 1 (May 1932), pp. 197-198.

<sup>2</sup> Ezra Pound, “The Renaissance”, in T. S. Eliot ed. *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, p. 215.

<sup>3</sup> Kenner, Hugh, “The Invention of China”, in *The Pound Era*, p. 198.

<sup>4</sup> Kaplan, Caren, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, p. 34.

vogue of imitating the Orient”<sup>1</sup>. The link between Western Imagism and Chinese traditional poetry was also affirmed by Shi Zhecun, who was perhaps the first to translate “Image” into *yixiang* (意象) in the 1930s in Shanghai. *Yi* in Chinese refers to an idea or a meaning and *xiang* a visual image. Shi was also aware of the Chinese influence on Western Imagism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, demonstrating a cross-cultural fertilisation between Chinese and Western Modernism. In 1990 he implied in an interview with Shih Shumei that Western modernism was influenced by Eastern culture and Pound was an obvious example. “Modernism in the West was influenced by the Eastern culture. Obvious examples include Amy Lowell and Ezra Pound, but the difference was felt in different writers.”<sup>2</sup> It can be derived from the above-mentioned research that both scholars on Ezra Pound and Shi Zhecun, the editor of *Xiandai zazhi* and an important promoter of Imagist poems in China, have identified a clear link between Western modernism and Chinese traditional literature and culture.

In spite of the forementioned wide interest in Imagists’ creative transformation of Chinese classical literature, little attention has been paid to Chinese translation of Western Imagist Poetry in the 1930s. The introduction of Western Imagism in China can be dated back to the May Fourth era, but it is in the 1930s that Imagism gained its popularity mainly through *Xiandai zazhi*.

Recognized as the most “modern” and avant-gardist literary journal in the 1930s, *Xiandai zazhi*, on which a number of Imagist poems and poetic theory were translated and introduced, opened up a window to contemporary world literature and cultivated a mature literary school of modernism in China. However, based on textual analysis of the translation and introduction of Imagism in *Xiandai zazhi*, it is interesting to observe that when imagism travelled back to China, Chinese intellectuals, at that time, kept silent on its connection with Chinese traditional culture.

In Issue 1:3 of *Xiandai zazhi* there appeared translations of American poems entitled “Selected Poems of Three American Women Poets”. Three poems by Hilda Doolittle, two by Evelyn Scott and another two by Amy Lowell were translated into Chinese by Shi Zhecun, writing as An Yi. The translation was attached with a postscript in which the translator pointed out that these three American writers all belonged to the school of Imagism. He did

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<sup>1</sup> Qian Zhaoming, “Prologue”, in *Orientalism and Modernism: the Legacy of China in Pound and Williams*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Shih Shu-mei, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937*, p. 231. The quotation was taken from Shih Shumei’s translation, which was based on her interview with Shi Zhecun in 1990.

mention in one sentence that Amy Lowell was influenced by Chinese and Japanese poetry, but even with this passing reference, what Shi emphasized is that “the two poems I choose to translate here can clearly find their origin in Ancient Greece”<sup>1</sup>. As a Chinese poet and translator, Shi Zhecun did not highlight the connection between Chinese classical poetry and Western Imagist School, as a nationalist would probably do. However, it seemed that he intended to focus on Ancient Greek culture rather than Chinese classical poetry.

In October 1934, a “Special Issue on Modern American Literature” was launched as the first of the scheduled series of special issues of *Xiandai zazhi*. It was an effort to give a systematic introduction to modern American literature. In “Selected Poems of Modern America”<sup>2</sup> in this issue, Shi Zhecun translated works by Amy Lowell, Ezra Pound, H.D. and J.G. Fletcher, who were all known as Imagist poets. Although it was the first time that Pound’s poems were translated into Chinese, the translator added nothing more on the information of these poets or the Imagist School in England and America, nor did he elaborate on Ezra Pound as an admirer of Chinese traditional culture. Despite Shi Zhecun’s clear and confident statement of Chinese influence over Western modernism in 1990, he chose to keep silent in the 1930s.

In addition to the translation of Imagist poems, there were more introductory essays on Imagism in *Xiandai zazhi* and it was Xu Chi, an important poet and critic at that time, who wrote most of them. In the essay entitled “Seven Poets of the Imagist School”, Xu gave a lengthy introduction to the seven poets of Imagism: Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, Hilda Doolittle, John Gould Fletcher, Richard Aldington, D. H. Lawrence and F. S. Flint. He listed and analyzed the main principles of Imagist Poetry, like new rhythm, free choice of subject matter, and concrete images. Although he did mention in only one sentence that “he (Ezra Pound) translated some Chinese poems among which *Chang’ganxing* [The River-merchant’s Wife, 长干行] by Li Bai was most popular among foreigners”<sup>3</sup>, he elaborated no more on the Chinese influence on Pound’s Imagist poems. In another introductory article about “Ezra Pound and His Coterie”, Xu Chi not only pointed out Pound’s role in co-founding the Imagist School, but also focused on Pound’s generosity with which he advanced the works of such major contemporaries as D.H. Lawrence, James Joyce, and especially T. S. Eliot. There is only one sentence indicating Pound’s connection with China: “He translated some Chinese

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Meiguo san nvliu shichao” (Selected Poems of Three American Women Poets), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 3 (July 1932), p. 427.

<sup>2</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Xiandai meiguo shichao” (A Selection of Modern American Poetry), *Xiandai zazhi*, 5: 6 (October 1934), p. 1199–1213.

<sup>3</sup> Xu Chi, “Yixiangpai de qige shiren” (Seven Poets of Imagist School), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 6 (April 1934), p. 1017.

poems”<sup>1</sup>. In addition to Xu Chi, Shao Xunmei (邵洵美, 1906-1968), a talented poet and elite literary figure in early 20<sup>th</sup> century China, also paid great attention to the new literary school of Imagist Poetry. In “A Brief Introduction to Modern American Poetry”<sup>2</sup> by Shao Xunmei, modern American poetry was categorized into six groups among which the Imagist School was understood as being previously popular, but at that time, out of fashion. In this essay he traced the influence that Japan and Ancient Greece had exerted on Imagism but still did not mention anything about the Chinese connection.

To sum up, although it is true that Shi Zhecun and Xu Chi did imply, in one sentence, the possible connection between Ezra Pound and Chinese traditional poems, Shi, Xu and Shao all seemed to have deliberately avoided elaborating on this connection. To justify this silence calls for an analysis of the anti-traditional discourse at that time in China.

### **3.2.2. Study of “Silence”: the empowered discourse of anti-traditionalism**

The question is why *Xiandai zazhi* gave up its principle of truthfully introducing a contemporaneous world literature into China but adopted a strategy of silence with regard to Chinese influences on Imagism. On the one hand, ever since the time when Western gunboats forced open the self-sufficient cultural life of the Chinese, to catch up with the latest trend in the West has meant the power to earn cultural capital. From this point of view, to translate Imagist Poetry should have been taken as a way to gain cultural capital for *Xiandai zazhi*. On the other, the connection between Imagist Poetry, a modern literary genre, and Chinese traditional literature would have been a good example to demonstrate Chinese nationalism, which has always been part of the agenda of Chinese modernity. As such, a truthful articulation of the connection between Imagist Poetry and Chinese traditional literature should have been in compatibility with either cosmopolitanism or nationalism. The real problem lies in the dominant discourse of anti-traditionalism in the historical context of 1930s China.

The study of silence and articulation offers a possible perspective to understand this strategy of silence in *Xiandai zazhi*. This study has been applied in several academic disciplines and interdisciplinary fields, including postcolonial studies, feminist studies, rhetoric and communication studies and many others, to identify the power relations between the

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<sup>1</sup> Xu Chi, “Ezra Pound jiqi tongren” (Ezra Pound and His Coterie), in *Xiandai zazhi*, 5: 6 (October 1934), p. 983.

<sup>2</sup> Shao Xunmei, “Xiandai meiguo shitan gaiguan” (A Brief Introduction to Modern American Poetry), *Xiandai zazhi*, 5: 6 (October 1934), pp. 874–890.

empowered group and the powerless minorities. Russ claims that to impose silence on the minority, the empowered group would not allow them to articulate at all.

If certain people are not supposed to have the ability to produce ‘great’ literature, and if this supposition is one of the means used to keep such people in their place, the ideal situation (socially speaking) is one in which such people are prevented from producing any literature at all.<sup>1</sup>

It should first be noted that what was behind the way of dealing with Chinese influence on Imagist Poetry was actually a cultural attitude towards Chinese tradition as a whole. The historical and political context in the early 1930s in general and the debate over *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan* in particular will help to explain why Chinese influence over Imagist Poetry was silenced because of the empowered discourse of anti-traditionalism at that time.

How to treat Chinese traditional culture has been a long and perpetual issue in the project of Chinese modernity. From the May Fourth Era until the 1930s, anti-traditionalism has been the dominant discourse in modern China. As I have outlined in Chapter One, in the historical context in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in China, Chinese tradition was politicized and victimized in the grand project of Chinese modernity. From the launch of the radical May Fourth Movement, westernization was set up as the only way for China to be modernized and tradition was criticized and even victimized as hindering Chinese empowerment and progress.

The decade of the 1930s witnessed the loosening of May Fourth discourse and the tightening of ideological control over literature by the Chinese communist left-wing camp. In the early 1930s, when it had been more than ten years since May Fourth Movement, some intellectuals like Shi Zhecun, often regarded as the second generation<sup>2</sup> of the May Fourth intellectuals, began to reflect on the discourse of total westernization and radical iconoclasm and intended to open up the scope of Chinese modernity by proposing a more tolerant response to it. at the same time, with the founding of the Chinese League of Left-wing Writers in 1930, democracy and science, which were the two mottos of May Fourth, were given up by Chinese Left- Wing camp, who adopted the discourse of Proletarian Revolution instead. Literature was rigidly manipulated as the instrument for political and ideological propaganda to serve Communist revolution in China.

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<sup>1</sup> Russ, Joanna, *How to Suppress Women's Writing*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> It has been generally agreed that the May Fourth Movement started in around 1919, but the ending period of this lingering and influential literary and cultural activity is a matter of controversy. I agree with Susan Daruvala in her conception of the May Fourth period “as stretching to 1942, when Mao’s speech at the Yan’an Forum on Literature and Art summed up and codified ideas and practices that had been prevalent among writers, especially on the Left”. See Daruvala, Susan, *Zhou Zuoren and An Alternative Chinese Response to Modernity*, p. 10.



Illustrating the influence that the Chinese League of Left-wing Writers exerted on Chinese intellectuals and the literary scene, C. T. Hsia has given a brief definition of the guidelines of the left-wing discourse in literature:

In February 1930, with the prominent support of Lu Xun and Mao Dun, the League of Chinese Left-wing Writers was formed; its Manifesto bore the signatures of some fifty writers, most of whom were members of now-defunct Communist literary societies. Though the manifesto maintained a firm stand on “the liberation struggle for the proletariat”, the choice of the key term “left-wing” was intended to disguise the overt communist character of the League and to attract writers with merely an anti-feudal, anti-imperialist, and anti-KMT bias.<sup>1</sup>

Of the three biases mentioned by C.T. Hsia, the anti-KMT stance was due to different political beliefs and categorization. Besides, the left-wing discourse rejected both Chinese tradition and “Western culture” (except for its proletarian Soviet Russian brand). The former was believed to be “feudal” and the latter “imperialist”. Socialist Realism, which was borrowed from the Soviet Union, had become the slogan of Chinese Communist leftists and also the “exclusively proletarian approach to literature”<sup>2</sup>. Revolution and Progress, which were increasingly becoming the dominant discourse of Chinese left-wing Communists, dictated an ideology of “historical progress” in which they defined a radical break with the past and a desperate need to be modernized along the proletarian line. The dichotomy between modernity and tradition, which was one of the May Fourth legacies, was integrated into the discursive formation of Chinese Communists. Chinese traditional literature and culture, criticized as being “feudal” and therefore retrogressive, were set up as the antithesis of China’s progress and Communist revolution, and therefore needed to be totally abandoned in order for China to achieve progress and to step into the modern age.

As the slogan of Communist leftists in terms of ideological control over literature, the principle of “anti-feudal, anti-imperialist, and anti-KMT bias” was applied in the assessment of intellectuals and literary practices in the early 1930s in China. The risk of appreciating Chinese tradition could be best demonstrated in the debate over *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*, which will be further examined in Section 3.3.

### **3.3. Debate, Dichotomy and Dialogue: A Background Reading of the Strategy of “Silence”**

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<sup>1</sup> Hsia, C.T., *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, pp. 124–125.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

In 1933 when Shi Zhecun was working as the editor of *Xiandai zazhi*, he was involved in a lingering and notorious debate with Lu Xun on *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*, two of the most important classical texts for the study of Chinese literature and culture. Shi Zhecun, who maintained both the enthusiasm to translate Western literature and an interest in traditional Chinese culture, was severely attacked by Lu Xun and was even labelled a “Compradore hack in foreign settlement” (yangchang e’shao, 洋场恶少), flattering the Westerners while acting as a cruel young master to his Chinese servants. Lu Xun, who was the Head of the Chinese League of Left-wing Writers in 1930, and since then has been regarded as politically correct in dominant left-wing discourse in China<sup>1</sup>, took an active part in this debate, which left an even more unfavourable ideological stain on *Xiandai zazhi* in the dominant Leftist discourse of modern Chinese literary historiography.

Under these circumstances, it is understandable that the reputation of *Xiandai zazhi* could be risked on an explicit appropriation of classical Chinese poetry. This debate, which has hindered a further re-evaluation of *Xiandai zazhi* and its role in modern China for more than half a century, ultimately demonstrated the gulf in cultural attitudes towards Chinese tradition from both sides: a dichotomized framework of modernity and tradition and an alternative vision which took tradition as a natural element in Chinese modernity.

### 3.3.1. A Debate on *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*

In September 1933, Cui Wanqiu, the editor of “*Huoju*” [Fire Torch, 火炬], which was the supplement of *Dawan Bao* [Evening News, 大晚报], sent two forms to Shi Zhecun, asking him to fill them in, listing respectively the books he was reading and those he would recommend for young people. Shi Zhecun listed in the first one *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment* (*Wenxue piping zhi yuanli*, 文学批评之原理) by Ivor Armstrong Richards (1893-1979), an English literary critic and rhetorician, and a Chinese translation of Ancient Indian Buddhist scriptures, *Buddhist Scriptures in Five-character Quatrain*, (*Foben xingjing*, 佛本行经)<sup>2</sup>. Some sarcastic commentaries from Lu Xun on these two books, which were respectively on Western literary criticism and Indian Buddhism, will be mentioned later in the analysis of this debate. For the recommendation booklist, Shi Zhecun wrote down two books, *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*, and attached a short note in which he expressed his hopes that

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<sup>1</sup> The relationship between Lu Xun and the Chinese Left-wing camp is another interesting and yet complicated question. For more information please see Leung Pak Wah, *Political Leaders of Modern China: A Biographical Dictionary*, pp. 113–117.

<sup>2</sup> See note No. 6 in Lu Xun, “Pukong” (With Opponent Absent, 扑空), in *Lu Xun quanji* (Complete Works of Lu Xun), Volume 5, p. 356.

young people could benefit from reading and learning the classical literary language and then would be able to write in a more polished way.

It would seem to be harmless to recommend these two books to help young people have a better command of Chinese written language. *Zhuang Zi*, a Taoist philosopher living in the pre-Qin period in China, is regarded as one of the greatest literary talents in Chinese history, and his masterpiece named after him, *Zhuang Zi*, was a collection of allegories, parables, simple but philosophical stories that were composed in very beautiful Chinese language with fantastic imagination. *Wen Xuan*, compiled by Xiao Tong (萧统, 501-531, A.D.), was a selection of poems and essays that were considered to be the best works in Chinese literary history from the late Warring States period (3100 B.C.) to the early Liang dynasty (500 A.D.). It had gained such great popularity since it was compiled that it was one of the required texts of literary knowledge for traditional Chinese scholars. This recommendation booklist triggered a fierce and lingering debate over the contemporary relevance of *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*, two Chinese classic books which were considered the essential readings for traditional scholars.

On October 6, 1933, an essay entitled “Ganjiu” [Reflection on the Old, 感旧]<sup>1</sup> by Feng Zhiyu (丰之余), one of the various pennames of Lu Xun, was published in *Shenbao · Ziyoutan* [Free Talk, a supplement of Shenbao Daily, 申报 · 自由谈]<sup>2</sup>. “The Old” as shown in the title referred to “Xindang” [New reformers, 新党] who were learning foreign languages and scientific knowledge in hopes of strengthening the nation-state of China after the humiliating defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895. Striving for self-strengthening in the way of west learning, they were “New Reformers” compared to their contemporaries in late Qing dynasty, whereas after more than 30 years, they were referred to the “old” by Lu Xun. As a firm anti-traditionalist, Lu Xun’s compliments to the old reformers in their efforts to learn from what was modern in the closing years of the Qing Dynasty were in fact a satirical attack on the “new youth” who “learn the traditional seal characters, compose *Ci* poetry, and ask people to read *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*”<sup>3</sup>. Here, reading *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan* was definitely alluding to Shi Zhecun and his recommendation booklist. Later in this essay, Lu

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<sup>1</sup> According to the note attached to this essay, the title was “*Ganjiu*” when it was first published in “*Shenbao · Ziyoutan*” (Free Talk · Shebao Daily, 申报 · 自由谈), and was later altered to “Chongsan Ganjiu” in the *Complete Works of Lu Xun*.

<sup>2</sup> Most of the essays concerning this debate between Lu Xun and Shi Zhecun were published in the column of *Free Talk* in Shebao Daily. A collection of these essays can be found in *Complete Works of Lu Xun*.

<sup>3</sup> Lu Xun, “Chongsan ganjiu”, in *Lu Xun quanji* (Complete Works of Lu Xun), Volume 5, p. 324.

Xun challenged the popular belief in “old wine in new bottles” in a satirical way, and pointed out that the shell of the new youth could be filled with the ghost of “Tongcheng miuzhong” (the deviant followers of *Tongcheng* Literary School, 桐城谬种) and “Xuanxue yaonie” (evils and demons of *Wen Xuan* School, 选学妖孽)<sup>1</sup>, both of which were proposed by Qian Xuantong (钱玄同, 1887-1939) to attack those who imitated the writing style of *Tongchengpai*, an influential school in Qing dynasty, and whose who learned to write the parallel prose as selected in *Wen Xuan*. These two terms were frequently used in the May Fourth Era to attack the followers of traditional old literature of China. The reference to *Wen Xuan* was again alluding to Shi Zhecun, who was believed to be guilty for his attempts to revive Chinese tradition by “recommending” that young Chinese people read classical texts.

As a response to the criticism from Lu Xun, Shi Zhecun wrote an essay entitled “*Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*” which was published in the 15th October Issue of *Shenbao · Ziyoutan* (Free Talk · Shebao Daily, 申报 · 自由谈). Starting with a brief account of the recommendation booklist, Shi Zhecun made it clear that he was not debating with Lu Xun (it is controversial whether Shi realized that Feng was Lu), but only wished to make a further explanation of his opinions. Then he justified his recommendation booklist in the following three ways.

Firstly Shi Zhecun gave some explanatory notes on the reason why he would recommend that young people read books like *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*. In fact, more books were to be added to the recommendation booklist if more space were given in the form that he received from the “Evening News”. Judging from his experience in teaching Chinese and editing literary journals, Shi felt a need for the writing and vocabulary of the young generation to be improved, and to read *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan* would be beneficial to them. It was also clarified in this essay that by publishing the recommendation booklist he was not asking young people to write in traditional Chinese language as in *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*. As had already been stated in the short note attached to the booklist, but seemingly ignored by Lu Xun, Shi Zhecun hoped that recommending *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan* would do some good for young people who were interested in literature and expecting future literary careers.

In the following part Shi Zhecun analysed why reading Chinese classical texts could be helpful to those who were expecting a career in literature. He believed in “the necessity of

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 325. Tongcheng Literary School was an influential group of literati who advocated concise and natural styles of prose-writing in the mid- Qing dunasty. *Wen Xuan* School refers to those who believed that the essays in *Wenxuan* [Selections of Refined Literature] were the best of Chinese literature.

anyone in the literary field learning from the literature of his previous generation” and denied anything that formed a division between Chinese “new literature” and “old literature”<sup>1</sup>. As to the metaphor of wine and bottle mentioned by Lu Xun in “Chongsan ganjiu”, Shi Zhecun expressed his disagreement in comparing literary works either to “new wine in old bottles” or “old wine in new bottles”. To both “wine” and “bottle”, it does not matter whether old or new. It matters that the wine should be originally fermented, and it takes a reading of books like *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan* to ferment the “wine” of literature.

In the last three paragraphs of this essay, Shi Zhecun expressed a tolerant view that reading classical texts, writing in seal characters and composing *ci* poetry were all personal interests and activities. On the one hand, by these “little ornaments” they were neither able to revive Chinese traditional culture, nor hinder the progression of modern China. On the other hand, these old-fashioned interests in Chinese tradition could also be found in those who actually advocated new and modern literature. Therefore, there is no need to denounce them as evil or as “deviant followers”.

Lu Xun was obviously displeased with Shi Zhecun’s tolerant attitude to Chinese tradition. Therefore, he wrote “Ganjiu yihou shang/xia” [After “Reflection on the Old”, Part One/Two, 感旧以后, 上/下]<sup>2</sup> to substantiate his criticism of those who were attempting to revive Chinese tradition. Although Lu Xun expressed his agreement with Shi Zhecun that there could not possibly be a division between the new and the old literature, he emphasized that the new literature was different and a preference should be clearly stated. From Lu Xun’s perspective, the preference should always be the new and modern literature. In other words, it was for not stating a preference for modern literature, while recommending traditional Chinese texts, that Shi Zhecun was being scolded. When speaking of the boundary between the old and new Chinese literature, Lu Xun always asked for a clear preference for new and modern literature. The basic assumption behind this preference is a rigid dichotomy in which modernity should be definitely prioritized over tradition, and politics over aesthetics.

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Zhuang Zi yu Wen Xuan” (*Zhuang Zi and Selected Essays*), in Chen Zishan and Xu Rulin eds., *Shi Zhecun qishinian Wen Xuan* (A collection of Shi Zhecun’s Seventy-year Writing Career), p. 344.

<sup>2</sup> Lu Xun, “Ganjiu yihou shang/xia” (After “Reflection on the Old”, Part One/Two), in *Lu Xun quanji* (Complete Works of Lu Xun), Volume 5, pp. 328–335.

Feeling a need to further develop his view, Lu Xun wrote a second part of *ganjiu yihou*<sup>1</sup>, in which he expressed his anxieties that once young people were encouraged to learn from traditional texts they would not endeavour to develop new literature.

The movement of vernacular language did succeed at that time, for which some soldiers were able to climb up to an established position. However, it is because of this established position that they do not fight for *baihua* anymore but have trampled it underfoot, mocking the young people for not acknowledging the traditional language. Being mocked, the young people would assume it necessary to read classical texts and imitate the style of those who were inclined to write in traditional language. As a result, they would not even make any efforts to make any innovations or create a new fashion.<sup>2</sup>

Although Shi Zhecun has repeatedly stated that the recommendation booklist was merely to offer some help to those young people interested in literature, and those who maintained an interest in traditional culture but were neither ambitious nor able to revive tradition, Lu Xun was still worried about potential problems due to a tolerant attitude towards tradition at that time. The logic behind the division between *baihua*, vernacular language, and *wenyan*, traditional written language was in fact a dichotomy of modernity and tradition, in which the former was believed to be hindered by the latter.

### 3.3.2. From “Yishao” To “Yangchang E’shao”

A key word in *Ganjiu yihou* was *Yishao* [young survivors of the bygone dynasty, 遗少], by which Lu Xun referred to those who dwelled upon the fantasies of the good old days and refused to break with tradition. From Lu Xun’s point of view, there was a large group of *yishao* who turned out to be stubborn and silly, and Shi Zhecun could be considered one of them. It was not long before *Yishao* was developed into “Yangchang e’shao” [Compradore hack in foreign settlement, 洋场恶少], an even more unfavourable title referring to someone who flattered Western culture while bearing an evil intention of reviving Chinese feudal tradition.

Having been annoyed with this lingering debate, and more importantly, sceptical about the possibility of any truth coming out of such polemics, Shi Zhecun felt that it was high time to end it. He wrote to Cui Wanqiu, who had sent him the booklist form at the very beginning, asking him to replace *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan* with *Huagaiji* (Unlucky Star, 华盖集) and *Wei ziyou shu* (Writings on False Freedom, 伪自由书), two collections of essays by Lu Xun.

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<sup>1</sup> The second part was written on October 12, 1933, the same day of the first part, but was published on October 16, 1933, the next day after the publication of the first part.

<sup>2</sup> Lu Xun, “Ganjiu yihou xia” (After “Reflection on the Old”, Part Two), in *Lu Xun quanji* (Complete Works of Lu Xun), Volume 5, p. 334.

It is perhaps because Shi Zhecun was really offended by the satirical “dagger and spear”<sup>1</sup> from Lu Xun, writing under the penname Feng Zhiyu, that he chose to punch back, also in a satirical way. He added that he would also be more than happy to recommend “one or two books of Mr. Feng Zhiyu”<sup>2</sup>, but unfortunately, he failed to find any. It has been controversial whether Shi Zhecun knew that Feng Zhiyu, the writer of the previous essays and Shi’s opponent in this debate, was actually Lu Xun when he was first involved in the debate, but most researchers tend to believe that Shi Zhecun had realized he was in a debate with Lu Xun when he wrote “Tuijianzhe de lichang” [The Standpoint of the Recommender] and mocked on Mr. Feng Zhiyu, as previously mentioned.

Feeling rather offended by Shi’s reference to Feng Zhiyu, Lu Xun was very quick in responding with an essay entitled “Pukong”, in which he compared Shi Zhecun to the author of *Yanshi jiaxun* (Family instructions of Master Yan, 颜氏家训)<sup>3</sup>. As mentioned at the very beginning of this section, besides recommending *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan* for young people, Shi Zhecun also entered *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment and Buddhist Scriptures in Five-character Quatrain* on the form. The fact that Shi Zhecun was himself reading an English book and a Buddhist text while recommending young people to read *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan* happened to offer the basis for Lu Xun’s comparison between Shi Zhecun and Master Yan. According to the analysis of Lu Xun, Master Yan, who himself read Chinese classical texts, behaving as a Confucian gentleman while practicing Buddhist doctrines, asked his sons to learn the language of *Xianbei*, an ethnic group from among the northern tribes, in order to work for the invading barbarians. An all-embracing and open-minded attitude could be inferred from Master Yan’s inclusion of old classical philosophy and a new foreign language, but this tolerant attitude was intolerable to Lu Xun, who further criticized Shi Zhecun’s similar combination of both old and new, the Chinese and the foreign.

On the one hand, this fast-tempo modern society makes it difficult to get as much leisure time as the previous generations; on the other hand, the overwhelming debate

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<sup>1</sup> The “dagger and spear”, in Chinese “匕首和投枪”, was used by Lu Xun to describe the preferred style of essay-writing: small but sharp and incisive in its criticism. See Lu Xun “Xiaopinwen de weiji”(Crisis on familiar essays), in *Xiandai zazhi*, 3:6 (October 1933), p. 730.

<sup>2</sup> See Shi Zhecun, “Tuijianzhe de lichang” (The Standpoint of the Recommender), in *Lu Xun quanji* (Complete Works of Lu Xun), Volume 5, p. 352. This essay was published in the October 19 issue of *Huoju*, the supplement of *Dawanbao*.

<sup>3</sup> The author of this book is Yan Zhitui (颜之推, 531-591 A.D.), a Chinese scholar and a government official who served several states. The book was mainly about his own philosophy and life-advice to his sons.

between the old and the new is far from reaching an agreement. This leaves him no option but to combine the ‘moralities’ of the last two generations as one.<sup>1</sup>

It could be concluded from the above citation that, as Lu Xun saw it, Shi Zhecun could not make a clear preference between modernity and tradition; he had no choice but resort to a combination. This ambiguous attitude was believed to have become a serious problem in China and needed to be eliminated. According to the rigid dichotomy, the pursuit of modernity would be praised while an appreciation of tradition would be criticized. An irreconcilable opposition between modernity and tradition made it difficult, if not impossible, for anyone to embrace both modernity and tradition at the same time.

Shi Zhecun, who was trying to reconcile the contradiction between modernity and tradition, was targeted as one of the dangerous enemies who endeavoured to revive tradition. By the end of “*Pukong*”, Lu Xun finally *scolded* Shi Zhecun as an extremely unfavourable “*Yangchang e’shao*”, a juxtaposition of immoral old-fashioned Chinese master and an enthusiastic follower of Western culture. Scolding, or *ma* in Chinese, explained as “abusive criticism”<sup>2</sup> by Michele Hockx, was essential to Lu Xun’s writing style, *zawen*, and his way of criticism. The terminology of “*Yangchang e’shao*” well demonstrates his intolerance towards the integration of modernity and tradition, which was what Shi Zhecun believed in.

After this second round of the pen fights, the debate on *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan* was still far from being over. Shi Zhecun and Lu Xun had both produced more essays<sup>3</sup>, which conveyed similar ideas to those expressed in their previous writings contributing to this debate. Even in the 1980s when Shi Zhecun and *Xiandai zazhi* was rediscovered, the debate between *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan* was still a contentious topic among scholars.<sup>4</sup>

### **3.3.3. Dichotomy and Dialogue: On the Relationship between Modernity and Tradition**

Leo Oufan Lee has given “A Political Postscript” to his analysis of the political vulnerability of both Shi Zhecun and *Xiandai zazhi*.

The reason behind Shi’s ideological debacle was that both the Nationalist government and the CCP- dominated League of Left-wing Writers had begun to tighten the reins of control in the mid-1930s, the former through censorship and random arrest, the latter

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<sup>1</sup> Lu Xun, “*Pukong*” (With Opponent Absent), in *Complete Works of Lu Xun*, Volume 5, p, 349.

<sup>2</sup> Hockx, Michel, *Questions of Style: Literary Societies and Literary Journals in Modern China, 1911–1937*, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Please see Shi Zhecun, “*Tuwei*” (To Break Through an Encirclement); Shi Zhecun, “*Zhi Li Liewen xiansheng shu*” (A Letter to Mr. Li Liewen); Lu Xun, “*Da Jianshi*” (A Reply to Shi Zhecun), in *Lu Xun quanji* (Complete Works of Lu Xun), Volume 5, pp. 354–357; pp. 360–362; pp. 358–359.

<sup>4</sup> See more details in Chapter One.



through increased polemics in order to establish its hegemony over Shanghai's literary scene.<sup>1</sup>

Under the political control of both the Nationalist government and Chinese left-wing Communists, *Xiandai zazhi*, which did not belong to either group, was vulnerable to dual attacks and criticisms. Political belief was one of the basic criteria used to evaluate intellectuals and their works, and it also played a part in Lu Xun's criticism of Shi Zhecun:

I don't really think Mr. Shi has carefully studied *The Selected Essays*; in doing so (recommending *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*, the author's edition) he was just flattering those in government.<sup>2</sup>

"Those in government" were surely from the Nationalist Party. To fight against the increasing power of the Left-wing camp, the Nationalist government implemented a policy of "Nationalist Literature" which called for a redefinition of Chinese traditional culture and morality.<sup>3</sup> Under this circumstance, a recommendation of *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan* was inevitably associated with the cultural policy of the Nationalist government.

In fact, Shi Zhecun was neither a member of the Nationalist Party, nor did he have any intimacy or association to the KMT government. He was appointed as the chief editor of *Xiandai zazhi* precisely because he was never a member of the Communist or Nationalist Parties in China. Moreover, as Shi Zhecun has stated several times, he recommended *Zhuang Zi* and *Wenxun* in hopes that young people who intended to start a literary career could benefit from reading Chinese classical texts. The division between Chinese new literature and old literature can never be clearly drawn and new literature could not develop from nothing but had to be built upon Chinese literature as a whole.

Jin Li has also observed the "anti-KMT" scope of this debate which tended to define a writer from the perspective of political belief and categorization. According to Jin's analysis, the reason why Lu Xun attacked Shi Zhecun in this debate was partly due to Lu Xun's belief that it was Shi who advised the Nationalist Party to enforce censorship on publications and to establish the Nationalist Censorship Committee for Books and Journals (Guomin dang tushu

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, Leo Oufan, *Shanghai Modern: the Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945*, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> Lu Xun, *Lu Xun quanji* (Complete Works of Lu Xun), Volume 12, p. 255.

<sup>3</sup> The cultural policies of the Chinese Nationalist government culminated in the "New Life Movement" in 1934. This civic movement was based on a combination of Chinese traditional morality, a hygienic and modern way of life, Western Christianity, and nationalism. For more details please see Young, C. W. H. *New Life for Kiangsi*.

zazhi shencha weiyuanhui, 国民党图书杂志审查委员会).<sup>1</sup> Having categorized him as a person favouring the Nationalist Party, Lu Xun believed that Shi Zhecun, who happened to recommend two Chinese classic books for young people, was responding to the cultural policy of reviving traditional Chinese culture of the Nationalist Party. In Jin Li's analysis of this debate, Lu Xun mistakenly took Shi Zhecun to be favouring the Nationalist Party, which is why he criticized Shi Zhecun for his recommendation of *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*.

The “anti-KMT bias”, in C.T. Hsia's words, accounts for part of the reason, by it is still far from being sufficient to explain the debate. For one thing, Shi was not a member of the Nationalist party, and there is no evidence that Shi worked for the Committee. For the other, Shi was born in 1905 and was the second generation of Chinese modern writers while Lu Xun was one of the leaders in the May Fourth Movement and several years his senior. It seems that Lu Xun was overreacting to a recommendation booklist proposed by a young man. There must be a deeper reason why Lu Xun attacked and even scolded Shi Zhecun for his recommendation of *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*.

Lu Xun is believed to represent the total anti-traditionalism of the May Fourth Movement. Anti-traditionalism, or iconoclasm, which was the prime slogan of the May Fourth Movement, was still one of the dominant discourses in the 1930s in China. As pointed out by Susan Daruvala, Lu Xun did not believe that the sickness of Chinese society could be cured by the New Culture Movement. His deep skepticism made him “the voice of the New Culture movement's totalistic assault on Chinese civilization.”<sup>2</sup> From the perspective of Lu Xun, *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*, two of the most important classics in traditional Chinese literature, were considered “feudal” and the recommendation of them was thus taken as a dangerous intention to revive the backward feudal tradition in modern China.

The legitimacy of anti-traditionalism lay in the possibility, or even certainty, that the progress of China would be hindered by tradition. Even the “New reformers” in the late Qing period who were actually supporting the feudal government of the Qing dynasty believed in the goal of strengthening China by way of learning Western technological advances. It is for this realization of the necessity of striving for modernity that they deserved some “praise”<sup>3</sup> from

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<sup>1</sup> See Jin Li, *Cong Lanshe dao Xiandai: yi Shi Zhecun, Dai Wangshu, Du Heng ji Liu Na'ou wei hexin de shetuan yanjiu* (From Orchid Society to Xiandai: A Study on the Literary Societies Mainly Established by Shi Zhecun, Dai Wangshu, Du Heng and Liu Na'ou), pp. 209–213.

<sup>2</sup> Daruvala, Susan, *Zhou Zuoren and an Alternative Chinese Response to Modernity*, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> The Chinese word of “praise” (*zanmei*, 赞美) was used by Lu Xun himself in “Chongsan ganjiu”, in *Lu Xun quanji* (Complete Works of Lu Xun), Volume 5, p. 324.

Lu Xun. However, the intellectuals, for example, Shi Zhecun, who were living in the post-May Fourth Era while trying to retain the traditional literature were felt to be extremely dangerous to the progressive development of modern China. In other words, in order to achieve Chinese modernity, all the traditional literature or culture or anything that was related to them should be totally abandoned. According to this dichotomized framework of progress and tradition, Chinese tradition was set up as the obstacle and even the antithesis to progress and modernity. This rigid dichotomy between modernity and tradition can be demonstrated in the term “*Yangchang e’shao*” which was coined by Lu Xun to refer to those who indulged in Western modernity while keeping an interest in Chinese tradition.

The real issue behind the relationship between modernity and tradition is a value judgment of Chinese tradition and Western modernity. Were Western modern things superior to Chinese literary and cultural tradition? And did Western modernity really have the potential to replace all Chinese traditions?

Known for his slogan of “Wholesale Westernization” in China, Hu Shi later changed it to “Wholehearted Modernization”<sup>1</sup> which means “to unreservedly accept this modern civilization of the West”<sup>2</sup>, and the “natural inertia of culture” would stop China from making a fundamental change into a Western civilization. Hu Shi believed in the role that Chinese traditions would play as cultural resistance in wholehearted but sufficient modernization.

I am convinced the old traditions will not be lost even when we take an extreme view of the need for modernization, because civilizations are conservative, by their nature. By the natural inertia of cultures, the vast majority will take good care of those traditional values.<sup>3</sup>

The relationship between tradition and modernity is far from being irreconcilable. It has been argued in Chapter 2 that *Xiandai zazhi* demonstrated its cosmopolitan policy of introducing and translating a contemporaneous world literature into China. As the chief editor of *Xiandai zazhi*, Shi Zhecun always believed in the role that translation could play in constructing modern Chinese literature and Chinese modernity at large. However, although he affirmed the need for westernization, Shi Zhecun was against the discourse of radical anti-traditionalism. An opposition to the dichotomy between Chinese tradition and modernity was essential in Shi Zhecun’s understanding of the relationship between them. This alternative attitude towards

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on this change, please see Cao Tianyu, Zhong Xueping and Liao Kebin eds., *Culture and Social Transformations in Reform Era China*, pp. 183–184.

<sup>2</sup> Hu Shi, “Conflict of Cultures”, in Chou Chih-p’ing ed., *English Writings of Hu Shi (Volume 2): Chinese Philosophy and Intellectual History*, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Chinese tradition takes it as a natural part of Chinese modernity rather than as antiquity associated with an ancient and past civilization, and this is where *Xiandai zazhi* departed from the dominant left-wing discourse which adhered to radical anti-traditionalism.

In the first essay of the fifth issue of Volume 5 which was published in September 1934, Shi Zhecun put forward an argument which was quite astonishing at that time: “I do not approve of the term of ‘literary heritage’ at all”<sup>1</sup>. He went on to develop his point by arguing that Chinese literature had never been a dead thing, nor could it be divided into traditional and modern periods. Very seldom did Shi Zhecun articulate his claims regarding literature and culture, but this time he had to respond to Hui’s<sup>2</sup> essay on the “Movement to Restore *Wenyanwen* [traditional Chinese written language. 文言文]”, in which he was again criticized for reviving the “heritage” of Chinese literature because of his recommendation of *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*. Despite his anger at this misunderstanding of his views, Shi Zhecun very briefly clarified his reasons for the recommendation booklist at the beginning of this essay and then pointed out the mistake of the term Chinese “literary legacy”.

If *Wenyanwen* was defined as being dead, and we selected, in a new way, some of its expressions to apply to Chinese new literature, then would it be acceptable to call these expressions “the heritage of *Wenyanwen*”? As to *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*, although they are not the products of our age, they are as inseparable to the entire Chinese literature as the literary works we have been creating nowadays. Does it make any sense to call them “heritage”?<sup>3</sup>

It could be concluded as the main argument of this essay that Chinese literature should be taken as a whole and the term “literary heritage” is just nonsense. In *Xiandai zazhi*, tradition, or “literary heritage”, was not understood as the antiquity of an ancient oriental civilization but as an inherent part of modern Chinese identity. With this new recognition of Chinese tradition, *Xiandai zazhi* offered us a new framework in which tradition was not the values or antiquities that were essential in shaping China in the past centuries, but an integral factor always present in modern Chinese identity.

Shi Zhecun also challenged the ideological basis of anti-traditionalism, which took *wenyan*, the Chinese traditional written language, as the symbol of feudalism. Although Shi Zhecun did not go further into a discussion of language, which was another important issue of Chinese modernity, he was, to some extent, expressing his rejection of the victimization of

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Wo yu wenyanwen” (Chinese Written Language and I), *Xiandai zazhi*, 5: 5 (September 1934), p. 681.

<sup>2</sup> “Hui” was the pen name of the author of this essay.

<sup>3</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Wo yu wenyanwen” (Chinese Written Language and I), *Xiandai zazhi*, 5: 5 (September 1934), p. 682.

Chinese tradition. In the last two paragraphs of this essay, Shi Zhecun satirically mentioned his recommendation of *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan*, and argued that it was impossible to entirely avoid *wenyan*, even for those intellectuals who supported *baihua*, or Chinese vernacular language, because “sometimes they still had to write one or two letters in *wenyan*”<sup>1</sup>. An essentialist<sup>2</sup> may understand tradition as Tang Poems, or Chinese Chan Buddhism, but for a real modern intellectual like Shi Zhecun, tradition is naturally present in modern literature and culture in China.

### 3.4. “Articulation” through the Transformations of Chinese Tradition in Modern Poems in *Xiandai Zazhi*

This section will be devoted to an analysis of how Chinese tradition was articulated in the transplantation of tradition in the modern poems with distinctive traditional features in *Xiandai zazhi*. Because of the gulf in understanding Chinese tradition between the empowered anti-traditionalists and *Xiandai zazhi*, the connection between Western Imagist Poetry and Chinese traditional literature was almost silenced in *Xianidai zazhi*. Silence, however, reflects a sense of anxiety but also indicates “a space of possibility”<sup>3</sup>, a term used by Malhotra and Rowe to refer to a freedom of not speaking or acting in relation to what is expected from the empowered group.

According to Malhotra and Rowe in their introduction to a collection of essays on silence and power, “silence” is defined as “a space of fluidity, non-linearity, and as a sacred, internal space that provides a refuge—especially for non-dominant people. Silence is a process that allows one to go within before one has to speak and act”<sup>4</sup>. Generally speaking, most of the examinations of silence and articulation focus on the minor, or “non-dominant” and powerless group and seek to identify the forms of resistance against power as well as possible ways of engagement. Speaking of engagement, one has to choose between assimilating himself with the dominant group or articulating his own voice usually by means of silence. King-Kok Cheung has summarized this choice by saying that “their way of breaking out of enforced

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 683.

<sup>2</sup> An essentialist believes that for any specific culture there is a set of conceptions which define and differentiate it from others. See Yasmeen Abu-Laban, “Liberalism, multiculturalism and the Problem of Essentialism”, in *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 2002, pp. 459–482; R. D. Grillo, “Cultural Essentialism and cultural anxiety”, in *Anthropological Studies*, 2003, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 157–173.

<sup>3</sup> Malhotra, Sheena and Rowe, Aimee Carrillo eds., *Silence, Feminism, Power: Reflections at the Edges of Sound*, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

silence is not by dissolving into the mainstream but by rendering their distinctive voices”<sup>1</sup>. When Chinese tradition was condemned as being feudal and retrogressive, the translators of Imagism in *Xiandai zazhi* did not elaborate on this issue, as a nationalist would normally do, nor did they adopt a totally iconoclastic attitude towards Chinese tradition which might have entailed ignoring Imagism altogether. Their strategy was then to keep silent on the connections of Imagism with China. From this point of view, although *Xiandai zazhi* did not elaborate on the relations between Chinese traditional poetry and the Imagist School in Western modern literature, the translation and introduction of Imagist Poetry had already revealed its rejection of total anti-traditionalism. Moreover, *Xiandai zazhi* managed to articulate its alternative attitude towards Chinese tradition in its transformations of Chinese tradition in the modern poems, which will be studied in the following section.

### 3.4.1. *Yixiang (Image): A Poetic Characteristic in Xiandai zazhi*

A keen interest in *yixiang*, 意象 which is usually translated as “image” or “imagery” in English, was one of the most distinctive features of the poems in *Xiandai zazhi*. In addition to the translation and introduction of Imagist Poetry in the UK and America, essays on Yesenin and the school of Imagist Poetry in Russia also appeared in this journal<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, the poetry theory and the modern poems published in *Xiandai zazhi* all demonstrated its special interest in the poems with the characteristic of *yixiang*, which had a clear connection to traditional Chinese literature.

*Canglang shihua* (Canglang’s Discussions of Poetry, 沧浪诗话) by Yan Yu (严羽, A.D. 1180-1235 A.D.) has been an important and influential book of critical analysis of poetry ever since it appeared in the Song dynasty. *Yixiang* has been listed as one of the five basic elements, or techniques of Chinese traditional poetry. James J. Y. Liu has also identified the important position that “Imagery” and symbolism have occupied in Chinese poetry<sup>3</sup>. As a traditional Chinese literary concept, imagery usually consists of two parts, the physical objects which are the words or characters, and the associations that the object recalls or signifies. The relationship between the image and what the image intends to signify will not come to you in a direct and straightforward way, and this is the very feature that defines Imagist poems and differentiates them from Symbolistic poems, which does not signify a

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<sup>1</sup> Cheung, King-Kok, “Don’t Tell: Imposed Silences in *The Color Purple* and *The Woman Warrior*”, in Shirley Geok-Lin Lim and Amy Ling eds., *Reading the Literatures of Asian America*, p. 185.

<sup>2</sup> Dai Wangshu (tr.), “Ye Saining yu E’guo yixiang shipai” (Sergei Yesenin and the School of Imagist Poetry in Russia), in *Xiandai zazhi*, 5: 3 (July 1934), pp. 411–421.

<sup>3</sup> Liu, James, *The art of Chinese poetry*, p. 101.

specific meaning by means of using images. A good poem may consist of simple images but stimulate associations far beyond them. No matter how wide a range the images could be chosen from, a true and spontaneous overflow of feelings was always central to traditional Chinese poetry.

Image as a poetic style has also been rediscovered as an important criterion of the aesthetics of Chinese literature and culture in the 1980s in China. An essay entitled “*Yixiang de jiliu*” [The Torrent of Imagery, 意象的激流] by Li Tuo was published in the third issue of “*Wenyi yanjiu*” [Literary Studies, 文艺研究] in 1986. Starting from an evaluation of Wang Zengqi and also some other *xungen* [root-seeking, 寻根] writers in the 1980s, including He Liwei, A Cheng, Han Shaogong, Jia Pingwa, and Mo Yan, Li Tuo argued that a similar aesthetic feature of “a creation of imagery”<sup>1</sup> could be identified from their fiction. He went on to suggest that this creation of imagery, which could usually be found in classical Chinese poetic theory, was now applied to the writing of fiction to construct a “Chinese style and fashion which was modern at the same time”<sup>2</sup>. In the writings of these root-seeking writers, the creation of imagery which was deeply embedded in the aesthetic structure of Chinese literary culture for thousands of years but had almost disappeared since the May Fourth Era has been revived since the 1980s in China. Susan Daruvala has also pointed out imagery as an important perspective with which to see Chinese modern literature in her study of Zhou Zuoren and an alternative response to Chinese modernity:

“Imagery”, however, does not convey the relationship between the component parts *yi* (meaning idea, intent) and *xiang* (image) of the binome, which is, as Li points out, a traditional aesthetic category. In its locus classicus, *yixiang* is what directs the writer in the creative process and is dependent on stillness of mind as well as learning<sup>3</sup>.

James Liu, Li Tuo and Susan Daruvala all use the term “Imagery” to refer to this very basic element and feature of Chinese traditional poetry: to use a simple and concise physical object to recall an emotion. I use the word “image” to refer to the individual words, phrases or stanza that evoke a concrete feeling or idea through imagination. When all the images in a poem are taken as a whole, they produce the “imagery” of the poem. As a poetic genre, *yixiang*, or image, first appeared in *Xiandai zazhi* in “*Yixiang shuqingshi*”<sup>4</sup> [Lyrical Poems of Imagism, 意象抒情诗], which was a collection of five distinctive Imagist poems composed by Shi

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<sup>1</sup> Li Tuo, “*Yixiang de jiliu*” (The torrent of Imagery), *Wenyi yanjiu* (Literary studies), 1986: 03, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Daruvala, Susan, *Zhou Zuoren and an Alternative Response to Chinese Modernity*, p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> Shi Zhecun, “*Yixiang shuqingshi*” (Lyrical Poems of Imagism), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 2 (June 1932), pp. 226-232.

Zhecun. The term of *yixiang*, by which Shi Zhecun meant a physical form to be associated with an idea, has demonstrated a clear reconnection to traditional Chinese literature.

In the 1930s in China, the poetry theory and the poems published in *Xiandai zazhi* constructed a clear link to the traditional aesthetic concept of *Yixiang*. The basic feature of imagery in Chinese traditional poetry resembles the poetic theory in *Xiandai zazhi* as demonstrated in “Wangshu shilun” [The Poetic Theory of Dai Wangshu, 望舒诗论], which was published in the first issue of Volume 2 in *Xiandai zazhi* in November 1932. It was the first time that a systematic introduction of the poetic theory of Dai Wangshu, one of the main contributors to *Xiandai zazhi* and also a close friend of Shi Zhecun, was published. According to the short note attached to it, this draft of poetic theory was selected and compiled by Shi Zhecun, who “copied the above lines from his manual of scripts to introduce his poetic theory to the readers”<sup>1</sup>, although he had been a poet Shi Zhecun rarely mentioned his own theory of poetry. In this selection and compiling, Shi Zhecun acted as, in a way, an interpreter or even a rewriter of Dai Wangshu’s understanding of poetry.

The essay includes a list of 17 criteria for a good poem. It presents Dai’s thoughts on the nature of poetry, including auditory effect like rhyme and syllables, the subject matter of poems, and especially whether the old images or classical forms could be used in the writing of modern poems, and also the relationship between the form and the content.

Generally speaking, the poetic theory of Dai Wangshu in this piece of writing gives priority to the spontaneity of the poet’s spirit or emotion, rather than auditory effects or versifications. Besides, the spirit or emotion could be achieved from de-visualized objects, which is very similar to the Chinese traditional concept of “image”. By “de-visualized objects” I mean the in a poem the images are produced through words, so it takes imagination to evoke a mental picture in people’s minds. Although these images make concrete ideas in the mental pictures, they are in a way imagined, rather than visualized.

It is worth noting that in the second point in “Wangshu shilun” the author differentiates a poem from a painting. Dai Wangshu points out that a poem cannot rely on the strong points of a painting. This statement resembles what James Liu has pointed out in his understanding of the basic features of Chinese classic poetry.

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Bianzhe zhuiyan” (A Editor’s Note on “Wangshu shilun”), in Dai Wangshu, “Wangshu shilun” (The Poetic Theory of Dai Wangshu), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 1 (November 1932), p. 94.



The language of Chinese poetry is extremely concise and often dispenses with connecting particles, so that a line can consist of a sequence of images. Such images are not merely pictures in words: they arouse emotional associations and enrich their poetic context.<sup>1</sup>

According to this view, a painting shows, while a poem inspires. The difference lies in whether imagination is employed to produce concrete ideas or feelings. Poetry expresses the spontaneous spirit and emotion rather than presenting the world to the readers in a direct way. It is reasonable to argue that Dai Wangshu's differentiation between a poem and a painting was a rediscovery of a traditional poetic concept, image, which was used to construct associations rather than to visualize the object.

Of greater importance in these statements on poetry is his emphasis on the nuance of “*shiqing*” [the spirit or emotion of a poem, 诗情] as the decisive factor of Chinese new poems.

According to James J. Y. Liu in his summarization of traditional Chinese views on poetry, poetry as a way of expressing self was listed as one of the four basic views of traditional Chinese poetry. This self-expression was very close to the concept of *shiqing* as proposed by Dai Wangshu in his 16 points concerning modern Chinese poetry.

According to Dai's definition of Chinese “new poetry” (新诗), new spirit or emotion should be infused with new forms which were neither arrangements of characters nor accumulations of new words. The newness of the new poem lay in the novelty of poetic spirit, rather than the coining of new words. Dai also said that the poetic spirit did not necessarily exist only in new subject matter. Rather, it could also be found in old and traditional things. The essential problem lies in whether this old thing can bring some new spirit or emotion. Dai felt that in terms of the techniques of writing a poem, the musical effect, or the auditory effect of a poem was eliminated to such an extent that a good poem should get rid of the musical effect, because the versification could possibly hinder the development of the poetic spirit.

In addition to this discussion of “Wangshu shilun”, a further inquiry into Shi Zhecun's own ideas on poetry will reveal his understanding of “image” as an important criterion for Chinese poetry. The December 2003 Issue of INK (*yinke wenxue shenghuo zhi*) published a collection of six letters addressed to Meng Lang, a modern Chinese poet living in America at that time. According to the note attached to the article, these letters were from Shi Zhecun in the period from 1986 to 1994 when Meng Lang, as a young poet at that time, was keeping in touch with Shi Zhecun. In these letters, Shi Zhecun reconnects the poems of the 1930s in *Xiandai zazhi*

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<sup>1</sup> Liu, James, *The Art of Chinese Poetry*, p. 104.

to the modernist poetry which was popular in Mainland China from the 1980s. The problem of how to deal with Western modern poems and the classical Chinese literary legacy was still an issue in the 1980s in China.

In responding to the *Menglong shi*, or “Misty poetry”, a term which was greatly popular in the late 1980s in Mainland China, Shi Zhecun proposed that a poem could be “obscure” but not intangible.

I do support Obscure poetry as long as it is as obscure as seeing a flower through a fog. It will otherwise be dark if the flower cannot be seen through a veil or fog. One has to pay special attention to the imagery arrangement and language organization in order to make it obscure but not dark<sup>1</sup>.

As to the relationship between the word and what the word intends to signify, one cannot go to such an extreme that it is too complex and vague to identify any associations at all. This is the difference between “being obscure” and “being dark”. The problem of “Misty poetry” would possibly occur if it broke the relationship between the physical objects and the emotion with which they are associated.

In the 1980s when Chinese modern poetry was gaining great popularity in Mainland China, Shi Zhecun emphasized a proper distance between the word and what the word intended to signify, which was very similar to the notion of a de-visualized poem in “Wangshu shilun”. Considering that “Wangshu shilun” was actually selected and compiled by Shi Zhecun, “image” as a traditional poetic characteristic was always incorporated into his understanding of Chinese poetry, and his idea of modern poetry in the 1980s was quite similar to the Imagist poetic theory when he was acting as the chief editor of *Xiandai zazhi* in the early 1930s. *Yixiang*, or image, an important poetic characteristic in *Xiandai zazhi*, has demonstrated its modern transformation of Chinese traditional literature, and therefore offered an alternative way to overcome the dichotomized framework between modernity and tradition.

### **3.4.2. Poems of “Nostalgia”: Theme and Variation**

In this section, poems published in *Xiandai zazhi* which had characteristics of Chinese traditional poetry will be discussed. Most of these writings were published after the polemic over *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan* in 1933. This debate lingered on until the next year when Lu

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<sup>1</sup> Meng Lang, “Shi Zhecun xiansheng de liufengxin” (Six Letters from Mr. Shi Zhecun), in *Yinke wengxue shenghuo zhi* (INK), December 2003, p. 192.

Xun was still ‘scolding’ Shi Zhecun in his letter to Xu Maoyong<sup>1</sup>. Even in such an unfavourable situation when the reputation of *Xiandai zazhi* could be at great risk over an explicit appropriation of classical Chinese poetry, there were still poems with distinctive features of Chinese classical poetry published in *Xiandai zazhi*. As shown in Table 3.1 and 3.2, 6 poems entitled as “Untitled”, a typical Chinese traditional poetic genre, and 24 poems of “Nostalgia”, an important Chinese traditional poetic theme, were published in *Xiandai zazhi*.

	Title	Author	Issue: Volume
1	无题 ( <i>Wuti</i> ), “Untitled ”	戴望舒, Dai Wangshu	1: 6
2	无题 ( <i>Wuti</i> ), “Untitled ”	李心若, Li Xinruo	4: 1
3	无题 ( <i>Wuti</i> ), “Untitled ”	芦焚, Lu Fen	4: 2
4	无题 ( <i>Wuti</i> ), “Untitled ”	辛予, Xin Yu	4: 3
5	无题 ( <i>Wuti</i> ), “Untitled ”	王华, Wang Hua	5: 1
6	无题 ( <i>Wuti</i> ), “Untitled ”	前人, Qian Ren	5: 3

Table 3.1: 6 Poems entitled “Untitled” in *Xiandai zazhi*

Although “Untitled” was used as a regular title given to those poems with no titles at all, it appeared more as the title for a Chinese poem (sometimes also in prose) when the poet was deliberately making a poem as ambiguous and obscure as a riddle. As a typical genre in ancient Chinese poetry, *wuti shi* [untitled poems, 无题诗] was used to present feelings or emotions which were extremely difficult to express in words. Li Shangyin (813–858), a Chinese poet living during the Tang dynasty, was particularly famous for a number of *wuti shi* written by him.

From the perspective of the dominant Left-wing discourse, if *xiaopinwen* [familiar essay, 小品文] which was popular in the Late Ming dynasty was “little ornament” (*xiao baishe*, 小摆设) for modern China, then *wuti shi* was definitely a dangerous way of reviving traditional Chinese culture. This dominant but rigid view could be identified in “*Xinjing zhuyi de wenxue*” (Literature about the State of Mind, 心境主义的文学)<sup>2</sup>, in which works on personal moods

<sup>1</sup> Shao Jian, *20 shiji de liangge zhishi fenzi: Hu Shi yu Lu Xun* (Two Intellectuals of 20th Century: Hu Shi and Lu Xun), p. 348.

<sup>2</sup> Mu Mutian, “*Xinjing zhuyi de wenxue*” (Literature of Mind-portrayism), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 6 (April 1934), pp. 936-938.

and feelings were summarized as “*Xinjing wenxue*” and defined as the reverse of Left-wing proletarian literature for being irrelevant, nihilistic and even reactionary. It is in this gap of understanding Chinese tradition that an alternative view could be identified in *Xiandai zazhi*: tradition was never the antithesis of modernity but a natural and essential element of it.

Of greater importance as an inventive appreciation of traditional Chinese literature were the poems on “Nostalgia” in *Xiandai zazhi*. Nostalgia was always one of the most familiar topics in Chinese literature, and it also takes up a great part in traditional Chinese poetry. In *The Art of Chinese Poetry*, James Liu has listed “nostalgia” as one of the “commonest expressions” of the “underlying concepts and ways of thinking and feeling” which “often form the actual themes or underlying frameworks of Chinese poetry”. It is quite true when James Liu asserts that “no one who has read any amount of Chinese poetry, even in translation, can fail to notice the abundance of poems on nostalgia. Chinese poets seem to be perpetually bewailing their exile and longing to return home”. Nostalgia as a basic theme could be found in a considerable number of poems published in *Xiandai zazhi*.

	Title	Author	Issue: Volume
1	游子谣 (Youziyao), “A Ballad for a Wandering Man”	戴望舒, Dai Wangshu	1: 3
2	乡愁 (Xiangshou), “Nostalgia”	曦晨, Xichen	1: 6
3	忆上海 (Yi Shanghai), “Reminiscence of Shanghai”	李金发, Li Jinfa	2: 1
4	嫌厌 (Xianyan), “Annoyance”	施蛰存, Shi Zhecun	2: 1
5	独游 (Duyou), “Traveling Alone”	伊涓, Yimei	2: 4
6	海滨 (Haibin), “The Coast”	伊涓, Yimei	2: 4
7	送砾子南归 (Song Lizi Nangui), “Parting from Lizi Who Is Travelling to the South”	钟敬文, Zhong Jingwen	2: 6
8	有忆 (Youyi), “Memory”	清如, Qingru	3: 1
9	单峰驼 (Danfengtuo), “One-humped Camel”	侯汝华, Hou Ruhua	3: 2
10	暮景 (Mujing), “Nightfall”	林加, Lin Jia	4: 1
11	故都的黄昏 (Gudu de Huanghun), “Dusk in My	王一心, Wang Yixin	4: 1

	Hometown”		
12	归轮中 (Guilunzhong), “Homeward Journey on a Steamboat”	李心若, Li Xinruo	4: 1
13	旅人 (Lvren), “A Wandering Man”	金克木, Jin Kemu	4: 1
14	端午 (Duanwu), “Dragon Boat Festival”	陈江帆, Chen Jiangfan	4: 2
15	白云深处 (Baiyun Shenchu), “Deep in White Cloud”	吴天籁, Wu Tianlai	4: 3
16	旅人 (Lvren), “A Wandering Man”	佚名, Yiming, (Anonymous)	4: 4
17	瘦的乡思 (Shou de Xiangsi), “Nostalgia That Is Slim”	李金发, Li Jinfa	4: 4
18	最后的樽前 (Zuihou de Zunqian), “The Last Toast”	柳倩, Liu Qian	4: 5
19	旅人 (Lvren), “A Wandering Man”	杨予英, Yang Yuying	4: 6
20	大街: 故都长安街之印象 (Dajie: Gudu Changan zhi Yinxiang), “The Street: A Impression of Chang’an”	玲君, Lingjun	5: 1
21	秋之歌 (Qiuzhige), “Ode to Autumn”	汀石, Tingshi	5: 1
22	夜泊感 (Yebogan), “Anchor at Night”	李心若, Li Xinruo	5: 5
23	有怀 (Youhuai), “A Mood”	叶企范, Ye Qifa	5: 5
24	烟 (Yan), “Smoke”	王云凡, Wang Yunfan	6: 1

Table 3.2: 24 Poems of “Nostalgia” in *Xiandai zazhi*

The very basic theme of nostalgia covers a wide range of sub-topics in Chinese poetry. In a introduction on how to read and understand Chinese poetry, the author has listed 11 themes that “lie at the core of the evolving Chinese poetic canon”<sup>1</sup>, including “Love and Courtship” “The Beautiful Woman” “The Abandoned Woman” “The Wandering Man” “Landscape” and so on. The theme of “Wandering Man” is closely related to the topic of nostalgia in ancient Chinese poetry.

<sup>1</sup> Cai Zongqi, “Introduction” in *How to Read Chinese Poetry: A Guided Anthology*, p. 1.

The Wandering Man” (*youzi*) is an enduring theme about the world of culture and politics. It comprises a broad array of depressing topos and motifs: the physical hardships of travel on official duty, the unreliability of political patrons, the treacherousness of court politics, the spectacle of famine and exploitation, the incessant frontier wars, the prolonged introspections of an insomniac man, the departure of a beloved friend, and, above all, the constant homesickness of a scholar-official. Whether for genuine self-expression or as a pure literary exercise, literati poets habitually chose to portray themselves as lonely, world-weary wanderers perpetually yearning for home.<sup>1</sup>

Although defined as a theme of “the wandering man”, this subject shares similar topics with nostalgia. Be it “nostalgia” or “wandering man”, these two basic themes and their related topics were almost all about “lonely world-weary wanderers perpetually yearning for home”, repeatedly developed in the poems in *Xiandai zazhi*. In the first issue of Volume One, we see a collection of poems by Dai Wangshu, in which a strong feeling of parting from friend could be detected, especially in the two poems entitled “Qianye: yiye de ji’nian ,cheng Na’ou” (On the Eve of Departure: An Overnight memory, To Na’ou 前夜：一夜的纪念，呈呐鸥) and “Cunzeng” (Valediction, 存赠). It was published six months before Dai Wangshu left for France in December 1932. The Poetry Section of Volume 1, Issue 3, contained four poems by Dai Wangshu.

The first one in this collection is “*Youzi yao*” (A Ballad for a Wandering Man, 游子谣).

When the wind is blowing wildly on the sea,

Navy roses have blossomed on the dark water.

But where is the home for a wandering man?<sup>2</sup>

The first three lines of this poem depict a typical image of a wandering man who was travelling on the sea, lonely and nostalgic. Of similar theme is the poem entitled “Xiangchou” (Nostalgia, 乡愁) by Xichen published in the sixth issue of Volume 1. This extract expressed the feeling of homesickness in a more direct way.

In the deep night of an ancient city,

I hear, the flute that I have heard in my home village,

Although thousands of miles away have we been parted,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> Dai Wangshu, “*Youzi yao*” (A Ballad for A Wandering Man), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 3 (July 1932), p. 401.

There was the same music that made me melancholy.<sup>1</sup>

To the theme of nostalgia may also be added the poems written on the departure of a beloved friend. In Issue 4: 4, an anonymous poem was published entitled “Lv’ren” (A Wandering Man, 旅人) which was a typical farewell poem.

Please take this cup of wine,

I wish you could brush with your sleeves and go,

And then with the exiles in Siberia,

Roar out and sing.<sup>2</sup>

The rapture with wine and the wishes to a friend would easily remind a Chinese reader of a famous Tang poem, “Seeing Master Yuan Off on His Mission to Kucha”, of which the last two lines go like this, “I summon you: Drink one more cup; No old friends, my friend, When you start westward for Yang Kuan”.

Although the poems on the theme of nostalgia are similar to the traditional ones, variation can be clearly identified in new images, techniques and modern ways of expression. Although it was a traditional Chinese poetic theme, nostalgia was not considered a way to revive ancient Chinese literature but to develop and broaden the themes of modern Chinese poetry.

“Song Lizi nan’gui” (Parting from Lizi Who Is Travelling to the South, 送砾子南归) expressed the poet’s longing and concern for his wife who has just travelled back to her hometown alone. The poet broadened the theme of farewell in Chinese poetry in the sense that it was a seeing-off poem written by a husband to his wife. The farewell poems in traditional Chinese literature were usually between male friends. In other words, the farewell poems were often about men’s friendship instead of love between couples. This poem of seeing-off was, in this sense, a modern variation on the theme of nostalgia.

Li Jinfa, who is generally regarded as a poet of “Symbolism” in modern China, was a regular contributor to *Xiandai zazhi*. Of his 10 poems that were published in *Xiandai zazhi*, reminiscence of one’s past life was a central theme. The poem “Yi Shanghai” (Reminiscence

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<sup>1</sup> Xi Chen, “Xiangchou” (Nostalgia), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 6 (October 1932), p. 826.

<sup>2</sup> “Lv’ren” (A Wandering Man), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 4 (February 1934), p. 657.

of Shanghai, 忆上海) is an adaptation/modification of the traditional theme of nostalgia. As a modern poet, Li Jinfu has developed and broadened the theme of nostalgia with a complicated feeling of remembrance mixed with a strong sense of resentment and cynicism towards Shanghai.

You must have been satisfied with my miseries!

A seducer as soulless as a whore,

I will, by the mountains in the southern country,

Yell out your sins as unforgivable as a witch.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast with the poems of nostalgia that usually portrayed a wandering man's homesickness and his longing to be back, the poem "Xianyan" (Annoyance, 嫌厌) by Shi Zhecun portrayed a man who would like to continue with his journey rather than go back to his hometown. The compass appeared as a new and original image in this poem of the wandering man. Although not clearly presented, this is a variation on the typical theme of nostalgia in Chinese traditional poetry.

Swirling and swirling,

I was in an endless journey towards home.

The compass shows the direction of my hometown, but I hope it is wrong,

I pray to God to keep me lost forever.<sup>2</sup>

Although Shi Zhecun had a strong fondness for Chinese traditional poetry, he still endorsed the role that translated poems could play in terms of writing methods and techniques of Chinese new poetry. In addition to the poems written by Chinese poets, there were also essays and translated works on the theme of nostalgia. In the note attached to his translation of seven poems by W.B. Yeats, Shi Zhecun (writing as An Yi, 安懿) expressed his appreciation of a

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<sup>1</sup> Li Jinfu, "Yi Shanghai" (Reminiscence of Shanghai), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 1 (November 1932), p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Shi Zhecun, "Xianyan" (Annoyance), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 1 (November 1932), p. 157.



dozen lyrical poems of Yeats and thus chose to translate some of them in *Xiandai zazhi*. “‘The Lake Isle of Innisfree’ was apparently an excellent work which has strongly expressed the sense of Nostalgia”<sup>1</sup>. A cosmopolitan view of nostalgia which could apply to both past and present could be identified, from China and abroad.

Some readers wrote to the publishing office of the journal to express their inability to read and understand the modern poems published in *Xiandai zazhi*. In the Column “Wenyi dubai” (Monologue on Literature and Art, 文艺独白) of the first issue in Volume 4, Shi Zhecun responded to some readers’ negative attitudes towards the poems by affirming that those poems were perfectly modern Chinese poetry.

The poems published in *Xiandai zazhi* are surely poems, and they are purely modern poems. They are works in modern poetic forms made up of modern words and expressions which depict modern frames of minds that modern people have felt in modern life.<sup>2</sup>

It could be firmly argued that Shi Zhecun was not intending to restore tradition but to make Chinese modern poetry “go parallel with Western poetry”<sup>3</sup>. This attitude of looking outside is somehow similar to the dominant left-wing discourse of striving for strengthening and progression through learning from outside China. The difference lies between a rigid dichotomy between modernity and tradition and an all-embracing strategy which includes both. The former left-wing discourse adhered to a prioritized aim of modernity and a total abandonment of all tradition, while the latter asserted that Chinese tradition was always there as a natural element of Chinese modernity, waiting to be rediscovered and utilized in modern Chinese literature. In Shi Zhecun’s understanding of modern Chinese literature, and as demonstrated in *Xiandai zazhi*, tradition was not an obstacle to progress but a natural and essential element of it. He expressed his doubt in the possibility of creating a completely new poetry by saying that “I hope that you could read more poems of both the past and the present, from home and abroad. A creative literary genre as poetry may be, it still has its tradition”<sup>4</sup>. This “tradition” could be the literary tradition of China and of the West, and a good poet should learn from both his national literary tradition and also methods and techniques from abroad. A successful transformation of Chinese traditional literature in the poems of *Xiandai*

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun (writing as An Yi), “Yi Xiazhi shi zhuiyu” (A Short Note on the Translations of the Poems by W. B. Yeats), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 1 (May 1932), p. 24. The English word “Nostalgia” was added by the author himself in this short note.

<sup>2</sup> Shi Zhecun, “You guanyu benkan zhong de shi” (A Re-discussion of the Poems in *Xiandai zazhi*), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 1 (November 1933), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Shi Zhecun, Preface in *Yuwai shichao* (A Collection of Translations of Foreign Poems), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Meng Lang, “Shi Zhecun xiansheng de liufengxin” (Six Letters from Mr. Shi Zhecun), *Yinke wenxue shenghuo zhi* (INK), December 2003, p. 195.

*zazhi* serves as an alternative way to overcome the dichotomy between modernity and tradition proposed by the dominant left-wing discourse in the early 1930s in China.

In terms of this historical consciousness of being new and modern, *Xiandai zazhi* actually shared some inherent similarity with the dominant left-wing discourse of progress, but differed in an open-minded cultural attitude towards Chinese traditional culture. According to the rigid dichotomy between tradition and modernity proposed by the dominant left-wing camp in the early 1930s, any forms of evaluation of tradition meant a revival of feudalism, and therefore proponents would be scolded as being anti-revolutionary and retrogressive. However, *Xiandai zazhi* offered us a new framework in which tradition was understood not in an essentialist way, but as a natural constituent of Chinese modernity. In other words, tradition was not the values or antiquities that were essential in shaping China in past centuries, but an integral factor always present in modern Chinese identity. According to Shi Zhecun, tradition is the legacy of Chinese literature that has never been dead, and therefore it is not the opposite of modernity, but rather a natural element of modern Chinese culture. It should be mentioned that in the fourth and fifth volumes of *Xiandai zazhi* there appeared two essays on the studies of *Yuanqu* opera which was popular in the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368 AD). These two essays were both written by Zhao Jingshen (1902-1985), a famous critic and translator, who investigated in detail some controversies in the studies of *Yuanqu*, and then published some of his new findings which were based on his research on this traditional Chinese literary genre<sup>1</sup>. It is interesting that Zhao Jingshen also wrote an introductory essay to the latest Italian literature which was published in the fourth issue of Volume 1 of *Xiandai zazhi*.

Shi Zhecun and Zhao Jingshen were among the contributors of *Xiandai zazhi* whose literary practice showed that modern and traditional literature and culture could co-exist. Moreover, in addition to the modern variations of poems of “Nostalgia”, *Xiandai zazhi* also provided very good examples of how to appreciate and transform traditional literature and culture by creative rewriting and transplanting of traditional subject matter. In “Dream”<sup>2</sup>, which was a short story based on *Water Margin*, one of the four great novels of classical Chinese literature, Zhang Tianyi presented a dream of Lu Junyi, one of the 108 Heroes in Liangshan Marsh (the ‘Water Margin’). The dream was actually a reflection of the psychological process in which

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<sup>1</sup> For more detail on these two essays, please see Zhao Jingshen, “Shuangjian yu suqing” (Shuangjian and Suqing) in *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 1 (November 1933), pp. 238–246, and “Yuanqu shidai xianhou kao” (A Study of the Chronological History of Yuanqu Opera), in *Xiandai zazhi*, 5: 4 (August 1934), pp. 590–592.

<sup>2</sup> Zhang Tianyi, “Meng” (A Dream), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 3 (January 1933), pp. 427–436.

he was tortured by the conflicts between his brotherhood with people in Liangshan Marsh and his longing for home. “*Wu Zixu*”<sup>1</sup> was a modern Chinese drama based on the historical records of Wu Zixu, a general and politician in the Spring and Autumn Period (722–481 BC). It is through this open-mindedness towards Chinese tradition that *Xiandai zazhi* constructed a textual space for a dialogue rather than a dichotomy between Chinese modernity and tradition.

### 3.5. Conclusion: Shi Zhecun in 1930s and 1980s

The cultural attitude of Shi Zhecun was inevitably reflected in his editing of *Xiandai zazhi*. Therefore, it takes a closer look into the cultural attitude of Shi Zhecun to understand that of *Xiandai zazhi*. As the chief editor of *Xiandai zazhi*, one of the most avant-gardist literary journals in the 1930s in Shanghai, Shi Zhecun showed great interest in appreciating and transforming traditional Chinese literature. Although he believed in the role that translation would play in Chinese modernity, he challenged the dominant left-wing discourse that realism was the only right doctrine of literature and literature was only the tool for political and ideological propaganda. After 1935, when *Xiandai zazhi* was discontinued, Shi Zhecun became more active in advocating literature as a means of self-expression.

In February 1935, Shi Zhecun launched a new literary journal entitled “Wenfan Xiaopin” [文饭小品, Literary Vignettes], which was established to publish light and leisurely literary works. Works by Lin Yutang, Zhou Zuoren, and others who were among the most famous writers who advocated familiar essays, were published in this journal. In April of the same year, Guangming Book Company published a collection of late-Ming familiar essays which was compiled by Shi Zhecun. In response to the debates and controversies over familiar essays in the 1930s, this book provided a liberal and negotiable attitude. “Those who advocate [familiar essays] are not necessarily asking everyone to read familiar essays of Ming dynasty, while those who oppose it are possibly over-misjudging the ancient people”.<sup>2</sup>

After the Japanese occupation of Shanghai in 1937, Shi Zhecun went to the southern part of China to teach at universities. His writing career stopped while his studies of Chinese classics and translations of Western literature continued. He had categorized his work into four groups which he named “Four Windows”, including the “Eastern Window” as research and teaching of classical Chinese literature, the “Southern Window” as writing and editing Chinese modern

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<sup>1</sup> Yang Hui, “Wu Zixu” (Wu Zixu), *Xiandai zazhi*, 6: 1 (November 1934), pp. 43–51.

<sup>2</sup> Shi Zhecun, “‘Wanming ershi jia xiaopin’ xu” (Preface to *A Collection of 20 Late-Ming Essayists*), in Shi Zhecun, *Shi Zhecun Xuba* (A Collection of the Forewords and Afterwords of Shi Zhecun), p. 68.

literature, the “Western Window” as translation of and research on foreign literature and “Northern Windows” as textual research on epigraphy.

Of these ‘Four Windows’, the ‘Western Window’ turned out to be most productive ... The years from 1950 to 1958 have seen a great harvest in my efforts in translating foreign literature. I have translated more than 20 books on East European and Russian Literature.<sup>1</sup>

If translation stands for a belief in the constructive role of translation in Chinese modernity, Shi Zhecun was apparently progressive rather than conservative. It could also be indicated from the fact that when *Xiandai zazhi* was under the editorship of Shi Zhecun and Du Heng, the journal always demonstrated a consciousness of being contemporaneous with the world and an all-embracing attitude towards world literature.

In the 1990s<sup>2</sup>, Shi Zhecun outlined his entire career which demonstrated that a liberal intellectual could work on modern Western literature while keeping an interest in Chinese traditional literature and culture:

Basically speaking, I was studying at school in the 1920s; I focused on writing and editing Chinese new literature in the 1930s; in the 1940s I was doing research and teaching on Chinese classic literature and in the 1950s I devoted most of my time to translating foreign literature. My interest was in epigraphy in the 1960s and then Tang poems and the poetic theory of *Ci* in the 1970s.<sup>3</sup>

In his whole literary career, Shi Zhecun never went exclusively after the translation of and learning from Western literature, nor did he believe in a total anti-traditionalism. His lifelong interest in Chinese traditional literature and culture never excluded his efforts to translate and introduce Western literature.

To conclude the main argument in this chapter, in the early 1930s when Chinese tradition was victimized as hindering the progress of China, *Xiandai zazhi* attempted an alternative understanding of Chinese tradition, which constructed a dialogue, rather than a rigid dichotomy between tradition and modernity.

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<sup>1</sup> Shen Jianzhong ed., *Shiji laoren de hua: Shi Zhecun juan* (Words of Centenarians: the Volume of Shi Zhecun), p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> According to the preface note written by Shen Jianzhong ed., the book *Shiji laoren de hua: Shi Zhecun juan* was based on his interviews with Shi Zhecun in the years from 1996 to 2001. See the preface note in *Shiji laoren de hua: Shi Zhecun juan*, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Shen Jianzhong ed., *Shiji laoren de hua: Shi Zhecun juan* (Words of Centenarians: the Volume of Shi Zhecun), p. 138.

## Chapter 4

### The “Third Category Men” and Their Literature: An Attempt to be Alternative to the Class-based Stratification from the Left-wing Camp

#### 4.1. Introduction

In the year 1932 *Xiandai zazhi* was involved in a debate about the “Third Category Men” (*Disanzhongren* 第三种人). The term was proposed by Su Wen (alias Du Heng), a regular contributor to *Xiandai zazhi* and also a close friend of Shi Zhecun. Moreover, most of the articles concerning this debate were published in this journal, making it the main battlefield for this fierce debate. Therefore, *Xiandai zazhi* was labelled with a derogatory title as a journal of the “Third Category”, which referred to a politically middle camp sitting on the fence over the life-and-death struggles in China. However, I argue against this criticism, that to be “Third” demonstrated an attempt to be alternative to the class-based stratification of people through a tolerant attitude and a principle of non-alignment. By “non-alignment” I mean a liberal and tolerant view toward both literature and people without the intention to form any exclusive camps. Besides, *Xiandai zazhi* provided a liberal re-thinking of the enlightening effect of literature through its incorporation of mass culture and literary works on individual expression. However, this alternative cultural attitude was believed to be the “middle-favouring-the-right” from the perspective of the exclusive left-wing camp who defined writers and their works according to their class nature.

I have outlined the political and ideological struggles between the Nationalist government and the Chinese Communist Party in the early 1930s in China in Chapter One. Situated in this Left-and Right struggle, the notion “Third Category Men” would easily arouse suspicion and be regarded as politically “incorrect” “middle party” based on a class-based stratification of people. The early years of the 1930s witnessed struggles on the cultural front between the Chinese Communist Party and some followers who were not necessarily party members (for example, Lu Xun) and were considered “Left wing”, and the ruling party of Chinese Nationalists considered as the “Right”. To compete for domination along cultural and ideological lines, both sides resorted to the weapons of literature and art. Consequently, the censorship regulations and cultural policies of the Nationalist government were basically unpopular among the intellectuals, while the Chinese Communist Party, which was once welcomed by the intellectuals and young people, became rigid in its discourses of class struggle and the “weapon of art”.

In 1930, the Left League was founded in Shanghai, and marked the formation of a large group of writers who followed the line of left-wing literature and ideology. Wong Wing-chi has pointed this out: “in the first half of the thirties, the Left League fought a number of lively battles against pro-government and even apolitical writers, regarded by the Left as the obstacles to their revolution.”<sup>1</sup> The increase in its control of literature and writers made the Left League exposed to “considerable resistance from the middle-of-the-roads, like the Third Category Men and other ‘fellow travellers’, who considered themselves leftist but did not agree with the heavy-handed ideological containment or literature that the League propagated and increasingly policed.”<sup>2</sup> Though not going into further detail, Shih Shumei indicates the de-politicized stance of the “Third Category Men”, saying that in order not to be dictated to by the ideological left or right, they “opted to be ‘Third Category Men’ (*disanzhongren*)”<sup>3</sup>. The debate was not the focus of Shih Shumei in her study of Shanghai Modernism in the 1930s, in which she did not fully explore the real meaning of the “Third”. However, to define the “Third Category Men” as “middle-of-the-roads” should be treated with caution. On the one hand, the “third category men” was first used to refer to the “group of writers” who were caught between “free people of the intellectual class” and “unfree people with a party affiliation”. As Lee Ou-fan has pointed out, both of which were Marxist advocates.<sup>4</sup> It was not indeed a middle position in the class struggles between Chinese Communist Left and the Nationalist Right. On the other hand, a middle position may easily imply that the “Third Category Men” were, politically, a third party-dominated group of people who advertised for an equal position to Chinese Communist Left and the Nationalist Right. In this chapter I will revisit the debate of the “Third Category Men” to see the real issue of this debate. As I will discuss later, they were opposed to both sides, but had no intention to form a new one. What they asked for was a non-alignment principle both in literature and in people.

I will start from a brief inquiry into the polemic over the “Third Category Men” to locate the tension between the class-based stratification of the left-wing camp and the alternative attitude of *Xiandai zazhi*. The central issue of the debate was the freedom of literature and art, but according to the dogmatic literary theory of the left-wing camp, freedom, if there were such a thing, could only be given to the proletarian class who represented the “class truth”. In

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<sup>1</sup> Wong Wang-chi, *Politics and Literature in Shanghai: The Chinese League of Left-wing Writers, 1930–1936*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Shih Shumei, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917–1937*, p. 238.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>4</sup> Leo Oufan Lee, “Literary Trends: the Road to Revolution 1927–1949” in *The Cambridge History of China*, Volume 13: Republican China 1912–1949, Part 2, pp. 435.

a class-based structure built by the Leftists, people, in this case, the writers, were stratified into two contradictory classes: either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. Those who were in neither of these two classes were categorized as the “Third Category”. This class categorization gave no legitimacy for the “Third” to strive for literary freedom. For the Left League, to claim freedom was to fight against the Chinese proletarian class and to attack the Chinese proletarian literary revolution. However, what I am trying to argue is that the “Third Category Men”, as first proposed by Su Wen in his article published in *Xiandai zazhi*, was never a class-based notion of a middle position. Rather, it referred to “the group of writers” who suffered from the dogmatic guidelines of both “the class of free intellectuals” (like Hu Qiuyuan, who advocated Marxist theory but was not a member of Chinese Communist Party) and Chinese League of Left-wing Writers. Although the “Third Category” carried different meanings in different phases of this debate, as far as *Xiandai zazhi* was concerned, the “Third Category Men” were not attacking Chinese proletarian literature but intended to offer a different framework in which people and literary works would not be defined on the basis of class nature at all.

The second part of this chapter will be given to a study of the liberal attitude of *Xiandai zazhi* featuring tolerance and the principle of non-alignment both in terms of literature and people. On the one hand, as will be discussed in Section 4.2 of this chapter, to refuse a class-based stratification was to imply an alternative option rather than opposition. In fact, a tolerant attitude towards proletarian literature could be found in *Xiandai zazhi* in its principle of “leftism in political views and liberalism in literary claims”<sup>1</sup>, which will be explained in section 4.3.2. One may argue that statement of “leftism in political views” contradicts the principle of non-alignment of *Xiandai zazhi*. As I will explain in more detail in Section 4.3.2, this statement must be examined in the historical context of early 1930s China. First, the principle of “leftism in political views and liberalism in literary claims” was first made by Shi Zhecun in an interview in 1992 to summarize the political preference of Du Heng and Shi Zhecun himself, but in the 1930s Shi was neither a member of the Left League nor a member of Chinese Communist party. In fact, Shi Zhecun was not affiliated to any political group in the 1930s. Second, what follows this statement is Shi’s clear declaration that *Xiandai zazhi* had a liberal attitude toward art and literature.<sup>2</sup> “Leftism in politics”, as I understand it, should be seen from the inclusion of Soviet literature and theories in *Xiandai zazhi*, which has been

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Da Liu Huijuan wen: wei zhongguo wentan caliang ‘xiandai’ de huohua” (Shi Zhecun’s Answering Liu Huijuan’s Questions: Striking a Spark of “Modern” for Chinese Literary World), in Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

discussed in Section 2.3.3. It is more a cultural attitude than political affiliation.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the final reconciliation between the Left League and Su Wen showed that the “fellow travellers” like Su Wen were not hostile to the proletarian literary revolution in China. In other words, *Xiandai zazhi* tolerated proletarian literature as a necessary element of Chinese modern literature, but the Leftists could not accept the non-proletarian classes’ appeal for freedom. On the other hand, it should be made clear that although *Xiandai zazhi* was tolerant of the Proletarian Literary Movement, it had no desire to be grouped with the left-wing camp, nor would it formulate any association or alignment in literature or politics. This non-alignment principle helped provide a free space for exchange of ideas and for individual expression. It was revealed in its engagement with the debate on the “Third Category Men” that *Xiandai zazhi* believed that the right to appeal for literary freedom should not be determined by one’s political categorization. The Leftists were free to advocate proletarian literature, while, at the same time, everyone was free to have his/her own “Egoism”<sup>2</sup>(the original word is in English).

This non-alignment principle was not to find a “middle” shelter from the fierce class struggles as defined from the leftist point of view. Rather, the logic behind this non-alignment principle was to inform individuals rather than guiding and steering them, and this will be discussed in the third part of this chapter. In other words, *Xiandai zazhi* acted as a platform of information for individuals so that they were able to acknowledge a full range of ideas and then be free to formulate and express their own ideas. By declaring itself the “companion”, rather than “master”, of the readers, *Xiandai zazhi* demonstrated that it had no intention to guide or steer the masses. It was believed by the dominant Leftists that literature was to educate the proletariat, and that only proletarian literature could undertake this enlightening task. However, *Xiandai zazhi* aimed primarily to inform but not to steer.

This divergence in understanding of the enlightening effect of literature was first represented in different understandings of the masses between *Xiandai zazhi* and the left-wing camp. A comparison of Western Modernism and the Chinese “Modern School” in *Xiandai zazhi* in 1930s implies that mass culture which was rejected in Western Modernism was intimately integrated in *Xiandai zazhi*. Based on the integration of mass culture in *Xiandai zazhi* and its editing principle, the masses were understood as ordinary individuals who carried no class affiliations. At the same time, mass language, or *dazhongyu* became a heated issue in the

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<sup>1</sup> Considering the political and ideological control from the Communist party in the early 1990s China, Shi Zhecun’s statement of “leftism in politics” was perhaps a discursive strategy.

<sup>2</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Shezhong riji” (The Editor’s Diary), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 1 (November 1932), p.217.



literary scene in China in 1934. In the left-wing class-based categorization of people, “the masses” were understood as almost equal to proletariats while educated intellectuals who were not in support of the Chinese Proletarian Literary Movement were condemned as belonging to the bourgeois class and hence being regressive and anti-revolutionary. Holding a different view towards the enlightening function of literature, *Xiandai zazhi* published a number of works that either portrayed the life of individuals or expressed personal feelings or emotions.

However, these literary works were criticized by leftist writers. For example, in the 1930s, psycho-fictions (a sub-genre of fiction that involves descriptions of psychology) and other genres like the familiar essay (xiaopin wen, 小品文) published in *Xiandai zazhi* were summarized as “Xinjing wenxue” [literature on personal moods and minds]<sup>1</sup> and was described as the reverse of left-wing proletarian literature, for its natinal an political irrelevance and nihilism. My study departs from the previous research on these writings in the way that I take psycho-fiction and familiar essays as forms for portraying the life of ordinary people and expressing individuality, which were largely repressed by the dominant socialist literature of realism. A study of the short story as a literary genre to construct individuality will be given in Section 4.4.3 of this chapter.

To summarize my main argument in this chapter, the appeal of the “Third Category Men” and their writing practices of non-realism literary genres signified a quest for alternative attitude towards people and literature. This liberal stance featured an opposition to class-based stratification and at the same time an adherence to a tolerant attitude and a non-alignment principle. In terms of literature, *Xiandai zazhi* agreed on the necessity of proletarian literature, while at the same time striving for a space for individual expression. In terms of the cultural attitude at large, the journal acted as an alternative to the dominant left-wing discourse by supporting individuality, rather than prioritizing the enlightening effect of literature upon people and the strengthening of nationalism.

## **4.2. The Debate on the “Third Category Men”: A Critique of the Class-based Stratification**

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<sup>1</sup> Mu Mutian, “Xinjing zhuyi de wenxue” (Literature of Mind-portrayism), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 6 (April 1934), pp. 936-938.

An outline of this debate will be given in this section, and I will mainly focus on how the “Third Category” was proposed and interpreted by the Chinese left-wing camp, through which a class-based stratification of people and literature could be identified. The central theme of this debate on the “Third Category Writers” was the freedom of literature and art, or more specifically the relationship between literature per se and literature as a weapon for class struggle and political propaganda. The debate was initiated by Hu Qiuyuan (胡秋原, 1910-2004) in December 1931, but named after the article by Su Wen (alias Du Heng), who declared freedom for the “Third Category Men” (which referred to the “group of writers”) positioned between “free people of the intellectual class” (智识阶级的自由人) and “unfree people with a party affiliation” (不自由的有党派的人)<sup>1</sup>. According to Du Heng, the “group of writers” were those who called for freedom of literature. Without a party affiliation, they were vulnerable to the attacks from people with party or class affiliation.

In 1932 the “Third Category Men” sparked lively controversy among Hu Qiuyuan, Su Wen and the Left League, while *Xiandai zazhi* served as an important arena for this battle on the theme of freedom of art and literature. Since the “Third Category Men” neither followed the literary guidelines of Marxist Communism nor accepted the cultural policies of the Nationalist Party, it was understood as non-Left, non-Right, and a middle-of-the-road “Third Category”.

According to the sides involved, the debate could be divided into three phases and in each of them “Third Category” carried different meanings. In the first phase, Hu Qiuyuan was in a fierce dispute with the left-wing camp over the theme of freedom of literature and art. It was in the second phase that Su Wen declared the freedom of the “Third Category Men” in his article published in *Xiandai zazhi*. These two phases will be investigated in sections 4.2.1, 4.2.2. In spite of the short reconciliation between Su Wen and the Left League, which will be studied in Section 4.2.3, the problem of defining writers and literary works based on class nature was not really solved. A third phase of the debate was inevitably started with Yang Cunren’s proposal for the “Banner of Revolutionary Literature of the Petite Bourgeoisie”. Although Yang’s provocative article published in *Xiandai zazhi* was not explicitly addressed to the debate on the “Third Category Men”, his claim for freedom for petite bourgeoisie literature was taken up by the Leftists as a challenge to the dominant position of left-wing literature. Yang’s article was finally published in *Xiandai zazhi*, but Shi Zhecun expressed his

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<sup>1</sup> Su Wen, “Guanyu *Wenxin* yu Hu Qiuyuan de wenyi lunbian” (On the Literary Debate between *Literary News* and Hu Qiuyuan), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 3 (July 1932), p. 384.

refusal to ally himself with Petite Bourgeois literature. The third phase will be studied in Section 4.3.

Based on a study of articles concerning this debate, I am going to argue in this chapter that the “Third Category Men” was proposed as an alternative to the class-based stratification of people and literature in early 1930s China, by addressing specific questions. What did “Third Category” really mean when it was proposed by Su Wen and then how was it interpreted by the Left League? If *Xiandai zazhi* was defined as “Third category”, then what were the first and the second categories? What was it that defined the “Third Category” as different?

#### ***4.2.1. The “Class of Free Intellectuals” as the “Third Category”: a class-based appeal for freedom***

In the first phase the supporters and opponents were respectively Hu Qiuyuan, representing the “class of free intellectuals” who were opposed to Nationalist literature but not affiliated to the Communist Party, and writers from the League, including Tan Sihai, Qu Qiubai and Feng Xuefeng (under the penname of Luo Yang). “The Third category” in this phase was referring to Hu Qiuyuan, one from the class of intellectuals, who claimed to be a genuine Marxist, fighting for the “class of free intellectuals” against the Nationalist Literature on one hand and dogma from the Left League on the other hand. It should be noted that “Third” in this phase was still a group of people distinguished by class nature.

Although the term “Third Category Men” was proposed by Su Wen in his article published in the 1932 July issue of *Xiandai zazhi*, the debate on the freedom of literature had been initiated in late 1931 by Hu Qiuyuan, who acknowledged the “class of free intellectuals”<sup>1</sup> and laid claim to freedom of literature and the true value of art per se. This appeal was absolutely unacceptable to the left-wing camp, especially the Left League, which represented the literary and cultural frontlines of a Chinese proletarian literary revolution. A debate between Hu Qiuyuan and left-wing writers including Tan Sihai, Qu Qiubai, and Feng Xuefeng started later that year. Hu stated that he was not going to argue for or against either nationalist or proletarian literature but was opposed to the idea that literature should serve a political function. However, the left-wing writers regarded this appeal for freedom as an attack on proletarian literature.

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<sup>1</sup> Hu Qiuyuan, “Zhenli zhi xi” (A Preamble for Truth), in Su Wen, ed. *Wenyi ziyou lunbianji* (Debate on Freedom of Literature and Art), p. 304. The article was signed by “Wenhua pinglun she” (Cultural Critic Association) when it was originally published in the first issue of “Wenhua pinglun” (Cultural Critic). It was drafted by Hu Qiuyuan, the editor of this journal.

In the first phase of the debate, Hu Qiuyuan did not propose a “Third Category”, but in the Leftists’ eyes, his appeal for freedom of literature and art was associated with the “Third Party”. In his study on politics and literature in Shanghai in 1930s Wong Wang-chi has mentioned the political background which could partly explain why the Left League showed sensitivity to Hu’s theory of freedom of literature.<sup>1</sup> In December 1931, Hu Qiuyuan founded the journal “Wenhua Pinglun” (Cultural Critic), which became a means to launch his appeal for the “free intellectuals” and therefore became the target of attacks by the left-wing in China. According to Wong’s account, “Wenhua Pinglun” was co-established by Hu Qiuyuan and Wang Lixi (王礼锡, 1901-1939), who was suspected of being a member of the Anti-Bolshevik Corps<sup>2</sup>. In 1930 Wang Lixi, together with another military figure named Chen Mingshu (陈铭枢, 1889~1965), were “seeking the creation of a political movement opposed to the GMD and the CCP”<sup>3</sup>. What makes it more complicated is that “Chen was said to have formed the Social Democratic Party<sup>4</sup> and had been in close relationship with the Third Party (*Disandang*)”<sup>5</sup>. The non-nationalist and non-leftist position of the Third Party probably made Hu Qiuyuan especially suspicious of the Left, and thus it is understandable that Tan Sihai, who was from the left-wing camp, would argue that “to find a Third place of refuge in this fierce battle is the same as to help the enemies”.<sup>6</sup>

As Hu was debating with Tan Sihai and Qu Qiubai, he wrote another article denouncing nationalist literature and, at the same time, criticized Qian Xingcun, an important member of the Left League. As a result, the Leftists were more convinced that in calling for the freedom of literature for the “free intellectuals” Hu Qiuyuan was actually attacking proletarian

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<sup>1</sup> For a complete account of this debate, please see Wong Wang-chi, *Politics and Literature in Shanghai: the Chinese League of Left-wing Writers, 1930-1936*, pp. 128-135.

<sup>2</sup> Anti-Bolshevik Corps, abbreviated as A B Corps, is generally known as a subsidiary of KMT, founded in 1926 in Jiangxi Province. It was composed of young members of KMT who struggled against the Communist Party for leadership in the first Kuomintang-Communist Party cooperation. As the leader of A B Corps, Wang Lixi had been disillusioned to the KMT since mid-1931, and he was in close relationship with Chen Mingshu, who was said to have formed the Social Democratic Party. For more information of A B Corps, please refer to Chen Qianmin, Chen Hongmin, etc. tr. Lloyd E. Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution: China Under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937*, pp. 108-109, 169-170.

<sup>3</sup> Wong Wang-chi, *Politics and Literature in Shanghai: the Chinese League of Left-wing Writers, 1930-1936*, p. 128. GMD refers to *Guoming Dang*, the Chinese Nationalist Party, sometimes also referred to as KMT; CCP was the abbreviation of Chinese Communist Party.

<sup>4</sup> The historical documentation of the Social Democratic Party is far from being clear.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128. The Third Party was opposed to both the GMD and the CCP. According to Eastman’s account, it was founded in 1932. Chen Mingshu was elected as the chairman, and he also drafted a political platform. See Chen Qianmin, Chen Hongmin, etc. tr. Lloyd E. Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution: China Under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937*, pp. 109-110.

<sup>6</sup> Tan Sihai, “Ziyou zhishi jieji de wenhua lilun” (The Cultural Theory of the Class of the Free Intellectuals), in Su Wen, ed. *Wenyi ziyou lunbianji* (Debate on Freedom of Literature and Art), p. 16.

literature. Moreover, for this article entitled “Reckoning on Qian Xingcun’s Theory and Criticism of Nationalist Literary Theories”, Hu added a subtitle “A Support to Marxist Literary Theory”<sup>1</sup>, indicating that by clarifying misinterpretations of Marxism, he was a real follower of Marxism in China. It should be noted that in this period, both Hu Qiuyuan and members of the Left League resorted to Marxist literary theories to substantiate their arguments. There were divergences in the leftist theories within the Soviet Union, and consequently, different interpretations and disputes were also inevitable in China. Although Hu Qiuyuan claimed that he supported Marxism, the Left League could not accept Hu as a Marxist. It was not possible for the League to share Marxism as perhaps the most important cultural capital with people of different class distinctions. What made it even more unacceptable to the left-wing camp was that this article was published in *Dushu Zazhi*, which was under the editorship of Wang Lixi, once the leader of the Anti-Bolshevik Corps. Undoubtedly, Hu was attacked by Feng Xuefeng, because he believed that Hu was in fact attacking the Chinese Proletarian Literary Movement. However, in the rigid structure built up by the Left to define people and literature, not to propagate proletarian literature was to promote bourgeois literature, while asking for the independent value of literature was interpreted as an attack on the entire Proletarian Revolutionary Literary Movement. In this period, Hu Qiuyuan was considered as being “Third” while the Nationalist Party represented the right wing and proletarian literature the left wing.

In addition to the political background that made Hu Qiuyuan a potential enemy of the Left League, the theme of “freedom of literature and art” was unacceptable to the left-wing camp, because there was tension between the dogma of class-based stratification and the appeal for freedom from the non-leftist group. In “A Preamble for Truth” Hu Qiuyuan once claimed that the role of the cultural movement from that time on was to fulfil the anti-feudalist task which was not completed in the May Fourth Movement.<sup>2</sup> As two primary watchwords of the May Fourth Movement, “Science” and “Democracy” were however no longer part of the discourse of the Chinese Communist Party; rather, “Anti-imperialism”, “Class struggle”, and “Proletarian revolution” constituted the dominant discourse of the Chinese left-wing camp in early 1930’s China. Therefore, although Hu Qiuyuan had stated opposition to nationalist

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<sup>1</sup> Hu Qiuyuan, “Qian Xingcun wenyi lilun zhi qingsuan yu minzu wenyi lilun zhi piping: Makeshi shay wenyi lilun zhi yonghu” (Reckoning on Qian Xingcun’s Theory and Criticism of Nationalist Literary Theories: A Support to Marxist Literary Theory), in Su Wen ed. *Wenyi ziyou lunbianji* (Debate on Freedom of Literature and Art), pp. 24–55.

<sup>2</sup> Hu Qiuyuan, (Literary Critic Association), “zhenli zhi xi” (A Preamble for Truth), in Su Wen ed. *Wenyi ziyou lunbian ji* (Debate on Freedom of Literature and Art), p. 302.

literature when he declared the freedom of literature, the Leftists would still feel challenged by a middle-of-the-road “third” party.

In an important article concerning this debate, “Wu qinlue wenyi” (Hands off literature)<sup>1</sup>, Hu Qiuyuan confessed that he had not aimed to attack any particular category of literature, be it the proletarian literature of the Left or the nationalist literature of the Right. Rather, he was appealing for a loosening of political and ideological control over literature. Hu Qiuyuan pointed out the problem of the exclusivity of the left-wing discourse, but in his proposal for literature and culture of the “free class of intellectuals” he was similarly using class distinctions. In other words, in the first phase of this debate, the “Third” was the “free class of intellectuals”, and this appeal for freedom was still built on class distinction. Su Wen soon identified the problem of Hu Qiuyuan’s theory of freedom of literature, which will be discussed later in Section 4.2.2.

#### **4.2.2. The “Group of Writers” as the “Third”: a notion with no class basis**

When Hu Qiuyuan was debating with the League writers on the freedom of literature and art, Su Wen entered this dispute with an article published in the 1932 July issue of *Xiandai zazhi*. After criticizing the main arguments of both *Wenyi Xinwen*<sup>2</sup> and Hu Qiuyuan, Su Wen put forward the “Third Category Men” idea which stirred even more controversy than that of Hu Qiuyuan’s “class of free intellectuals”. The period from Su Wen’s participation in this debate to the reconciliation that finally took place is defined as the second phase of this debate. It is in this period that *Xiandai zazhi* was involved and the theme changed from the freedom of literature and art to focus on the “Third Category Men”. It was believed by the League, and some later researchers, that Su Wen was supporting Hu Qiuyuan in his claim for literature to be independent and for writers to have creative freedom. Based on this assumption, they categorized Su Wen as one of Hu Qiuyuan’s class of free intellectuals who were considered in the “middle position” in the struggles between Chinese Communist Party as the “Left” and the Nationalist government as the “Right”. In terms of class affiliation, the “Left” fight for proletarian while the “Right” fight for the bourgeois. Yet the notion of the “Third Category Men” was not a class-based notion like the “free class of intellectuals” proposed by Hu Qiuyuan, nor was it a middle position as interpreted by the left-wing camp.

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<sup>1</sup> Hu Qiuyuan, “Wu qinlue wenyi” (Hands off Literature), in Su Wen ed. *Wenyi ziyou lunbian ji* (Debate on Freedom of Literature and Art), pp. 10–13.

<sup>2</sup> *Wenyi Xinwen* (Literary News) is believed to be one of the journals formed by *Wenyi xinwen she* (Literary News Association), a literary association supported by the Left League.

From Su Wen's perspective, both Hu Qiuyuan and the Left League were seeking class-based domination over literature rather than real freedom for all. Hu claimed to be a genuine Marxist and belonged to the "class of the intellectuals" while the Left League represented Chinese Communist Left-winger. It was pointed out by Su Wen that when Hu Qiuyuan was calling for "hands off literature", he was actually asking the Nationalist and Communist Parties to leave literature for the "free class of intellectuals" to control.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the different class distinctions they belonged to and represented, Hu Qiuyuan and the Left League held similar views based on a class-based stratification. Feeling frustrated by these two sides, Su Wen proposed the notion of "Third Category Men", after which this influential debate was named in the early years of 1930s.

When the free class of the intellectuals and the unfree class with a party affiliation were struggling for hegemony in the literary field, it was the Third Category Men who suffered most. These Third Category Men were the so-called group of writers.<sup>2</sup>

The "free class of the intellectuals", as analyzed in Section 4.2.1, was still a notion based on class distinction, and the "unfree class with a party affiliation" referred to the Communist Leftists as well as the Nationalist Party. These two categories were both formulated on the basis of class. However, the "group of writers" (zuojia zhi qun, 作家之群) caught between the forementioned two sides, suffered this class-based stratification and the disputes it incurred, attempted to go beyond this rigid categorization. The definition above shows that the "Third Category Men" were clearly not a class-based middle group of people who were ambitious to attack the proletarian literary revolution. Rather, the notion was put forward simply for writers' freedom in literary creation no matter to which class they belonged.

Su Wen's article triggered even greater disputes than that of Hu Qiuyuan. The notion of the "Third Category Men" was understood from the Left League's point of view as an attempt to isolate literature from the proletarian class, or at least a wish to remove the distinction of class from literature. It was definitely unacceptable to the League writers, who believed that literature always had class distinction and therefore always served a particular class in a class-based Chinese society. Three months later in the No. 1: 6 Issue published in October 1932, Qu Qiubai (writing as Yi Jia), Zhou Yang (周扬, 1907-1989, writing as Zhou Qiyong) and Shu Yue all contributed articles to *Xiandai zazhi* to debate with Su Wen on the "Third Category Men". In addition to another two articles by Su Wen there were in total five articles

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<sup>1</sup> Su Wen, "Guanyu *Wenxin* yu Hu Qiuyuan de wenyi lunbian" (On the Literary Debate between *Literary News* and Hu Qiuyuan), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 3 (July 1932), p. 385.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 384.

concerning the “Third Category Men” published in this same issue of *Xiandai zazhi*, making it a primary arena for this debate on the freedom of literature and art.

Yi Jia (Qu Qiubai) criticized Hu Qiuyuan and Su Wen, respectively, in both parts of his article. He denied the possibility that Hu Qiuyuan was a liberal Marxist because a man who believed in “Ziyou ren” (free man, 自由人) could never be a real Marxist. He then further summarized Hu’s theory as being opposed to the class nature of proletarian literature. In his criticism of Su Wen, Yi Jia denied the existence of the “Third Category Men” in the class-based Chinese society:

Each and every man of letters is always representing the ideology of a particular class, no matter whether he is conscious or not, or whether he keeps writing or not. A class-based society is a gigantic net from which no one can escape to become the so-called “Third Category Men”.<sup>1</sup>

It can be judged from the above that class nature was the very basic criterion for the Leftists to distinguish writers and their literary works. In a class-based society where people were labelled either as proletariat or bourgeois, based on what they wrote or did, they were “sponsoring the fight for a particular class”<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, anyone who did not speak for the proletarian class was helping the anti-revolutionary bourgeois. Although the “Third Category Men” was not a politically class-based notion but a “group of writers” who strove for freedom in literary creation, a class-based criterion was applied to this notion and, according to Yi Jia, there was no space for a third category of people in China, at least, not in the class-based society at that time. The class nature was echoed and highlighted in Zhou Qiying and Shu Yue’s articles published in the same issue of *Xiandai zazhi*. In the Leftists’ eyes, truth has a class basis and only “the class-based truth” (阶级的真理)<sup>3</sup> could be the highest and ultimate truth. Therefore, the only option for the petite bourgeoisie class and the “Third Category Men” was to serve the new-emerging proletarian literary revolution.

It could be argued from the above articles that Su Wen proposed the “Third Category Men” to highlight the freedom of the “group of writers” who should not be judged by class nature, while the League writers adhered to the class-based stratification and denied the absence of class distinction. The problem in the dogma of leftist dictatorship in literature was gradually revealed in the debate.

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<sup>1</sup> Yi Jia (alias Qu Qiubai), “Wenyi de ziyou he wenxuejia de buziyou” (Free Literature and Unfree Men of Letters), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 6 (October 1932), p. 791.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 784.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 781.



### 4.2.3. *Problem unsolved with the recognition of “Fellow Travellers”*

Six months after the notion of “Third Category Men” was proposed by Su Wen, the debate finally ended with a reconciliation between Su Wen and the Left League. However, the contradiction between the class-based stratification and the appeal for freedom in literature was not really resolved with this temporary reconciliation.

Despite the Leftists’ strong conviction in the class-based stratification of literature, this rigid exclusion of non-leftists had drawn the attention of some senior members of both the Communist Party and the Left League. In the November issue of *Xiandai zazhi* in 1932, both Chen Wangdao (writing as Chen Xuefan) and Lu Xun, asked the Leftists to re-think their attitude towards non-leftist “sympathizers” and potential “fellow travellers”. Chen Wangdao, who was highly respected and influential among the left-wing writers and the Chinese Communist Party, highlighted two tasks for the leftist literary theorists to reconsider. On the one hand, the leftist theorists should inspect and criticize the problems of non-leftist literature in order to attract more people to the left-wing camp. However, “the voices from other sides were not necessarily to be totally forbidden”<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, the theorists should introduce more theories to help the development of leftist literature. It was at least affirmed in Chen’s article that not all non-leftist literature should be banned and that leftist literature was still imperfect. In the same issue, as one of the co-founders of the League and a leading figure in Chinese modern literature, Lu Xun’s article was of great importance to the leftist re-thinking of the issue of “fellow travellers” that had been dramatized by the debate on the “Third Category Men”. First of all, Lu Xun proclaimed that the left wing was not only open to “fellow travellers” but was also ready to recruit the on-lookers to travel with them. Secondly, he expressed the same opinion as Yi Jia that in a class society like China there must also be a class affiliation for the group of the “Third Category Men”.<sup>2</sup>

The articles of Chen Xuefan and Lu Xun were responded to by other League writers. Two months later, in the January 1933 issue of *Xiandai zazhi*, Qu Qiubai (writing as Luo Yang) and Feng Xuefeng (writing as Dan Ren) contributed articles summarizing the debate of the “Third Category Men”. Qu confessed that the left-wing camp were very willing to travel with

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<sup>1</sup> Chen Xuefan, “Guanyu lilunjia de renwu suxie” (A Sketch on the Tasks for the Theorists), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 1 (November 1932), p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Lu Xun had long believed in the class nature of literature and writers, which could be demonstrated in the debate between Lu Xun and Liang Shiqiu which was started in 1930 and continued for about eight years. For more information please see Shao Jian, *Two Intellectuals of the 20th Century: Hu Shi and Lu Xun*, pp. 298–331.

“those people who long for bright prospects”<sup>1</sup>, and that the “‘Guidelines’ (*zhidao dagang*, 指导大纲)<sup>2</sup> which were generally-defined directions give the writers the freedom to create and to discuss”<sup>3</sup>. The issue of the “Guidelines” was also proposed by Su Wen in his article published in Issue 2:1. From Su Wen’s perspective, the primary function of literature was to present the “truth” and only in this way could it work as surveillance of a specific age. However, according to some “Guidelines” stipulated by the “official critics”, literature should serve politics, a principle which would definitely be harmful to the fundamental role of literature: “Seen in this way, the notion of valid literature seemed to equal ‘advantageous literature’, but it bears no relation to ‘truth’”.<sup>4</sup> According to the leftist discourse, politically valid literature equated with the utilitarian proletarian literature. The problem of “validity” and “truth” actually led to some further criticism from the leftist writers, which will be discussed in Section 4.3.

As an important leader in the Left League, Feng Xuefeng also summarized the main issues raised in the debate. He changed the term from the “Third Category Men” to the “Third Category Literature”, replacing the problem of defining the class-based categorization of the “group of writers” with the evaluation of a “Third Category Literature”. According to Feng, if the “Third Category” referred to a “middle” literature which transcended class struggle, then it was not middle, or “Third” at all, for such literature and literary theories were still favouring the landowners and bourgeoisie. However, “if this Third Category Literature was ‘against old times and old literature’, even if it was not in the proletarian camp, it was definitely not anti-revolutionary literature”<sup>5</sup>. This apparent embrace of “Third Category Literature” was in fact still based on the premise that it would benefit the Proletarian Literary Movement. In the binary opposition between proletarian and anti-proletarian, the “Third Category” would either

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<sup>1</sup> Luo Yang, “Bingfei langfei de lunzheng” (A Debate That is not Really Wasted), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 3 (January 1933), p. 483.

<sup>2</sup> When the Left League was established on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1930 in Shanghai, the “Theoretical Program for Chinese League of Left-wing Writers” was passed at this founding conference. More details of this program, please see Wang Xirong, “*Zuolian*” *yu zuoyi wenxue yundong* (The Left League and The Left-wing Literary Activities), pp.79-82. When the standing committee had been elected, 17 motions were put and passed. They were reported from several reports which appeared later in League magazines. The so-called “official critics” refer to those members of the League who usually write for political and ideological propaganda. See Wong Wang-chi, *Politics and Literature in Shanghai: the Chinese League of Left-wing Writers, 1930-1936*, pp. 62-63. It is possible that the “Guideline” mentioned by Qu and Su refers to the above-mentioned program and motions.

<sup>3</sup> Luo Yang, “Bingfei langfei de lunzheng” (A Debate That is not Really Wasted), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 3 (January 1933), p. 485.

<sup>4</sup> Su Wen, “Lun Wenxue shang de ganshe shay” (On the Interventionism to Literature), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 1 (November 1932), p. 133. It is listed as the first of the 17 motions of the League.

<sup>5</sup> Dan Ren, “Guanyu disanzhong wenxue de qingxiang yu lilun” (On the Inclination and Theory of the Third Category Literature), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 3 (January 1933), p. 499.

benefit one or the other. Therefore, this re-definition was in fact still based on the left-wing camp's dogmatic assumption of class-based stratification of people and literature.

In the same Issue, an article by Su Wen, was also published, which summarized where the two sides agreed and disagreed.<sup>1</sup> From Su's point of view, free literary creation was generally acknowledged and the "fellow travellers" were accepted by the left-wing camp. As to the function of literature, although both sides agreed that literature should reveal the "truth", the Leftists insisted that only the most advanced proletarian class could have a command of the class-based truth while Su Wen believed that even those short stories that did not touch upon the proletarian class could also reveal truths. Thus, class distinctions of people and literature were still the defining feature in the divergence between the left-wing camp and the "Third Category Men".

With the articles described above, the tension between the League writers and the "Third Category Men" seemed to be reconciled, but the appeal for freedom of literature and art, which was once the primary theme of this debate, was not really addressed. First of all, it should be noted that although the non-leftist intellectuals were welcomed as potential "fellow travellers" in the Proletarian Literary Movement, the Leftists always assumed leadership. In addition, the declaration to welcome the "fellow travellers" was based on the assumption that those "fellow travellers" were ready to fight against the reactionary forces and had the potential to become part of a proletarian class, distinguished by the Leftists as the most advanced class.

In 1930, the Left League had been established as the cultural frontline for Chinese Leftists to fight against enemies and to attract "fellow travellers". In order to "build up close relations with revolutionary groups" and "to oppose all oppression of our movement"<sup>2</sup>, the League had to decide whether people and their works were either revolutionary or oppressive. This dichotomy made it impossible to secure real freedom of literature and art.

What made it even more ironic was that "to organize a branch of the Freedom Movement League"<sup>3</sup> was among the aims of the League, but this slogan was to secure the freedom of

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<sup>1</sup> Su Wen, "1932 nian de wenyi lunbian zhi qingsuan" (A Concluding Summary of the Debate on Literature and Art in 1932), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 3 (January 1933), pp. 500-505.

<sup>2</sup> Wang Wong-chi, *Politics and Literature in Shanghai: the Chinese League of Left-wing Writers, 1930-36*, pp. 62-63. Freedom Movement League, in Chinese 中国自由运动大同盟, was initiated by Lu Xun, Feng Xuefeng and some others in 1930 to fight for freedom of speech, publication and demonstration against the censorship from the Nationalist government.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

speech for Leftists rather than “class of free intellectuals” or a “group of writers”. Even if the Leftists had some re-thinking over the issues of the “fellow travellers” and the dogma of the “Guidelines” on literary creation, the issue of freedom of literature was not resolved at all as long as literary works and writers were still defined on the basis of class distinction.

#### **4.3. Debate on the Freedom of Literature, *Xiandai Zazhi*, and Shi Zhecun: A Liberal View Featuring the Principles of Non-alignment and Tolerance**

Some misunderstandings of both *Xiandai zazhi* and Shi Zhecun resulted from the debate on the “Third Category Men” between Su Wen and the Leftists. As a regular contributor to *Xiandai zazhi* and also a close friend of Shi Zhecun, Su Wen’s participation in this debate placed *Xiandai zazhi* in an unfavourable position. Moreover, several months after the heated debate ended, Su Wen joined Shi Zhecun as co-editor of *Xiandai zazhi* from the launch of Issue 3:1 in May 1933. Consequently, the left-wing writers were inclined to equate the cultural outlook of *Xiandai zazhi* with Su Wen’s view, and believed it to be an attack by hidden enemies on proletarian revolutionary literature in the guise of freedom of literature.

For a very long time from the early 1930s in Mainland China, the term “Third Category Men” was considered derogatory, and *Xiandai zazhi* was believed to be the mouthpiece of a depoliticized, “middle-favouring-the-right” group of people. In a three-volume book entitled “A History of Modern Chinese Literature” published in 1979, the debate on the “Third Category Men” was recorded as an important event in the history of Chinese Proletarian Revolutionary Literature. The editor, Tang Tao (唐弢, 1913-1992), spoke highly of the efforts that the Left League had made to fight against the “arrows in the dark”<sup>1</sup> coming from the “Third Category”.<sup>2</sup> Hu Qiuyuan and Du Heng (Su Wen), were defined as the exponents of a reactionary bourgeoisie class. Tang’s criticism of the “Third Category Men” was still made on the basis of the dominant Left-wing discourse. The criticism and misunderstandings of both “Third Category” and *Xiandai zazhi* were also recorded in Shi Zhecun’s “Random Thoughts of *Xiandai*”<sup>3</sup> which was written in 1981, in which a textual analysis of Su Wen’s articles concerning this debate was provided.

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<sup>1</sup> Tang Tao, *Zhongguo Xiandai Wenxueshi (2)* (A history of Modern Chinese Literature: Volume 2), p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 33–42.

<sup>3</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Xiandai zayi” (Miscellaneous Reminiscences on *Xiandai zazhi*), in Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de jiaoji* (Footprint in the Sand), pp. 20–34.

The debate lasted as long as one year. Moreover, literary historians of Chinese New Literature have kept on criticizing the “Third Category Men” over the past forty years. Every time the term “Third Category Men” came up, they would be ready to fight as if they were faced with a formidable enemy.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to Shi Zhecun’s efforts to reinterpret the “Third Category Men” in his recollections of *Xiandai zazhi*, some recent studies have also touched upon the depoliticized stance of the “Third Category Men”, and considered the debate as an epitome of the tension between literature and politics in early 1930s China. Based on a chronological reading of the articles concerning this debate, Wong Wang-chi has presented the opinions of different sides involved in the debate on the “Third Category Men” and their power relations in the *Chinese League of Left-Wing Writers in Shanghai from 1930 to 1936*, first published in 1991. He defines the period from 1930 to 1933 as years of achievement in the history of Chinese left-wing literature and considers this debate on “Free Men” and the “Third Category Men” as “the biggest polemics ever fought by the organization”<sup>2</sup> (the organization here means the Left League). Since the book mainly focuses on how left-wing literature emerged and grew in the 1930s, it still leaves some space for further study of *Xiandai zazhi*’s position, where a number of articles concerning this debate were published.

Researchers from mainland China have also shown their interest in the polemic over the “Third Category Men”. Beside Tang Tao as mentioned before, in a more recent book published in 2006, Jin Li devotes one informative chapter to the debate in his study on the literary associations that were mainly formed by Shi Zhecun, Liu Na’ou and Mu Shiyong. He argues on the basis of a descriptive account for this debate that both sides have rationalities and limitations. On the one hand, as Jin indicates, Hu Qiuyuan and Su Wen shared similar viewpoints, claiming for the freedom of literature and art and criticizing the literary theories of the Left League, but they both failed to realize the political function of literature as a revolutionary weapon. The Left League, on the other hand, were too eagerly propagating the political function of literature to recognize the aesthetic value of literature. Jin’s revisionist view of the debate is still based on the May Fourth paradigm which is constructed on the premise of binary oppositions between the Left League and the non-leaguers, and thus there remains the promise of a more considered re-examination of the debate taking place. First, as discussed before, there was a difference between Hu Qiuyuan and Su Wen’s understanding of the freedom of literature and art. Second, it is *Xiandai*’s distance from, rather than its

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Wong Wang-chi, *Politics and Literature in Shanghai: The Chinese League of Left-wing Writers, 1930-1936*, p. 128.

similarities, that needed investigating to differentiate cultural attitudes between the Left League and those of a more liberal attitude. Special attention should be paid to the last phase of the debate when Yang Cunren entered, proclaiming to unfurl the banner of Petite Bourgeois literature in China. The way that Yang's proposal was treated in *Xiandai zazhi* was most revealing in its liberal attitude of non-alignment. Shi Zhecun's view towards this debate as well as the issue of freedom of literature will be examined in this section. Although he was at first hesitant to be involved in the debate, his views on liberalism in literature could be found within the "Editor's Diary" and in other articles. Meanwhile, the editing practice and the choice of literary works published in *Xiandai zazhi* demonstrated a liberal outlook featuring a non-alignment principle and a tolerant attitude. In sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.3, these two aspects will be studied respectively, followed by a concluding analysis of the liberal attitude of *Xiandai zazhi*.

#### **4.3.1. Rejection of "The Banner of Revolutionary Literature of Petite Bourgeoisie": the non-alignment principle of *Xiandai zazhi***

I have discussed in section 4.2.2. and 4.2.3. that after both sides—the Left League writers and Su Wen—published concluding articles on the debate in Issue 2:3 of *Xiandai zazhi*, the disagreement between them was in a way reconciled. In the "Editor's Diary" of the same issue published in January 1933, Shi Zhecun stated his wish to put an end to this debate.

Mr. Su Wen sent me the article entitled "A Concluding Summary of the Debate on Literature and Art in 1932", and I felt so pleased after I read it. From the perspective of a journal editor, I think it is time the debate on the freedom of literature and art was ended. The article of Su Wen happens to act as an announcement of the closure of this debate.<sup>1</sup>

As the editor of *Xiandai zazhi*, Shi Zhecun did not produce any articles on the debate of the "Third Category Men", but his views on the theme of freedom of literature could nonetheless be found in the editor's notes drafted by him and revealed by his editing practice. Here in the quotation provided above, he expressed his satisfaction with Su Wen's concluding article and believed that this article was a fitting end to the debate. As far as I can see, Shi Zhecun's wish to conclude the debate was partly because of the escalation in misinterpretations of both the "Third Category Men" and *Xiandai zazhi*. The term of the "Third Category Men" was initiated in *Xiandai zazhi* by Su Wen, and since Su had reconciled with the League, it would be the right time to stop the debate. However, his wish did not come true. The reconciliation between the "Third Category Men", represented by Su Wen, and the Left League was

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, "Shezhong riji" (The Editor's Diary), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 3 (January 1933), p. 514.

resumed by Yang Cunren who announced the unfurling of the “Banner of Revolutionary Literature of the Petite Bourgeoisie”. It should be noted first that the “Banner of Revolutionary Literature of Petite Bourgeoisie” was again a class-based proposal.

We acknowledge the class nature of literature and art, and believe that a writer will speak for the benefit of the class to which he/she belongs. We are the writers of petite bourgeoisie, and thus we are going to fight for the benefit of urban petite bourgeoisie and peasant masses.<sup>1</sup>

Yang’s proposal was made on the premise that there was a petite bourgeoisie class in China, including urban petite bourgeoisie and semi-autonomous peasantry, and, according to the leftist class-based stratification of people and literature, the petite bourgeoisie class should have their own literature. This could challenge the left-wing proletarian literature since the Leftists believed that “validity” in politics required literature to expose “class truths” which only belonged to the proletariat. Moreover, in the last paragraph, Yang Cunren even asked the “Third Category Men” to join him in a movement of revolutionary literature for the petite bourgeoisie.

Writers and young people who consider yourselves the “Third Category Men” and are ready to be devoted to revolutionary literary movement, I urge you to hold high the banner of the revolutionary literature of petite bourgeoisie. Let’s join into one army and march along!<sup>2</sup>

In calling for the “Third Category Men” to align himself to the Literary Movement of the Petite Bourgeoisie, Yang apparently misinterpreted the “Third Category Men” as a class-based concept. As discussed in Section 4.2, the liberal attitude of *Xiandai zazhi* was first represented in the non-class-based notion of “Third Category Men” which was proposed in opposition to both the class-based stratification of the left-wing camp and the “class of free intellectuals” like Hu Qiuyuan. To categorize the “Third Category Men” as potential members of the petite bourgeoisie was definitely a misinterpretation.

Although Yang’s article was not clearly addressed to the debate on the “Third Category Men”, his proposal of petite bourgeois literature was developed from the class nature of literature, a central issue in the debate on the “Third Category Men”. This is why I argue that Yang’s essay marked a third phase in the debate on the “Third Category Men”.

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<sup>1</sup> Yang Cunren, “Jieqi Xiaozhanchangjieji gemingwenxue zhiqi” (To Unfurl the Banner of Revolutionary Literature of the Petite Bourgeoisie), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 4 (February 1933), p. 624.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 623–625.

In the preface to “Unfurl the Banner of Revolutionary Literature of the Petite Bourgeoisie”, Yang Cunren expressed his wish to engage in the recent discussion on freedom of literature and art. According to his own account, before his essay was accepted by *Xiandai zazhi*, he had sent another one entitled “On the Literature of the ‘Third Category Men’” to the Left League. In the article he urged the Left League to unite urban petite bourgeoisie and the peasant masses who constituted the majority of the Chinese population, in order to support the Revolutionary Literature of the Petite Bourgeoisie. From Yang’s point of view, “the Left League was not the Communist Party”<sup>1</sup>, and its literary claims could not be determined by party preference. He also sent a letter to the Left League expressing the same idea of petite bourgeoisie literature but was not replied.

This unpublished essay<sup>2</sup> was also mentioned by Shi Zhecun, who added a short note to Yang Cunren’s essay published in *Xiandai zazhi*. He attributed his rejection of Yang’s previous essay to “some special reasons”<sup>3</sup> but did not clearly state what they were. With his essay unpublished by *Xiandai zazhi* and the letter not responded to by the Left League, Yang Cunren was convinced that he had been ignored by the Left League, and thus decided to carry on alone with the call for a petite bourgeoisie literature. Yang Cunren, once a member of the Chinese Communist Party, withdrew from the party, resumed his liberal identity, and declared himself to be “an intellectual from the petite bourgeoisie class”<sup>4</sup>.

Considering the political background of Yang Cunren and his claim to build up a new form of “revolutionary literature” based on the petite bourgeoisie, it was a difficult decision for Shi Zhecun, the editor, to include Yang Cunren’s article in *Xiandai zazhi*. Since the reconciliatioin had been incomplete, the debate on the “Third Category Men” was sure to be re-started. This was clearly not what Shi Zhecun had hoped for. Having realized the risk of publishing Yang Cunren’s article and the possibility of restarting the debate, Shi Zhecun was at first hesitant to publish it in *Xiandai zazhi*.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 623.

<sup>2</sup> In the preface of this article, Yang stated that he had drafted an article entitled “On the Literature of the ‘Third Category Men’” and also a letter, but he did not clearly said to whom the article and the letter were addressed. Since later in this preface he mentioned that both the article and letter were ignored by the Left League, it could therefore be speculated that they were written to the League. It became more confusing when Shi Zhecun mentioned in the short note attached to Yang’s article that he had received the article entitled “On the Literature of the ‘Third Category Men’” but decided not to publish it in *Xiandai zazhi*. I thus speculate on the basis of these accounts that perhaps Yang chose to send the article to *Xiandai zazhi* after neither his article or the letter were replied by the Left League.

<sup>3</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Bianzhe an” (A Note from the Editor), in Yang Cunren, “Jieqi Xiaozichanjieji geming wenxue zhiqi” (To Unfurl the Banner of Revolutionary Literature of the Petite Bourgeoisie), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 4 (February 1933), p. 625.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



It has been about ten days since I received the striking article by Mr. Yang Cunren. I have been wondering whether to publish it or not. Today I decide to include it in this month's *Xiandai*, for I think it also of considerable importance.<sup>1</sup>

Shi Zhecun must have realized that Yang's call for the Petite Bourgeoisie literature would inevitably strike the Left League and that he would definitely be attacked by them. Despite all this, the article was finally published in *Xiandai zazhi* in Issue 2: 4 in February 1933, one month after the reconciliation between the League and Su Wen. In order not to cause misunderstandings, an editorial note was attached to Yang's article. In the note Shi Zhecun further explained why he attached great importance to Yang's article: "I think it can be regarded as a declaration of a writer." What Shi did not explain was the reason why "a declaration of a writer" was "of considerable importance". It should be noted that when Su Wen proposed the notion of "Third Category Men" he was also striving for freedom for a "group of writers". In terms of the right to speak out, Yang Cunren should be given freedom no matter whether he was a party member or an intellectual from the petite bourgeoisie class. The liberal attitude of Shi Zhecun made it possible for Yang's article to be published.

Shi Zhecun supported Yang in his right to speak, but expressed his opposition to his specific call for a Revolutionary Literature of the Petite Bourgeoisie: "It seems that Mr. Yang was ambitious to build up a new literary association, which we take as unnecessary and, to some extent, harmful actually."<sup>2</sup> It is evident that Shi Zhecun was so very unsure about the outcome of including Yang's essay in *Xiandai zazhi* that he not only added a note to it, he also made further explanation in the "Editor's Diary". It is even more apparent that Shi Zhecun was very cautious about Yang's ambition to align himself with a class-based literary association. Ever since it was started, *Xiandai zazhi* had no intention to form or join any literary alignments, especially those based on a specific class nature. The fact that different classes existed in China, according to the left-wing discourse of class struggle, was not denied by either Su Wen or Shi Zhecun. The real problem was that the alignments formed according to class nature or political position harmed the liberal atmosphere that Shi Zhecun had envisaged for modern literature and culture. To make alignments according to one's class nature was one of the historical limitations of modern China. For intellectuals in the early 1930s, political and ideological categorization was mainly defined by party and class affiliations. Once the class nature was decided, alignments would be formed to struggle against others for cultural capital.

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, "Shezhong rijì" (The Editor's Diary), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 4 (February 1933), p. 645.

<sup>2</sup> Shi Zhecun, "Bianzhe an" (A Note from the Editor), in Yang Cunren, "Jieqi Xiaozichanjieji geming wenzue zhiqi" (To Unfurl the Banner of Revolutionary Literature of the Petite Bourgeoisie), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2:4 (February 1933), p. 625.

What made it worse was that those who were not aligned similarly could easily be attacked. To debate in journals or newspapers was one of the most common and important ways for the League to fight against the “hidden enemies” and to propagate the ideology of Chinese Communist Leftists, and the debate on the “Third Category Men” was a typical example of this.

Shi Zhecun had realized the harm of pervasive alignments in the early 1930s before he expressed his concern with Yang Cunren’s “Banner of Revolutionary Literature of Petite Bourgeoisie”. In the “Inaugural Statement” of the first issue of *Xiandai zazhi*, he had clearly declared the non-alignment liberal principle of *Xiandai zazhi*. According to his statement, *Xiandai zazhi* was not a “tongren zazhi” (coterie journal); it did not intend to form any particular trend, doctrine or schools in literature and art. Rather, the journal needed the support of all Chinese writers and would support all those who were interested in literature. To embrace all rather than some people who were of the same affiliation was the main feature of the liberal attitude of *Xiandia zazhi*.

The argument continued and after the suspension of *Xiandai zazhi*, a real anti-leftist “Third Category” camp was formed by Yang Cunren, Du Heng and Han Shiheng (韩侍桁, 1908-1987) and a “coterie journal” named “Xinghuo” (Star Light, 星火) was launched in 1935.<sup>1</sup> After that, the original non-class-based liberal attitude of the “Third Category Men” was violated, and the friendship and any literary cooperation between Shi Zhecun and Du Heng (also known as Su Wen, co-editor of *Xiandai zazhi*) were brought to an end.

#### **4.3.2. “Leftism in Politics and Liberalism in Literature”: a tolerant attitude**

Refusing to be categorized into any particular political camp in literature or art, *Xiandai zazhi* managed to serve as a free arena for open discussion among intellectuals. Examples can be found in both the debate on *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan* discussed in Chapter 3 and in the debate on the “Third Category Men” as well. This tolerant attitude was demonstrated not only by its inclusion of works by left-wing writers, but, more importantly, in its support to everyone, as individuals who wish to express their own ideas. Although opposed to the rigid class-based stratification of Chinese leftists, *Xiandai zazhi* recognized left-wing theory and writings as an inseparable part of modern Chinese literature and culture. An interesting example was how the concept of “*xinxing*” [newly-emerging, 新兴] was interpreted differently by Chinese

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<sup>1</sup> For more details of this anti-leftist coterie journal, please see Jin Li, *From Orchid Society to Xiandai: A Study on the Literary Societies Mainly Established by Shi Zhecun, Dai Wangshu, Du Heng and Liu Na'ou*, pp. 191–192.

Leftists and *Xiandai zazhi*. In the essays concerning the debate on the “Third Category Men”, “Xinxing jieji” [the newly-emerging class, 新兴阶级] was used by some Left-League writers to solely address the proletarian class in China. *Xinxing*, which was in this sense understood as a class-based concept, carried however quite different meanings when applied to the translation of Western literature in *Xiandai zazhi*. It referred to a most recent literary and cultural fashion or school. For example, in “Yingmei xinxing shipai” [the newly-emerging schools of poetry in England and America, 英美新兴诗派], *xinxing* was understood as an artistic concept which referred to a literary fashion, both in form and content, distinguishing itself from the past. As one of the “*xinxing*” schools, communism was translated and interpreted as one of the newly-emerging and avant-gardist fashions in *Xiandai zazhi*, but was emphatically not the only legitimate literary theory in China.

Tolerance of Chinese left-wing discourse and an appeal for freedom of literature were reconciled in the principle of “Leftism in Politics and Liberalism in Literature”. This principle was proposed by Shi Zhecun in 1992 in an interview with Liu Huijuan. A further explanation of this standpoint of *Xiandai zazhi* was given later in this interview: “the standpoint of *Xiandai zazhi* was liberalism in literature and art, but it did not reject writers and works from the left-wing camp”<sup>1</sup>. For the debate on the “Third Category Men” in particular and many issues concerning modern Chinese literature, *Xiandai zazhi* has acted as a public sphere. Despite the disagreement on the class-based stratification of literature and the misinterpretation of the “Third Category Men”, the articles of the Left League writers, including Lu Xun, Feng Xuefeng, and Qu Qiubai, were all published in *Xiandai zazhi*, making it the main battlefield of the debate.

A tolerant attitude by *Xiandai zazhi* was characterized not only by its acceptance of leftist literature but also in its recognition of freedom for “everyone”, rather than “someone”, be it the “class of free intellectuals”, petty bourgeoisie, or Chinese Left-wingers, all of which were a group who shared the same class nature. As discussed in Section 4.2, *Xiandai zazhi* was opposed to the class-based stratification of people and literature. The problem of this kind of class-based literary theory lay in its inclusion of someone of the same class nature while excluding anyone from a different one. Examples can be found in the “free people of the intellectual class” represented by Hu Qiuyuan, the proletarian left wing or the petite

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Da Liu Huijuan wen: wei zhongguo wentan caliang ‘xiandai’ de huohua” (Shi Zhecun’s Answering Liu Huijuan’s Questions: Striking a Spark of “Modern” for Chinese Literary World), in Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), p. 181.

bourgeoisie proposed by Yang Cunren. In contrast, *Xiandai zazhi* rejected the class-based “someone” while acting as a platform for “everyone”.

It was also believed by the editor of *Xiandai zazhi* that the freedom of literature should be given to everyone (except the Nationalists, as indicated above) as individuals rather than someone who showed political allegiances. “Debate on the Freedom of Literature, *Xiandai zazhi*, and Me” was the title of the article that Shi Zhecun planned to write in response to Gu Fei’s criticism of the “Third Category Men” and *Xiandai zazhi*. This was the first time that Shi Zhecun, directly responded to the debate on the “Third Category Men”. In December 1932 when the Left League was in a fierce debate with Su Wen, Gu Fei (alias Hu Feng, 胡风, 1902-1985), an influential figure in the Chinese left-wing camp, cited the literary works published in the first volume of *Xiandai zazhi*, as an example of the argument that the differentiation of “reality” and “validity” proposed by Su Wen was whitewashing and distorting the reality of class struggle in China. At the very beginning of this article, Gu Fei criticized Su Wen for “not being able to take an objective attitude based on the inexorable law of historical evolution”<sup>1</sup>. Taking “reality” as one of the key issues in the debate on the “Third Category Men”, he further argued that “validity” in politics was exactly the same as “reality” in literature. In other words, the validity of proletarian literature lay in its objective representations of class-based reality, while the “Third Category Men” were “whitewashing and distorting” reality because “the writers’ cognition of objective reality was restricted by their subjective class-nature”<sup>2</sup>.

Three months later, when Shi Zhecun happened to read Gu Fei’s article, he felt so “disappointed”<sup>3</sup> with Gu’s prejudice against *Xiandai zazhi* that he planned to respond with an article entitled “Debate on Freedom of Literature, *Xiandai zazhi*, and Me”. When he realized that Su Wen had decided to write a response, he thought Su’s work would substitute and chose not to write himself. As the editor of *Xiandai zazhi*, he was well aware that some further disputes would be caused if his own article were published. On behalf of Shi Zhecun, Su pointed out the liberal editing principle of *Xiandai zazhi* in his article in response to Gu Fei’s criticism:

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<sup>1</sup> Gu Fei, “Fenshi, Waiqu, Teyiban de shishi” (Whitewashing, Distorting, and Hard Facts), in *Hu Feng quanji* (Complete Works of Hu Feng), Volume 5, p. 125. The article was first published in the combined issue of No. 5 and 6 of “Wenxue Yuebao” (Literature Monthly) on December 25, 1932. According to the “Editor’s Diary” in the Issue 2:5 of *Xiandai zazhi*, Shi Zhecun came across this article on February 11, 1933 when the debate was nearly brought to an end.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Shezhong rijì” (The Editor’s Diary), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 5 (March 1933), p. 769.

*Xiandai zazhi* holds an open-minded attitude in its editing practices. Those whose writings are published here do not necessarily share the same ideal or view on literature. Su Wen is expressing his own ideas in his articles published in *Xiandai zazhi*.<sup>1</sup>

At least two points could be concluded from the above statement: a tolerant attitude to all the writers (except those from the Nationalist Party)<sup>2</sup> and a respect for individual expression. *Xiandai zazhi* was not a coterie journal in which the writers had to share similar views towards literature and art. Nor was it the mouthpiece of any specific literary association or political group. As the chief editor, Shi Zhecun never intended to select the articles to be published according to his own literary claims or personal preferences. Meanwhile, freedom was given to every individual rather than to a group of people of the same class allegiance. Ever since Su Wen entered this debate, *Xiandai zazhi* had become the main arena for this dispute between the Left League and those who made claims for freedom of literature. Having published articles from Left-League writers, Su Wen as well as Hu Qiuyuan, *Xiandai zazhi* respected each individual's right to express themselves.

In the "Editor's Note" for Issue 2:1 published in November 1932 when the fierce debate on the "Third Category Men" was going on, Shi Zhecun expressed a similar tolerant attitude.

All the progressive writers who are not necessarily involved in politics must be able to realize the current situations of Chinese society and some solutions to them. At the same time, it is also a hard fact that everyone needs to keep some of his *Egoism*, which was quite neglected by the progressive critics.<sup>3</sup>

"Egoism" is the one and only English word used by Shi Zhecun in this short note in Chinese. The English word here is not used either as an abstract philosophical term or a psychological motivation to do everything for one's own interest. Despite the extensive interpretations, the very basic meaning of "Egoism" is one's self and individuality. Located in the historical context of the early 1930s when the discourse of national survival became overwhelming, "Egoism" was proposed to call for individuality, and more importantly, that individuality should be given to everyone. Understanding and fulfilment of individual expression from the perspective of people's hearts and minds was related to the literary genre of "Xinjing wenxue" (Literature about the State of Mind, 心境文学), which will be investigated in Section 4.4.2.

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<sup>1</sup> Su Wen, "Piping zhi lilun yu shijian" (The Theory and Practice of Literary Criticism), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 5 (March 1933), pp. 695-696.

<sup>2</sup> I will provide a brief critique of a limited cosmopolitanism of *Xiandai zazhi* in Conclusion of this thesis.

<sup>3</sup> Shi Zhecun, "Shezhong rijì" (The Editor's Diary), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 1 (November 1932), p. 216.

To summarize this section, the basic principles of the liberal attitude of *Xiandai zazhi* were defined as tolerance of different views without formulating any particular literary associations and to respect the freedom of expression of “everyone” rather than “someone” in particular.

#### **4.3.3. A liberal attitude and its significance for modern Chinese literature**

The reason why *Xiandai zazhi* held a liberal attitude was that the development of Chinese modern literature was possible through this belief in freedom of literature and art. According to Shi Zhecun, the significance of a liberal attitude was best demonstrated in Modern American literature, for which he launched the very first Special Issue on a national literature.

In October 1934, the last issue of Volume 5, a “Special Issue on Modern American Literature” was launched after more than two months of preparation<sup>1</sup>. Appearing as an effort to present a systematic introduction of modern American literature, it contained over 450 pages and covered almost all the genres of modern literature. This Special Issue started with brief information on fiction, drama, poetry, essays and literary criticism, and then was followed by introductions to 15 modern American writers and translations of the most influential works in America. It is no exaggeration to say that this extensive introduction to modern American literature “was unprecedented in its systematic, comprehensive effort to cover American literature”<sup>2</sup>. In the “Introductory Preface” of this Special Issue, Shi Zhecun<sup>3</sup> stated the reason for compiling this Special Issue and his belief in the role that translation had played and would play in constructing Chinese New Literature: “It is self-evident that the translation and introduction of foreign literature has played an essential part in the construction of Chinese New Literature.”<sup>4</sup> In order to undertake the responsibility of introducing and translating foreign literature in a systematic way, Shi Zhecun stated his grand plan of “a series of special issues on modern literature from foreign nations”<sup>5</sup>, of which this Special Issue on Modern American Literature was just the beginning.

It is worth looking into the reason why American literature was listed as the first in the extensive programme of systematically translating modern world literature. In fact, the idea of

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Bianhouji” (Editor’s Afterwords), *Xiandai zazhi*, 5:6 (October 1934), p. 1258.

<sup>2</sup> Shih Shumei, *The Lure of Modern: Writing Modernism in Semi colonial China, 1917–1937*, p. 252.

<sup>3</sup> The writer of this “Introductory Preface” was stated as “Editors”. In Shen Jianzhong’s interview with Shi Zhecun, Shi stated that both the “Introductory Preface” and the “Afterword” were written by Shi himself. See Shen Jianzhong ed., *Shiji laoren de hua: Shi Zhecun juan* (Words of Centenarians: the Volume of Shi Zhecun), p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Xiandai meiguo wenxue zhuanhao daoyan” (Introductory Preface to Special Issue of Modern American Literature), *Xiandai zazhi*, 5: 6 (October 1934), p. 834.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

starting with American literature was challenged and even criticized by some of Shi's friends who were sceptical about the accomplishments of modern American literature, especially when compared with some of the leading European national literatures. However, this objection did not stop the editors of *Xiandai zazhi* from launching this Special Issue, as they believed that American literature, which was modern, creative and liberal, served as a great example for Chinese New Literature.

Of particular importance in the development of an independent national literature is the spirit of creativity and freedom. As Shi Zhecun stated in the "Introductory Preface", creativity and liberalism, which were the two main characteristics of modern American literature, were also the "essential requirements for building up a new culture"<sup>1</sup> for China. By asserting that modern American literature was "creative", the editor highlighted its quest for "newness" which was facilitated by a new historical context and people's strong awareness of creation. The creation of American literature, which was still an on-going process, was a powerful encouragement to Chinese New Literature, which was on its way to an independent national literature. Besides, the USA was one of the very few nations where liberalism was still possible. "In the modern American literary field, we can find that all kinds of theories and works are co-existing with each other. They have free rights to argue with each other, and meanwhile, they are developing in an independent way."<sup>2</sup> This was quite the opposite of 1930's China when literature was highly politicized and therefore constrained by both politics and ideology.

In the concluding part of this "Introductory Preface", Shi Zhecun summarized the achievements of modern American literature which were made possible by its spirit of creativity, which was mainly based on the premise of liberalism. Liberalism was thus highlighted as the most essential part in constructing an independent national literature, and Shi Zhecun firmly believed that "only through liberalism could the development of literature be guaranteed"<sup>3</sup>. The liberal attitude had worked in the USA, and Shi Zhecun believed that it would also work for Chinese modern literature.

To summarize, although *Xiandai zazhi* was tolerant of proletarian literature, it was against the radical dogma which put national interest as the only criterion for assessing literary activities. The crux lay in whether proletarian revolutionary literature should be set up as the only goal

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 838.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 837.

for all Chinese people. As Shi Zhecun pointed out in an essay responding to the criticism when he was involved in the debate with Lu Xun on whether *Zhuang Zi* and *Wen Xuan* should be recommended to Chinese young people, “these (writing in seal script, composing classical *Ci* poetry, etc.) were personal choices”<sup>1</sup>. A liberal could tolerate the Proletarian Literary Movement and cherish the right of individual expression. This is where *Xiandai zazhi* departed from the dominant left-wing discourse in terms of the freedom of literature and art.

#### 4.4. “Companion” or “Master”: A Re-thinking of the Enlightening Effect of Literature

In Section 4.3 I have analyzed the liberal view featuring the non-alignment principle and a tolerant attitude. How this liberal view was represented in a re-thinking of the enlightening effect of literature will be examined later in this section. In the first issue of *Xiandai zazhi*, Shi Zhecun had stated that he hoped to make the journal a “companion” to rather than a “master” of the readers. To be a “companion” indicated an equal position so that both the journal and the readers were free to express and communicate, while to be a “master” implied that literature was to undertake the task of guiding and enlightening the masses. Whether to guide the masses or to inform the individuals defined the divergence of *Xiandai zazhi* from the Leftists in their attitudes to the enlightening effect of literature.

The companionship that *Xiandai zazhi* aimed for refers to the ordinary people, and particularly the masses living in cities in China. Mass culture as a realistic representation of cosmopolitan Shanghai in the 1930s was integrated in *Xiandai zazhi*. Compared to the dogma of the left-wing camp, *Xiandai zazhi* tolerated the Proletarian Literary Movement while respecting the freedom of individual expression. In the Proletarian Literary Movement built up on class-based stratification, class critique and the theme of anti-bourgeoisie which stemmed from the critique, prevailed among leftist writers. In other words, the “validity” in politics was prioritized over the “reality” in literature in order that literature would be strictly used to guide the masses in proletarian revolution. By contrast, in efforts to become a “companion”, *Xiandai zazhi* attempted to inform the readers of the non-class-based “reality” of literature and provide a space for individual expression. “Xinjing zhuyi de wenxue” (Literature about the State of Mind, 心境主义的文学)<sup>2</sup> served as a literary genre to portray

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Zhuang Zi yu Wen Xuan” (*Zhuang Zi and Selections of Refined Literature*), in *Lu Xun quanji* (Complete Works of Lu Xun), Volume 5, pp. 330–331.

<sup>2</sup> Mu Mutian, “Xinjing zhuyi de wenxue” (Literature of Mind-portrayism), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 6 (April 1934), pp. 936–938.



the inner reality of individuals. “Xinjing wenxue” was a term given by Mu Mutian (穆木天, 1900-1971), a leftist writer who summarized short stories and some familiar essays as literary works on the state of mind, and criticized them for being nihilistic and irrelevant to the current situation in Chinese society. I apply this term in my study of the literary works on “Egoism” but argue that this literary genre helped to construct a way for individual expression in the early 1930s when individuality was repressed by leftist ideology of proletarian revolution. The integration of mass culture and the advocacy of literature on an individual state of mind will be studied respectively in the following sections.

#### **4.4.1. “Companion” or “Master”: to guide the masses or to inform the individuals**

From the beginning of *Xiandai zazhi*, Shi Zhecun had differentiated two different editing strategies of a journal: to be a “master” or to be a “companion”, and *Xiandai zazhi* was designed to be the latter. In the “Bianji zuotan” (Editor’s Afterword) in Issue 1:1, Shi Zhecun pointed out the problem of a literary journal when it was placed as “master” of the readers.

For the literary journals in China in the past few years, I usually felt rather unsatisfied. I considered them either too rigid in cultural attitude or too low in literary taste. The malady of the former was that it was easily inclined to elevate itself from a companion to a master of the readers. The editors of such a kind of journal cling to their own limited views on literature and art, and would unconsciously fill the journal with an air of seriousness and gravity. Consequently, the readers would have to be their disciples.<sup>1</sup>

To be a “companion” means equality between the journal and the reader, and therefore both were given the freedom to express themselves. On the contrary, to be a “master” indicates that the readers have to obey and accept all the teachings from the journals. To put it in a broader way, literature as a “companion” was to represent the specific and individual realities while as a “master” it was supposed to educate and enlighten the masses. The term of “the masses”, however, was understood differently in the left-wing discourse and in *Xiandai zazhi*, and the difference will be discussed in Section 4.4.2.

According to proletarian literary theory, literature was meant to uncover the reality of life-and-death class struggles between proletariat and bourgeoisie, so that the masses would be able to align themselves on the right side. The enlightening effect of literature was overestimated to such an extent that only proletarian literature would benefit the revolution, while other forms of literature would harm it. Despite the fact that *Xiandai zazhi* was tolerant

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Bianji zuotan” (Editor’s Afterwords), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 1 (May 1932), p. 197.

of the enlightening function of literature, it doubted whether a prioritized revolutionary literature could work as a powerful tool for propaganda and still qualify as literary form.

A letter from a reader named Chen Wenjun was published in Issue 3:4 of *Xiandai zazhi*. Chen spoke highly of *Xiandai zazhi* and enthusiastically asked the journal to propose some mottos in order to lead young people, which Shi Zhecun refused in a dispassionate way. First of all, he replied that *Xiandai zazhi* could not put forward any goals to lead young people because he did not believe that any literary journal was able to lead young people, no matter how advanced it appeared to be. Then he further explained the possible paradox between revolutionary discourse and a literary journal:

We are willing to contribute to revolution as much as a literary journal can do, but we do not want to perform any act of bravado, which means to prioritize revolution over all the targets of literary journals. This is to deceive the readers, and it will definitely come out that neither revolution nor literary values are fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>

Shi Zhecun's unwillingness to propose any slogans to lead young people could be explained in two ways. Firstly, to lead young people was outside the scope of a literary journal, which echoed his hope that *Xiandai zazhi* could become a "companion" rather than a "master" of the readers. Secondly, it would possibly help neither revolution nor literature at all to ask a literary journal to undertake such a revolutionary task. For *Xiandai zazhi*, the task was to inform the readers of all the accessible contemporaneous world literature (as has been illustrated in Chapter 2), where the works portrayed individual's life realities. The flow of knowledge in early modern Chinese was often along the line of West-elite and the masses, which means that it came from the West to the elite and then to the masses. In *Xiandai zazhi*, however, it goes from the West and then directly to the ordinary people. Situated in a cosmopolitan Shanghai, the life of the masses in an urban city and their hearts and minds were recorded in *Xiandai zazhi*.

#### **4.4.2. Mass culture and urban Shanghai: the integration of mass culture in *Xiandai zazhi***

It has been demonstrated in the above section that *Xiandai zazhi* claimed to be the "companion" rather than the "master" to its readers. I will further argue in this section that the companionship that *Xiandai zazhi* aimed for was different from the proletariat who were targeted as the masses to be enlightened. According to the class-based stratification of the left-wing camp, the masses were defined as equivalent to the proletariat, a class-based concept set against the bourgeois. Besides the debate on the "Third Category Men", the 1930s

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, "Shezhong zuotan" (Editor's Afterwords), *Xiandai zazhi*, 3: 4 (August 1933), p. 579.

witnessed another debate on *dazhongyu*, or mass language, which is designed to be the language of proletarian. I have discussed in Chapter One that Chinese Communists and Nationalists had different conceptions of people. The Communists understood people as *renmin* in abstract class analysis, so there were proletarian people, and the bourgeoisie, the enemy of people.<sup>1</sup> *Dazhong* shared the same meaning of *renmin*. Qian Suoqiao has pointed out the reason why a mass language was proposed in the early 1930s.

Considering themselves as the most progressive inheritors of the May Fourth and New Culturalist spirit, leftist writers now took *baihua* as lagging behind the tide of historical progress, and proposed to replace *baihua* [Chinese vernacular language] with what they call *dazhongyu*, or mass language.<sup>2</sup>

As a language for the masses, *dazhongyu* had to be plain and to serve the proletarian revolution in China. From the leftists' point of view, the vernacular language, or *baihua*, could be employed to express the ideology of everyone, no matter which class he/she belonged to, but *dazhongyu* had to be strictly employed by the masses. Mass language and mass literature were supposed to undertake the task of mass education and mass enlightenment. The 'masses' in this sense were understood as the proletarian class who were waiting to be educated and enlightened.

*Xiandai zazhi*, on the contrary, provided an alternative view of the masses and the enlightening effect of literature. Believing that mass education and mass enlightenment were outside the scope of a literary magazine, *Xiandai zazhi* aimed its companionship at the ordinary people regardless of their class. Mass culture, which was usually associated with the bourgeois who lived in cities and had leisure time, was naturally considered by the Leftists as deconstructing the enlightenment of *dazhong*, the masses, and integrated into *Xiandai zazhi*.

It takes an analysis of mass culture to understand the masses that were constructed by *Xiandai zazhi*. There have been various approaches to defining mass culture, a frequently used term yet a historically fluid concept. In literal terms it refers to the culture that is mass-produced and mass-consumed, and it has been defined as "low culture" which is usually seen as inferior and in contrast to high culture. According to John Storey in his introduction to culture theories concerning popular culture<sup>3</sup>, mass culture and popular culture are defined as "mass-produced

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph R. Levenson, *Revolution and Cosmopolitanism: The Western Stage and the Chinese Stages*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Qian Suoqiao, "Literariness (Wen) and Character (Zhi): From *baihua* to *yuluti* and *dazhongyu*", in Zhang, Yingjin ed. *A Companion to Modern Chinese Literature*, pp. 181-194.

<sup>3</sup> There are cases where mass culture is understood as a synonym of popular culture, but I agree with Dwight Macdonald when he says that "It is sometimes called "Popular Culture", but I think "mass

by commercial culture” while high culture is “the result of an individual act of creation”<sup>1</sup>. Since it is not the focus of this chapter to explain these two terms, I will use the term “mass culture” to refer to those cultural forms that are related to commercial culture and Shanghai urban reality.

Among the conceptual frameworks in which mass culture has been defined, the exclusion of mass culture in Western Modernism is of greater significance to my analysis of the integration of mass culture in *Xiandai zazhi*. Though modernism and its division from mass culture were not historically fixed, the rejection of mass culture prevails throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Milwaukee’s summary of modernism is: “Modernism constituted itself through a conscious strategy of exclusion, an anxiety of contamination by its other: an increasingly consuming and engulfing mass culture.”<sup>2</sup> The unbridgeable opposition between modernism and mass culture was in a way reconciled in the 1930s in China in the integration of mass culture. Since material modernity had not yet been a factual reality in Shanghai, the division between historical modernism and aesthetic modernism which drove mass culture as the alternative to modernism, was bridged in Shanghai Modernism.

As an embodiment of Chinese modernism in the early 1930s, *Xiandai zazhi* integrated elements of mass culture into the subject matter of literary works published in *Xiandai zazhi*. Through a study of the short stories by Shi Zhecun, Liu Na’ou and Mu Shiying, all of whom were the regular contributors to *Xiandai zazhi*, Shi Shumei has asserted that mass culture was frequently exploited and revealed in both the form and content of Shanghai modernism.

Shanghai modernism was intently interested in the erotic, exotic, urban, material, and decadent, and often approximated in content mass cultural forms such as cinema and popular magazines. In form as well, the visual and technical qualities of cinema and illustrated magazines were frequently exploited, either through the use of cinematic perspective, montage, a structure of erotic gaze, or pictorial illustrations, or through the incorporation of the technical language of film production.<sup>3</sup>

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culture” is a more accurate term, since its distinctive mark is that it is solely and directly an article of mass consumption, like chewing gum.” See Macdonald, Dwight, “A Theory of Mass Culture”, in Rosenberg, Bernard and White, David Manning eds. *Mass Culture: the Popular Arts in America*, p. 59. Mass culture and popular culture are partly overlapping and partly different.

<sup>1</sup> Storey, John, *Culture Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Milwaukee, “Introduction”, in Huyseen, Andreas ed., *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, P. vi. This notion was quite dominant since the late 18th century and was challenged in the process of modernism, and eventually rectified in the theory of postmodernism.

<sup>3</sup> Shih Shumei, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917–1937*, p. 268.

Issue 4:1 published a statement made by Shi Zhecun, who explained the features of modern poems published in the journal. He described modern aspects of the realities of life which shaped modern poetry of the time.

The so-called modern life contains all kinds of special sites and situations: the harbour where large ships are anchored, the factories roaring with noise, the mines deep underground, the dancehalls with jazz music, the skyscraper department stores, the airplanes in combat in the sky, the spacious horse racing course. Even natural scenery is different from before.<sup>1</sup>

These embodiments of modernity from which mass culture originated defined the realities of life for the masses in modern China, especially in Chinese cities. The integration of mass culture in *Xiandai zazhi* was by every means made possible by urban realities in Shanghai in the early 1930s. As Leo Lee has pointed out,

*Xiandai zazhi* was a product of Shanghai's evolving urban culture. Without the city's physical environment and facilities it would have been impossible for Shi and his Shanghai 'contemporaries' to create—or even imagine—a modern literature of their own.<sup>2</sup>

Considering the social realities or urban culture that made mass culture a possibility in China, class struggle was not the one and only reality of China in the early 1930s. To engage in the elements of urban mass culture rather than condemning it for the sake of enlightening the proletariat indicated that *Xiandai zazhi* acted as a “companion” instead of a “master” to its readers.

According to the class-based stratification in the discourse of proletarian revolution, mass culture, which was incorporated in *Xiandai zazhi*, was the product of the bourgeoisie and therefore should be criticized. However, to take mass culture as a natural part of Chinese modernity rather than the embodiment of imperialism or a bourgeois leisure activity again demonstrated a non-class-based cultural attitude in *Xiandai zazhi*.

I have argued in both in Chapter One and in the beginning of the section that *dazhong* was understood as proletarian *renmin*, a class-based notion of people in the discourse of Left-wing camp. However, “masses” in *Xiandai zazhi* shared a similar meaning to ordinary individuals, especially those living in urban Shanghai who shared both excitement and anxieties about

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “You guanyu bekan zhong de shi” (A Re-discussion of the Poems in *Xiandai zazhi*), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 1 (November 1933), p. 6. This translation is quoted from Lee, Leo Ou-fan, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945*, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> Lee, Leo Oufan, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945*, p. 144.

modern life. *Xiandai zazhi* not only recognized the masses as a non-class-based ordinary people, but also acted as a platform for individual expression, which will be examined in the section below.

#### **4.4.3. A study of “Xinjing Wenxue” in *Xiandai zazhi*: a literary genre for individual expression**

As a realistic representation of urbanism in Chinese modernity, the integration of mass culture in *Xiandai zazhi* was in contrast to the “validity” of politics which lay in the class critique of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, *Xiandai zazhi* focused on narrating inner feelings and to portray the lives of the masses who were living among the elements of mass culture. This preference for portrayal of the people’s psychological world could be found in the short stories of Sensationalism by Mu Shiyong, Liu Na’ou and others, as well as the Psychoanalytic Fictions of Shi Zhecun, both of which were distinguished literary genres in *Xiandai zazhi*. However, they were not welcomed by the leftist writers and critics.

It has been mentioned in Section 4.3.2 that Hu Feng joined leftist criticism towards *Xiandai zazhi* in the debate over the “Third Category Men”. According to the rigid theory of proletarian literature, *Xiandai zazhi* was defined as the “Third Category” which was neither left nor right but wavering between these two political positions. The short stories published in *Xiandai zazhi* were therefore believed to be created according to the literary theory of the “Third Category Men”. All the 32 short stories published in the first volume of *Xiandai zazhi* were criticized by Hu Feng for “whitewashing and distorting” social realities. Hu Feng argued that “The writers made an effort to separate their stories from social reality and ignored the connections between the protagonists and the real society. They invited the readers to feel an air of naivety in these works”<sup>1</sup>. From the Leftists’ points of view, the social reality lay in the “serious struggles”<sup>2</sup> and class-based truths, and irrelevance to social reality was the greatest mistake these psycho-fictions could make. It was believed by the Leftists that the individuals’ psyche, especially those living in modern cities, was irrelevant or even harmful to proletarian revolution.

Mu Mutian, a member of the Left League, defined this literary genre as “Xinjing wenxue”, a derogatory term for escaping from social reality. Although the term was intended as a

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<sup>1</sup> Gu Fei, “Fenshi, Waiqu, Tiejiban de shishi” (Whitewashing, Distorting, and Hard Facts), in *Hu Feng quanji* (Complete Works of Hu Feng), Volume 5, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 144.

criticism, it described the main feature of this literary genre: to study individual inner feelings, but this expression of individuality was perceived as sentimental and self-indulgent.

This inclination to portray the psyche was a symbol of *fin de siècle*. It was mainly because the writers did not have experience of life and therefore were divorced from social reality... It could be safely argued that these writers had given up their task of representing reality.<sup>1</sup>

Mu Mutian held the same view as the Leftists that the psycho-fiction published in *Xiandai zazhi* was divorced from social reality, and therefore did not fulfil the task that they should have undertaken. The role that literature was intended to play has been analyzed in the previous section. Here I focus on psycho-fiction as a way to represent reality as an alternative to life-and-death class struggle. A short story by Shi Zhecun will be given here as a typical example of the psyche-fictions in *Xiandai zazhi*.

“Canqiu de xiaxianyue” [First Quarter Moon in a Lingering Autumn, 残秋的下弦月]<sup>2</sup> depicts a conversation between a wife, who is staying at home for convalescence, and her husband, who is upset with his writing. Expecting more love from her husband, the wife starts to talk about ‘the good old days’. However, as a writer who lives for his work, the husband is too anxious about his writing to contribute to the conversation. But in the end, the tension ceases and the story ends with moonlight pouring into the room. The wife falls asleep and the husband carefully covers her well with a quilt. There was no doubt that this piece of writing was criticized by Hu Feng for not touching upon class struggle, but class struggle was not the only social reality in China. The quiet room in this short story seemed to be isolated from the social reality, but it provided ordinary individuals with a space for self-expression.

In 1990, in his interview with two Taiwanese writers, Shi Zhecun proposed the term “inside reality”<sup>3</sup> which described the inner mind of an individual or an inner view of social realities. Although the “inside reality” is different from the “outside” reality, both represented a part of the social reality of early 1930’s China. In other words, social realities did not only reside in life-and-death class struggles. The outside reality should not exclude “inside reality” as a way of individual portrayal and individual expression.

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<sup>1</sup> Mu Mutian, “*Xinjing zhuyi de wenxue*” (Literature of Mind-portrayism), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 6 (April 1934), p. 937.

<sup>2</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Canqiu de xiaxianyue” (First Quarter Moon in a Lingering Autumn), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 1 (May 1932), pp. 175–184.

<sup>3</sup> “Zhongguo xiandai zhuyi de shuguang” (The Dawn of Chinese Modernism), in Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de Jiaoji* (Footprint in the Sand), p. 172. The English word “inner reality” was used by Shi Zhecun in the original text.

In the same interview Shi Zhecun also pointed out that the flexibility in the historical context of Shanghai presupposed the development of psycho-fictions in *Xiandai zazhi*.

It was the social realities of Shanghai from 1928 to 1937 that were represented in the short stories by Mu Shiying and me, as well as some other writers. Unfortunately, Shanghai society has totally changed ever since the Anti-Japanese War, and therefore, this sort of short story could not be created any longer.<sup>1</sup>

Shanghai in the 1930s was defined as “flexible”<sup>2</sup> by Shih Shumei because of the “inequalities in a city marked along various lines of nationality, race, gender, and class, even though some of these boundaries were not entirely codified and hence permeable and porous”<sup>3</sup>. This “suggests the existence of a space not exclusively defined by the demands of nationalism or imperialism, where we can chart the emergence of a Shanghai Cosmopolitanism that straddled the multiple demands of ideology (from the Nationalist government and the League of Left-Wing Writers), the seductions by and the abhorrence towards the semi-colonial city, and an avowed celebration of metropolitan Western and Japanese literary cultures.”<sup>4</sup> Despite the rigid discourse of proletarian revolution and the strict censorship from the Nationalist government, literature and culture were not monopolized by any one political group. Although literature on individual expression was criticized by the dominant left-wing camp, it was still possible in a volatile and flexible period in the early 1930s.

Although threatened by both domestic crisis and foreign invasion, *Xiandai zazhi* nonetheless paid attention to ordinary people and their lives. Moreover, by publishing the psycho-fictions, individual feelings and emotions were recorded in this period when proletarian revolution was the only legitimate goal for the dominant left-wing camp. In this sense, psycho-fiction constructed a space for individual expression, which was an alternative to the socialist realism of the Proletarian Literary Movement.

#### 4.5. Conclusion

As one of the avant-gardist literary journals of the early 1930s, *Xiandai zazhi* shared at least one similarity with the dominant left-wing discourse. As has been illustrated in Chapter 2, cosmopolitanism was an integral element in the translating and editing practices of *Xiandai*

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 166.

<sup>2</sup> Shih Shumei, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917–1937*, p. 237.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



*zazhi*. From this perspective of looking outside and learning from newly-emerging theories and ideologies, Chinese Communism, which advocated international revolution while defying nationalism or nationality, was as cosmopolitan as *Xiandai zazhi*. With this similar cultural attitude, it seems puzzling that the Leftists deplored *Xiandai zazhi*, in which a considerable number of theoretical guidelines and writings of Communist leftism were published. The journal accepted “*Weile wangque de ji’nian*” (In Memory of the Forgotten)<sup>1</sup> by Lu Xun, which had been rejected by many others. “Socialist Realism”<sup>2</sup> was translated from Russian as an important theoretical aspect of proletarian literature and writings on the exploitation and oppression of the working class were prevalent in *Xiandai zazhi*. Yet it was involved in the notorious debate on “Third Category Writers” and was repudiated severely by the left-wing writers as one of the “hidden enemies” who were opposed to the Chinese proletarian literary revolution.

I argue in this chapter that the crux lies in whether class distinction should be applied to categorize people and their works, and this is one of the most significant differences between a rigid leftist discourse and the tolerant cultural attitude of *Xiandai zazhi*, even though it claimed to be left-leaning in terms of its political views.

The debate on the “Third Category Men” demonstrated a gap in the class struggle between Chinese Nationalists and Communists. From the late 1920s, although the Nationalist government was the only official regime in China, communist doctrine became increasingly dominant among Chinese intellectuals. With the founding of the Chinese League of left-wing writers in 1930, the ideological line of the Chinese proletarian literary revolution became more and more distinct and aggressive. It was in this context that the debate on freedom of literature and art was initiated. Hu Qiuyuan and Su Wen both appealed for free creativity in literature, but the differences lay in ideas of whether the freedom should be given to a group of people based on their class nature. Throughout the debate on the “Third Category Men” *Xiandai zazhi* demonstrated an opposition to the rigid class-based stratification, and a liberal view featuring a non-alignment principle and tolerant attitude. By claiming to be a “companion” to rather than “master” of the readers, *Xiandai zazhi* valued literature more as a means of free individual expression than an enlightening tool rigidly applied to arm the

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<sup>1</sup> Lu Xun, “*Weile wangque de ji’nian*” (In Memory of the Forgotten), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 6 (April 1933), pp. 772-778.

<sup>2</sup> See: Sen Bao tr, “*Shehui zhuyi de xianshi zhuyi lun*” (On Socialist Realism), *Xiandai zazhi*, 3: 6 (October 1933), pp. 735-744; Zhou Qiyong, “*Gunayu ‘shehui zhuyi de xianshi zhuyi yu geming de langman zhuyi’*” (On “Socialist Realism and Revolutionary Romanticism”), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 1 (November 1933), pp. 21-31.

masses for proletarian revolution. In terms of literature and culture which were opposed to the class-based stratification, mass culture was integrated in *Xiandai zazhi* as a realistic representation of urban Shanghai and “*xinjing wenxue*” was a way to construct individuality rather than to guide the masses.

## Chapter 5

### “East and West and the Novel”: Blurring the Boundary of Self and Other in Writings about the “Other” in *Xiandai Zazhi*

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter studies how “exotic stories” featured in *Xiandai zazhi* serve as a way to blur the boundary between self and other in East-West relations, or more specifically, China-West and China-Japan relations. By “exotic stories” I mean the stories with an “exotic” setting (a distant foreign country) and/or “exotic” characters (foreigners). Both the “Chinese novels” by Pearl S. Buck (1892-1973, known as 赛珍珠 in Chinese) and Chinese short stories portraying foreign characters and plots by Chinese authors were writing about the “exotic”, or, in other words, a geographical or cultural “other”, or sometimes both.

The notions of the exotic and exoticism are associated with the understanding of self and other. Hegel was among the earliest scholars who gave a philosophical account of the relations of the self and the other. As summarized by Berenson, Hegel claims in the *Phenomenology of Minds* that “the Other Self is the only adequate mirror of my own self-conscious self; the subject can only see itself when what it sees is another self-consciousness.”<sup>1</sup> The concept of “other” has been widely explored in a range of areas including philosophy, psychoanalysis, literature, and sociology. Despite the various interpretations of self and “other”, a dialectical understanding can always be identified, that the existence of self is contingent on the existence of an opposed “other”. For example, J. Mitchell Miller defines “otherness” as “the condition or quality of being different or ‘other,’ particularly if the differences in question are strange, bizarre, or exotic.”<sup>2</sup> In history and literature, the exotic and exoticism were brought about by experiences in reading, viewing and representing others or the outside. When applied to the discussion of the relationship between Western culture and non-Western cultures, exoticism leads to the paired terms, Orientalism and Occidentalism, as a frame for defining self in relationship to the other. Edward Said defines Orientalism as “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident’”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Frances Berenson, “Hegel on Others and the Self”, in *Philosophy*, Vol. 57, No. 219 (January 1982), p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> J. Mitchell Miller, “Otherness”, in Given, Lisa M. ed. *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, unpaginated.

<sup>3</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, Penguin Books, 2003. p.2.

He also suggests that the Orient and the Occident are geographical and cultural entities, invented to display the other as an exotic being, and therefore support and reflect each other.<sup>1</sup> Orientalism is the exoticizing of China by Westerners while Occidentalism is essentialization of the West as the Other.

More relevant to my study in this chapter is that, as Srinivas Aravamudan argues, “any notion of the exotic relies on an implicit understanding of a boundary, inside which relative familiarity reigns and outside which the wild things roam.”<sup>2</sup> Located in the study of China-West relations, the discussion of exoticism implies a nationalist perspective, between self and an exotic other. Seen from this perspective, the Chinese novels by Pearl S. Buck and the “exotic short stories” by Chinese writers would be easily considered writings on the “other”, and therefore, seen as a way to essentialize the “exotic”, as Orientalists and Occidentalists would do. However, I argue in this chapter that these writings on “other” blur the nationalistic boundary by proposing a cosmopolitan cultural attitude which allows a fluid cross-cultural understanding of both self and Other. There is all the difference between thinking of the “Other” as exotic and thinking about exoticism in the Other; and the latter often implies a cosmopolitan perspective.

Srinivas Aravamudan indicates that cosmopolitanism offers the possibilities of exceeding the boundaries between the self and the exotic other. He argues that “if exoticism manages objects and phenomena by drawing a tight boundary between the self and the external world, cosmopolitanism makes boundary-crossing obligatory, embracing strangers and internalizing them.”<sup>3</sup> He also suggests that exoticism is “a dynamic process of making and framing”<sup>4</sup> and that it gives way to a forked outcome, of cosmopolitan promise and nationalist result.

“The shock of the exotic forced some observers to recognize that the world was vast and that it needed a new philosophy —cosmopolitanism. The same shock fed into the reinforcement of the familiar and the rejection of the strange—nationalism.”<sup>5</sup>

With respect to the cosmopolitan promise of exoticism, Victor Segalen propagates the notion of “universal Exoticism”<sup>6</sup> which is “marked by a recognition of difference, the ‘perception of

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<sup>1</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, Penguin Books, 2003. p.5.

<sup>2</sup> Srinivas Aravamudan, “Response: Exoticism beyond Cosmopolitanism?” in *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, Volume 25, Number 1, p. 227.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 229

<sup>4</sup> Srinivas Aravamudan, “Response: Exoticism beyond Cosmopolitanism?” in *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, Volume 25, Number 1, p.230.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 229.

<sup>6</sup> Victor Segalen, *Essay on Exoticism: An Aesthetics of Diversity*, p. 70.

Diversity’, and the ‘knowledge that something is other than one’s self’<sup>1</sup>. In other words, it is a cosmopolitan perspective that goes beyond the boundary of self and exotic other. In the trans-national and cross-cultural writings published in *Xiandai zazhi*, “other” was not portrayed as “strange” or “bizarre”, nor was it built upon nationalist assumptions. Through examining the translation and introduction of Pearl S. Buck’s “Chinese stories” and the “exotic” short stories by Chinese writers, I argue that *Xiandai zazhi* underlined a cultural attitude of cosmopolitanism blurring the nationalistic and ethnographic boundaries between self and Other.

In Section 5.2 I will discuss how Pearl S. Buck was seen and interpreted as a cosmopolitan writer and critic to the Chinese readership of *Xiandai zazhi*. As a journal striving to translate and introduce the latest literary figures and events for its readers, *Xiandai zazhi* would by no means ignore Buck, who was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1932 for her second Chinese novel, *The Good Earth*, a bestseller in America. She was reported to have won the Prize in the special column “Art and Literature Express” in Issue 1:3 (July 1932), soon after she was announced as the winner. It is evident that *Xiandai zazhi* attached great importance to Buck. Pictures of her appeared three times in the column “Pictorials for Modern Literature and Art”, one lecture and a brief autobiographical account were translated, and three introductory essays by Chinese authors were published in *Xiandai zazhi*. Among them the lecture “East and West and the Novel” is cited in the title of Chapter 5 because the three key words in the title of her speech well summarizes the central argument I propose here: story-writing as a way to blur nationalistic boundaries of self and Other in the China-West/Japan relationship. I will argue in this section that the introduction and translation of Buck’s work published in *Xiandai zazhi* highlighted a cosmopolitan attitude that encompassed both understanding and criticism of Chinese and Western Culture.

An interesting and significant phenomenon in *Xiandai zazhi* is that there appeared a number of cross-cultural writings about Westerners and Japanese by Chinese authors. My discussion of them will be divided into four categories. In the first category are two short stories by Ba Jin (巴金, 1904-2005): “Zui yu Fa” (罪与罚, Crime and Punishment) and “Dianyi” (电椅, Electric Chair) which contained exotic subject matter. They were set in Massachusetts, U.S.A. and Paris, France with all the characters being foreigners. In Section 5.3.1 I will discuss how an attitude of cosmopolitanism was demonstrated in these two short stories.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. xiii.

The second category is the short stories by Jin Yi (靳以, 1909-1959), which will be discussed in section 5.3.2. Jin's writings present similar exotic characteristics to Ba Jin's, but focus more on the encounters of Chinese and Westerners in a colonial city, Harbin. Harbin was not formally colonized, but the presence of Western (mainly Russian) and Japanese powers made it a transnational city in the Northeast of China. The historical context of Harbin and how it relates to Jin Yi's writing of Western people will be further explained in section 5.3.2. In both "Shengxing" (圣型, Sacred Model) and "Ni" (溺, Drowning) he dramatizes the encounter of Chinese and Russian people in the city of Harbin, which was an international metropolitan hub in the early 20th century. The above-mentioned short stories by Ba Jin and Jin Yi attracted the attention of critics in the 1930s, and the reviews of Ba Jin's and Jin Yi's stories published in *Xiandai zazhi* will also be included in the section.

Section 5.3.3 will be devoted to a brief examination of a piece of writing about Chinese people living in the West. As the title, "Sai'na hepan" (塞纳河畔, On the Bank of the Seine) suggests, the story takes place in the exotic setting of Paris. The first-person narrator is a young Chinese man who works with and gets along very well with French workers in an enamel factory located on the bank of the Seine. What makes it significant is that for the female French protagonist, who was first a friend then the lover of the first person narrator, China was imagined as a dream place and a distant Heaven. In the unbalanced West-China relation in which China was perceived as lagging behind and being inferior, this western imagination of China as a dream place is worth further examination.

Section 5.3.4 will be devoted to a study of the short stories about Japanese people situated in the period of the War of Resistance against Japan. It is rather remarkable to notice that even though China was faced with imperialist invasion from Japan, these short stories published in *Xiandai zazhi* did not depict Japanese people as the Other. Rather, the short stories were narrated from the Japanese point of view and showed some sympathy to ordinary Japanese people who suffered as the Chinese did in wartime. A critique of Japanese nationalism can also be identified in these short stories. In these Chinese writings about the Japanese the position of self and Other was transformed from a rigid dichotomy into a liberal and tolerant cosmopolitanism.

## **5.2. A Cosmopolitan Perspective: the Translation and Introduction of Pearl S. Buck in *Xiandai Zazhi***

Born into a missionary family in 1892 in the United States, Pearl Sydenstricker was taken to China as an infant by her parents who worked in the rural interior of China. There she grew up and lived among ordinary Chinese people who later became the primary theme of her Chinese novels. Except for the years when she was studying in the U.S in Randolph-Macon Woman's College from 1910 to 1914 and later in Cornell University in 1926, and some other short visits, she spent most of her time in China before she finally settled down in America in 1934. In 1917 she married John Lossing Buck, an American agricultural scholar working in China, and became Mrs Pearl S. Buck, as she was usually referred to. Although married to Richard Walsh in 1935 after her divorce with Mr Buck, she kept Buck as her surname. In the translation and introductory essay of Buck published in *Xiandai zazhi*, she was always referred to as Mrs Buck, in Chinese 勃克夫人, rather than her more well-known Chinese name, 赛珍珠. We do not know exactly the reason for the editorial decision to refer to her as Mrs. Buck, but we do know that 赛珍珠 sounds like a Chinese name while Mrs Buck carried more foreign flavours. The editorial choice therefore denotes a strategy of foreignization in translating and introducing the West into China.

Buck's Chinese novels had won her great popularity and high reputation not only in America but also throughout the world. In 1932 she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize<sup>1</sup> for her second novel, *The Good Earth*, a lengthy narrative of a Chinese peasant family. The novel proved to be such a great success that it not only became one of the best-sellers in America but also achieved great popularity around the world. The award of Pulitzer Prize also contributed a lot to her winning the Nobel Prize for literature in 1938 for her "rich and generous epic description of Chinese peasant life and masterpieces of biography"<sup>2</sup>. As an American writer and novelist whose Chinese novels were among the bestsellers in America in her time, Buck attracted great attention of *Xiandai zazhi*. It was shortly after she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize that she was first mentioned in a short news report in the special column "Art and Literature Express" in Issue 1:3 (July 1932) in *Xiandai zazhi*. In addition to her winning the Prize, Buck was said in this report to have lived in China for years and to have published two Chinese novels in America: *East Wind, West Wind*, and *The Good Earth*. According to this short report, the first novel which concerns the conflicts between a Chinese young couple—a

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<sup>1</sup> Pulitzer Prize used to be awarded to a book on American subject matter, but as Qian Suoqiao points out, the board had to change the criterion from "a book on American" to "the best novel by an American author" in order to award Pearl S. Buck the Pulitzer Prize for her Chinese novel, *The Good Earth*. See Qian Suoqiao, "Pearl S. Buck/赛珍珠 as Cosmopolitan Critic", in *Comparative American Studies*, Volume 3, Number 2, p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> The quotation is taken from the Nobel Committee citation which appeared in *New York Times*, December 24, 1938, p. 13. See No. 2 footnote from Paul A. Doyle, *Pearl S. Buck*, p. 76.

traditional Chinese women and her Western-educated husband— was well-received among English and American readers. The second one received even greater acclaim in the U.S for the “delicate plot-arrangement and penetrating portrayal of the hero and heroine”<sup>1</sup>. Following this short introduction of Buck, there appeared three long essays on her in *Xiandai zazhi*, including both translations of her works and introductory essays by Chinese scholars. In issue 2:5 (March 1933) was published “East and West and the Novel”, a lecture delivered by Pearl S. Buck to the Shanghai American Women’s Association on October 27, 1931. This lecture was translated by Zhao Jiabi (writing as Xiao Yan, 小延, 1908-1997), who also contributed an introductory essay on *Mrs Buck and The Good Earth* published in Issue 3:5 (September 1933). Zhang Boyu’s interview essay, accompanied by a translation of a short autobiography of Buck, was published in Issue 4:5 (March 1934). Though few in number, these essays covered Buck’s literary theories, her most well-known novel and a brief autobiography of her. Through examining these essays I argue in this section that Pearl Buck was seen and received in *Xiandai zazhi* very much as a cosmopolitan critic and novelist.

### **5.2.1. “East and West and the Novel”: Pearl S. Buck as a cosmopolitan critic**

The “East” and “West” in the title referred specifically to China and England, and the “novel” was limited to pre-modern works only. Although Buck stated at the very beginning of the lecture that she would make a comparative study, her focus of discussion was evidently Chinese traditional novels. As one of the significant sources and the constant thematic concerns of Buck’s writing, the Chinese traditional novel, or in Buck’s words, the early Chinese novel, was among the basic subject matter of her lectures both in China and America. The full text of the lecture “East and West and the Novel” was first published in the American Association of University Women *Bulletin* in November 1931.<sup>2</sup> In 1932 this lecture and another one entitled “Sources of the Early Chinese Novel” given by Buck were collected in a booklet and published in Beiping (Peking) China by the North China Union Language School cooperating with California College in China.<sup>3</sup> These two informative lectures with the

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<sup>1</sup> “Mrs. Buck is awarded Pulitzer Prize for Literature” in “Yiwen qingbao” (Art and Literature Information), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1:3 (July 1932), pp. 471–472.

<sup>2</sup> See the No. 48 note given by Peter Conn, *Pearl S. Buck: A Cultural Biography*, p. 403.

<sup>3</sup> With no access to the original text or the booklet entitled *East and West and the Novel; Sources of the Early Chinese Novel*, or any other sources of the full text in English, I cite some of the original lines of “East and West and the Novel” from *Pearl S. Buck: A Cultural Biography* by Peter Conn, and translate other quotations from the Chinese translation by Zhao Jiabi.



similar thematic concern of Chinese traditional novels were believed to be the “earliest expression of Pearl Buck’s literary theories”<sup>1</sup>.

As Buck’s earliest expression of literary theory, “East and West and the Novel” was immediately noticed by *Xiandai zazhi*. It was translated into Chinese as “东方、西方与小说” (Dongfang, xifang yu xiaoshuo) by Zhao Jiabi, and was published in the 2:5 Issue of *Xiandai zazhi* in March 1933. Zhao was invited by *Xiandai zazhi* to write on Pearl S. Buck. In the note attached to the translation of this lecture, Zhao Jiabi explained that it was the editor, Shi Zhecun, who urged him to contribute an essay on Buck in *Xiandai zazhi*. As Zhao accounted for, having known that Zhao Jiabi was very interested in her works such as *The Good Earth*, *East Wind*, *West Wind*, *Sons*, etc, Shi Zhecun asked him to go and conduct an interview with her as she was at that time living and teaching in Nanjing. It was believed by Shi Zhecun that the interview would provide material for an exclusive account on this latest winner of the Pulitzer Prize. Zhao’s trip to Nanjing was first delayed by the extremely hot weather and finally cancelled because Buck had left for America to deliver some lectures there. With the interview plan unfulfilled, Zhao decided to translate the lecture instead. He further explained that the lecture was made to a small group of people and hence had not been published elsewhere. Moreover, it could be inferred from her cross-cultural understandings of Chinese and English novels in this lecture that this writer of “Oriental novels” had once worked very hard on Chinese classic novels.

According to the documentation on Chinese translations of Buck’s works provided by Yao Junwei, “East and West and the Novel” was among the earliest translations of Buck’s works in China, only several months after the publication of Chinese translations of *The Good Earth* and *Sons* in 1932.<sup>2</sup> *Xiandai zazhi* again demonstrated its strategy of translating cotermporaneous world literature into Chinese.

It should be pointed out that a detached tone could be identified in the doubly critical view toward both the pre-modern Chinese novel and its English counterpart in terms of history and development, structure and form, methods and aims. In the discussion of history and development, Buck pointed out that the Chinese novel emerged earlier than its English counterpart but developed at a slower pace. She further attributed this situation to the different positions that English and Chinese pre-modern novels had respectively possessed within their

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<sup>1</sup> Paul A. Doyle, *Pearl S. Buck*, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> Yao Junwei, *Wenhua xiangdui zhuyi: Sai Zhenzhu de zhongxi wenhua guan* (Cultural Relativism: The China-West Cross-cultural Attitude of Pearl S. Buck), p. 225.

national literary fields. In English literary history, the novel had always been regarded as a genre of high literature, with its earlier forms being epics and romances. On the contrary, for the educated literati class in China, the novel had long been considered as “small talks”, just as its Chinese name, 小说, indicated. Because of its marginal position in the long literary history of ancient China, some sinologists believed that novel had not been produced in China until Mongolian-dominated Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) when the exotic Mongolian culture exercised great impact on Chinese culture. Buck argued against these sinologists and suggested that although unrecognized as a genre of high literature until early modern China (no earlier than late Qing dynasty), Chinese novels had existed and developed for centuries.<sup>1</sup> She applied a historical reading to early Chinese novel and traced the sources of it in Chinese folktales and stories. She also outlined how these folktales and stories, handed down through generations, gradually formed the early genre of novel in China:

There were hardly any great classic novels in China that were created independently. Most of them were adapted from a large corpus of historical legends, storytellers’ narratives, anecdotes about the imperial court and episodes presented on stage.<sup>2</sup>

Buck regarded these sources as having utmost significance in shaping the features of Chinese traditional novels, among which *Shui Hu Zhuan* (水浒传, Water Margin) and *San Guo Yan Yi* (三国演义, Romance of the Three Kingdoms), were cited as the best examples.

The fact that most Chinese traditional novels evolved from folktales and historical accounts contributed to another unique feature in the way that the plots of a traditional novel were organized. In the second part of this speech, Buck shifted her focus onto the structure and form of Chinese and English pre-modern novels. She argued that compared to its counterpart in England, the Chinese novel had a feature of “formlessness” in its approach to plot organization.

There was not a clear pattern of sequences in early Chinese novels, nor was there a pivotal point or the highest tension that can be clearly identified, for the story would move on to other sequences in one or two pages. Except for the main actions centred on the protagonist (if there was any), traditional novels exhibited no clear climax or concluding point. One can hardly find any primary dramatic plots or even an underlying structure.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Zhao Jiabi (writing as Xiaoyan, 小延) tr. Pearl S. Buck, “Dongfang, xifang yu xiaoshuo” (East and West and the Novel), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 5 (March 1933), p. 668.

<sup>2</sup> Zhao Jiabi (writing as Xiaoyan, 小延) tr. Pearl S. Buck, “Dongfang, xifang yu xiaoshuo” (East and West and the Novel), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 5 (March 1933), pp. 669–670.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp. 671–672.

A lack of coherent plot structure was believed by Western critics to have made traditional Chinese novels “badly organized and confusing”<sup>1</sup>, as compared to Western fiction. Buck agreed with Western critics on this defective feature, but she also argued nonlinear plots and loose structure were “an apparent virtue of Chinese novels”<sup>2</sup>. According to Buck, “formlessness” and “fragmentariness” were exactly the representations of the law of uncertainty in real lives not only for the Chinese but also for all human beings. Her analysis of the feature of “formlessness” in plot structure in Chinese novels was so insightful that it is worth quoting in full.

In the first place in this formlessness there is a remarkable likeness to life. Life has no plot, no subplot... We meet people, their time coincides with ours for a short space, they walk away out of the story and we never see them again nor do we know their end any more than we know our own. This fragmentariness is the impression which the Chinese novel gives us, primarily. Events come and pass, people walk on and off on the stage, perhaps to return, perhaps never to be seen again.<sup>3</sup>

It could be deduced from Buck’s analysis that the preferred plot structure of traditional Chinese novels, though without either a coherent plot or a clear concluding section, invites a reflection on a cyclical worldview and the sense of uncertainty in human life. By contrast, however, Buck pointed out that English novels turned out to be rigid and mechanical in plot development, for almost all the plots in Western novels could be sketched out in a chart. As Doyle put it, “Miss Buck does attack the Western behaviouristic novel because it imposes a rigidity of viewpoint which condemns mankind to a narrow, mechanical, and one-sided type of existence.”<sup>4</sup> As such, it was argued by Buck in this lecture that one would inevitably feel bored to read the “well-charted” Western novels if he/she had developed a Chinese taste in reading.

In a comparative discussion of the development and structure of Chinese and English novels, Buck critically pointed out the merits and defects of both sides. Taking a detached point of view, she did not necessarily believe that one method was better than the other. Rather, she identified the differences while recognizing the virtues of each. Moreover, she linked the looseness in plot structure of traditional Chinese novels, considered as defective by Western critics<sup>5</sup>, to “a remarkable likeness to life”. To recognize the unique feature of traditional

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 672.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Cited from Peter Conn, *Pearl S. Buck: A Cultural Biography*, p. 136.

<sup>4</sup> Paul A. Doyle, *Pearl S. Buck*, p. 94.

<sup>5</sup> Buck just made a passing remark that the loose structure of Chinese novel was seen as defective from the Western critics’ points of view, but she didn’t say who these critics were.

Chinese novels while connecting it to universal human traits distinguishes Buck from her contemporary Orientalists who defined China as a remote Other.

A similar view could be found in the third part of the lecture in which Buck talked about the differences in methods and aims of Chinese novels and English counterpart. She borrowed two very well-known terms—Romanticism and Realism—as two basic methods of novel writing. Literary Romanticism is usually characterized by an emphasis on individual expression of emotion and imagination, and sometimes by an interest in nature. Realism, on the other hand, is more concerned with detailed, realistic and factual treatment of life and society, without idealization. Buck pointed out that unlike English novels in which Romanticism and Realism can be clearly differentiated from each other, it is impossible to draw a distinction between Romanticism and Realism in Chinese novels as these two were always interwoven with each other. This again demonstrated a feature of “formlessness” in Chinese novels.

As far as I know for Chinese novels, a Romantic flavour could be felt in even the most Realistic works... while the works of Romantic style were realistically represented in the very familiar things that are true to life... It is to represent the Romantic subject matters in a Realistic approach that served as the essential way of Chinese novel writing.<sup>1</sup>

Romanticism was used in traditional Chinese novels, as Buck suggested, mainly in the perception of gods and spirits and in the consciousness of human destiny, or *mingyun* 命运, with the former in a way leading to the latter. On the one hand, although Chinese people did not necessarily have a specific religious belief, they did believe that gods and spirits existed in a parallel world, neither as serious as God nor as bizarre as demons, but as human as human beings. In spite of their supernatural powers, the gods and spirits were believed to share the same human emotions and feelings with ordinary people. On the other hand, because of their belief in the real existence of gods and spirits, Chinese people developed a faith in *mingyun*, 命运, which referred to human fate or destiny given and controlled by transcendental gods and spirits. When they were fated to experience some unexpected or uncontrollable events, they were inclined to resort to *mingyun*. This reassuring power of the Romantic gods and spirits was similar to the salvation that religion provides in the Christian tradition.

The belief in *mingyun* may strike western critics as much as Chinese revolutionary intellectuals as pessimistic or superficial, but Buck argued that it was through attributing turmoil to *mingyun* that Chinese people could find peacefulness in their life. The combination

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<sup>1</sup> Zhao Jiabi (writing as Xiaoyan, 小延) tr. Pearl S. Buck, “Dongfang, xifang yu xiaoshuo” (East and West and the Novel), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 5 (March 1933), p. 674.

of Romanticism and Realism in Chinese people's understanding of *mingyun* conveys again the unpredictability of life and, therefore, it demonstrated a "remarkable likeness to life" in traditional Chinese novels.

In the concluding paragraphs of the lecture, Buck clearly expressed her belief in the future development of the Chinese novel, stating that in due time there would be a Chinese novel which would incorporate writing techniques from the West but at the same time represent a wise and strong national character of its own.

When reading new Chinese novels one can easily find a lack of the sense of humour which was intrinsic in the life of ordinary people and was incorporated in old Chinese novels. The new novels, however, were bound up in the self-analysis which was learnt from either some Western literary schools or the Russian writers. A melancholic reflection could be easily identified while the interest in portraying human nature or human life that were deeply embedded in the old novels of China could be hardly felt. As such, for me, the new Chinese novels were quite not comparable to the old ones.<sup>1</sup>

Buck has examined the universal human traits reflected in the unique virtues of Chinese classic novels. She did not refer to either of them as the "other". Rather, she critically discussed both sides, recognizing their merits while pointing out the defects. Moreover, as an American novelist and critic, she identified some universal features in her rediscovery of Chinese classic novels which were believed by Western critics to be different and even confusing, as "other" usually implied. This detached and double critical cross-cultural analysis of pre-modern Chinese novels was significant in the way that it helped to de-essentialize Chinese culture to its Western readers. By translating this essay and introducing it through *Xiandai zazhi*, Zhao Jiabi seems to endorse it.

Zhao also touched upon the artistic features of Buck's Chinese novels in his short note attached to the translation of Buck's speech. He characterized Buck's Chinese novels as vividly portraying the ordinary Chinese people one sees every day. Also expressed in this note was Zhao's compliment that as an American writer she was able to present an authentic "Chinese flavour"<sup>2</sup> in her writing. From Zhao's point of view, Buck's big success was attributed to her living in China for more than thirty years and her interest in and knowledge of Chinese traditional literature, especially Chinese classical novels. Some further explanations of these two points were developed in his essay on Buck and *The God Earth* which was published later in *Xiandai zazhi*. This essay will be discussed in section 5.2.2.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 679.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

### 5.2.2. “Mrs Buck and Wang Lung”: Pearl S. Buck as a legitimate agent in cross-cultural writing

It was a typical method of *Xiandai zazhi* to introduce a non-Chinese writer in an introductory essay complemented by a translation of his/her original writing. In addition to the translation of Buck’s literary critique on Chinese and English pre-modern novels, as outlined in “East and West and the Novel”, Zhao Jiabi also contributed a critical essay entitled “Mrs Buck and Wang Lung” published in Issue 3:5 of *Xiandai zazhi*. He provided a brief introduction on how Buck was able to represent an authentic China and why Wang Lung, the protagonist of *The Good Earth*, was well-appreciated in the West. *The Good Earth* depicts the rise and fall of a family living in rural China before the First World War, and the protagonist, Wang Lung, was representative of ordinary Chinese.

At the very beginning of the essay Zhao traced Westerners’ writing about China back to the travelogue of Marco Polo in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. From that time on, Westerners developed an interest in reading and writing Chinese novels, but they tended to portray and imagine Chinese people as exotic and bizarre. It was against this Orientalist view that Zhao proposed Buck as quite different. While critical of some Westerners who wrote about China but merely built up “their silly writings on the basis of limited experience, wild imagination and a strong sense of nationalistic pride”<sup>1</sup>, Zhao attached great significance to Buck and her Chinese novels. Instead of pandering to Westerners by essentializing China and Chinese people from an orientalist perspective, Buck, who grew up in China and lived with ordinary Chinese people, was able to “touch a part of the real soul of Chinese”<sup>2</sup>.

There were different views among Chinese intellectuals on the legitimacy of Buck’s writing about China. Zhao’s affirmative attitude toward Buck’s authentic representation of China was different from the criticism of her from both the nationalist and the communist sides. The first critique to be mentioned here is the debate between Buck and Kiang Kang-hu (江亢虎, 1883-1954), professor of Chinese Studies at McGill University in Montreal, U.S. Kiang began with a typical nationalist’s view that as a non-Chinese writer, Pearl S. Buck could not write accurately about Chinese people. He then further argued that the main characters in Buck’s novels represent the most primitive lower class in China, and therefore, her writings were neither representative nor authentic in her writings about China. Buck replied by asserting that

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<sup>1</sup> Zhao Jiabi, “Boke furen yu Huanglong” (Mrs. Buck and Wang Lung), *Xiandai zazhi*, 3: 5 (September 1933), p. 639.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 640.

ordinary people like Wang Lung were the majority of Chinese population, and she chose to write of ordinary people rather than modern Chinese intellectuals to represent what she knew about China. Besides, if the majority of the Chinese population could not represent China, who else could?<sup>1</sup> Of much greater influence on Chinese reception of Buck was Lu Xun's negative criticism of the legitimacy of her representation of China. Lu Xun, a leading figure in Chinese Left-wing camp, believed that only Chinese people could find out the truth of China, and Buck, as a Western missionary, would merely be able to touch upon the superficial aspects of Chinese people and their lives.<sup>2</sup> As Qian Suoqiao has pointed out, the fact that Buck's portrait of China was attacked by both nationalist and communist intellectuals "shows that these two opposing ideological camps actually share the same functional presumptions of national salvation and nation-building."<sup>3</sup> Prof. Kiang, like many other modern intellectuals of China at that time, feeling inferior to the Westerners, wanted China to be represented to the West by its elite intellectuals rather than the lower-class common people. In other words, Kiang believed in an essentialist and elite way of nation-building of China through the old Confucian tradition. Lu Xun also resorted to a nationalist perspective in his attempts to promote national awakening through his fierce criticism of "Chinese national character" (in Chinese 国民性), which could be best exemplified in 阿 Q 正传 [*The True Story of Ah Q*]<sup>4</sup>. Zhao Jiabi, on the contrary, was affirmative on the legitimacy of Buck as a cross-cultural agent. In his critical essay "Mrs Buck and Wang Lung", he mentioned the criticism from Kiang kang-hu but validated Buck's legitimacy by saying that Wang Lung, carefully constructed and vividly portrayed, was one of the ordinary Chinese people who constituted the majority of Chinese population at that time.<sup>5</sup> Compared with the critique from a nationalistic perspective in 1930s in China, *Xiandai zazhi* not only showed great interest in Buck's works, but also recognized her as a legitimate cross-cultural agent in China.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on Kiang's critique and Buck's rebuttal, please refer to Qian Suoqiao, "Pearl S. Buck/赛珍珠 as Cosmopolitan Critic", in *Comparative American Studies*, Volume 3, Number 2, pp. 153-172; Paul A. Doyle, *Pearl S. Buck*, pp. 49-54.

<sup>2</sup> Lu Xun, *Lu Xun quanji* (Complete Works of Lu Xun), Vol. 12, pp. 272-273.

<sup>3</sup> Qian Suoqiao, "Pearl S. Buck/赛珍珠 as Cosmopolitan Critic", in *Comparative American Studies*, Volume 3, Number 2, p. 158.

<sup>4</sup> *The True Story of Ah Q*, first published in 1921, is a novella by Lu Xun, and is considered a masterpiece of modern Chinese literature. It depicts a peasant with little education who resorts to "spiritual victory", a strategy of self-deception when faced with defeat or humiliation. Although Lu Xun exposed the defects and weakness of "Chinese national characters" in his characterization of Ah Q, he also showed great sympathy for him.

<sup>5</sup> Zhao Jiabi, "Boke furen yu Huanglong" (Mrs Buck and Wang Lung), *Xiandai zazhi*, 3: 5 (September 1933), p. 647.

Zhao attributed the great success of Buck's Chinese novels to two factors: she spent more than 30 years of her life in China, and she had appreciated and learned from classic Chinese novels.<sup>1</sup> The first factor legitimated her representation of China by means of portraits of ordinary people, and the second helped her to develop an ability to write her novels in a Chinese artistic manner. Ever since babyhood, she lived with her missionary parents mostly in the Chinese countryside. The village men and women with whom she had spent her early life were developed into the protagonists of her Chinese novels. It has been pointed out by Qian Suoqiao that, from Buck's point of view, it is "the culture and life of ordinary people" rather than "the Confucian classical tradition" that represented "the true Chinese culture"<sup>2</sup>. Zhao Jiabi was affirmative to the role that Buck's life experiences among the ordinary Chinese people had played in her authentic representation of a true China, which neither mythologized China as an Orientalist world, nor depicted China as being modernized as professor Kiang Kang-hu had wished.

Buck's knowledge of Chinese classical novels was regarded as another essential reason for her legitimacy in representing the "real soul of Chinese". The folk tales that Buck knew from her Chinese nanny, who took care of her since her babyhood, and the Chinese classic novels she read exerted remarkable influence on her own writing. Having read classic Chinese novels extensively, Buck gradually acknowledged the differences between Chinese and English novels, as she discussed in the speech "East and West and the Novel". Zhao Jiabi pointed out that in addition to the anticlimactic plot development and the combination of Romanticism and Realism, simplicity in expression was also adopted by Buck in writing her Chinese novels. To write about ordinary Chinese people in a Chinese writing style, Zhao argued, was essential to the big success of *The Good Earth*. Peter Conn has also noticed this connection between Buck's reading of Chinese traditional novels and her writing style:

Her tendency to rely on formulas and stock phrases, her preference for narrative surface over psychological depth, her use of episodic plots, her desire to entertain, her naturalism---all these writing habits were influenced by her long immersion in texts

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<sup>1</sup> Zhao Jiabi focused more on the authentic Chinese flavor that made Buck's novels unique in the Chinese and American canon, but it should also be pointed out that Buck's writing also owes much to Western traditions, especially when she is writing in a pseudo-Biblical mode. In this sense, her writing style is also quintessentially English too. This is another perspective to see the cross-cultural and cosmopolitan feature of Buck's Chinese novels, but due to time limit, I cannot elaborate more on this perspective.

<sup>2</sup> Qian Suoqiao, "Pearl S. Buck/赛珍珠 as Cosmopolitan Critic", in *Comparative American Studies*, Volume 3, Number 2, p. 156.



such as *San Kuo (Three kingdoms)*, *Shui Hu Chuan*, and *His Yu Chi (Travels to the Western Regions)*.<sup>1</sup>

Conn has also pointed out that Buck's *All Men Are Brothers* was the first complete translation of *Shui Hu Zhuan* [Water Margin] into English, and that her novel *Sons* was written during her revising and completing the translation, and was clearly influenced by the Chinese classic novel.<sup>2</sup> Discussing the simplicity and slow-paced sentence structure of Buck's writing in *The Good Earth*, Doyle, author of another cultural biography of Buck, has also observed the influence of old Chinese sagas. He asserts that Buck's writing style "follows the simplicity of word choice of the Chinese saga rather than the more imaginative and exotic colouring of the Old and New Testaments." Buck herself has once explained that the style was influenced by a mixture of old Chinese sagas and the Bible. Having analysed the writing style of Buck, Zhao Jiabi was able to point out that "it was thought-provoking and ironical that when the new Chinese novelists were imitating the complicated and inverted syntax in Western style, Mrs Buck was, on the contrary, learning the simplicity and concreteness in Chinese old novels."<sup>3</sup> The irony that Zhao brought up here is similar to the one that I have identified in Chapter 3 when I argue that the Imagists from the West were looking for new models in Chinese traditional poetry while Chinese contemporaries were doing quite the opposite. Arguing for the legitimacy of Buck's cross-cultural writing of China, Zhao observed and analyzed on the influence of Chinese novels in his introduction of Pearl S. Buck. A tolerant attitude toward Chinese traditional literature and culture could thus again be found in the introduction of Pearl S. Buck in *Xiandai zazhi*, since Buck's success was partly attributed to her interest in and reading of Chinese traditional novels.

In the concluding part of his essay, Zhao analyzed the reason why *The Good Earth* was highly appreciated in modern Europe and America. First of all, he affirmed, in a calm and detached tone and that Wang Lung represented a typical Chinese "primitive man", 初民<sup>4</sup>. Both the English and Chinese terms were used by Zhao to describe the majority of ordinary Chinese people who believed in simplicity, lived a simple life, and held an innocent view of destiny. Zhao was fully aware of an Orientalist point of view in Western reception of Wang Lung when he observed that the "primitive man" fulfilled the expectations of Euro-American people who took China as an inferior nation. As Peter Conn argues, when *The Good Earth*

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Conn, *Pearl S. Buck: A Cultural Biography*, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> Zhao Jiabi, "Boke furen yu Huanglong" (Mrs. Buck and Wang Lung), *Xiandai zazhi*, 3: 5 (September 1933), p. 644.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

appeared, Orientalism still determined American assumptions about China.<sup>1</sup> What deserves more attention is that, in the following paragraphs, Zhao attributed a deeper reason for the popularity of *The Good Earth* in the West to a critique of Western modernity. The primitive life that Wang Lung lived was in stark contrast to the lives of modern Westerners, who were tired of being alienated in urban life and were longing for an escape from modernity:

In reading the literary world that Mrs Buck has built up (in *The Good Earth*), they (the Euro-American readers) don't have to worry about the collapse of mass production or the bankruptcy of modern cities, nor do they seek for the cures for the above-mentioned catastrophic crisis. They would grasp and never let go any peacefulness that they feel in their imagination (of the primitive life of Wang Lung).<sup>2</sup>

It is believed by Zhao that, as an American writer writing in English, Buck's authentic representation of China in her Chinese novels served as a cure for the overwhelming modernity in the West. A critique of Western modernity and the recognition of the role that Chinese culture could play as a cure for the ills of the Western world defined by Zhao's cosmopolitan perspective on the writings of Pearl S. Buck. In the previous decades, ever since the late Qing dynasty, Chinese intellectuals were always anxious about the Western gaze under which they were depicted as inferior and lagging-behind. *Xiandai zazhi*, in this case, no longer doubted itself when faced with the West, but passionately negotiated with it in confidence and equality. This face-to-face perspective from which Chinese culture could negotiate with the West with confidence rather than anxiety offered Chinese a valid approach to overcome the May Fourth dichotomy of East and West in which the former was set against the latter.

### ***5.2.3. "A Brief Autobiography of Mrs Pearl Buck": meeting of America and China in her dual identity***

Buck's cosmopolitan outlook was so appealing to *Xiandai zazhi* that a third essay on her was published in Issue 4:5 of the journal. It has to be pointed out that it was not common practice for *Xiandai zazhi* to include three or more essays concerning the same writer. As Chapter 2 indicates, it was much more common to translate one piece of writing with an introductory essay on the author in question attached. A third interview essay attached to an autobiography of Buck, added to the translation of Buck's literary theory in "East and West and the Novel" and the review essay on "Mrs Buck and Wang Lung", presented and repeatedly reminded its readers of Buck's cross-cultural writing practice and her dual identity.

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Conn, *Pearl S. Buck: A Cultural Biography*, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> Zhao Jiabi, "Boke furen yu Huanglong" (Mrs. Buck and Wang Lung), *Xiandai zazhi*, 3: 5 (September 1933), p. 648.

As the Chinese translator of *The Young Revolutionist*<sup>1</sup>, another Chinese novel by Buck, Zhang Boyu (章伯雨) paid a visit to Buck's house in Nanjing on November 28, 1933. On the basis of the conversation between them, Zhang was able to produce an interview essay with Buck. Zhang also translated a five-page brief autobiography of Buck published by John Day Company, which was the publisher for most of Buck's writings in the U.S. In this short autobiography Buck first accounted her early years living among ordinary Chinese people in rural China where her missionary parents worked. It was through the beautiful scenery of the mountain village where Buck grew up and the ordinary people who Buck lived with that "the beauty of this nation and the identity of Chinese become inseparable parts in me"<sup>2</sup>. Buck always believed that she bore great resemblance to the Chinese people because she had been living so close to them since she was very young, and sometimes she even felt that she could not know more about her own race than she knew about Chinese people.

Buck recognizes the role of both China and America in shaping her identity. "If America is my motherland and gave me her body, China is my fatherland and gave me his spirit and his mind. My heart they share."<sup>3</sup> Despite being a "white", Buck's American identity was never in question when she was living among the ordinary Chinese people. From both the perspectives of local Chinese people and herself, Buck was not seen as Other to Chinese people.

However, she had problems when she went to America to study in the college. One could hardly say that Buck lived an easy life at college. She recollected, "I could not understand what these girls were talking about. It felt like my life was as distant from theirs as from another planet"<sup>4</sup>. Buck returned to China after graduation from the college. It is worth mentioning that although Buck's mother regarded the U.S. as their home country, Buck used to refer to their house in China as her "home" and represent herself as Chinese. As she wrote in this short autobiography, "My biggest pleasure and greatest interest lies in the Chinese people. For I have grown up and lived among them, I am one of them." Qian Suoqiao also points out that "the fact that Buck lived all her life in China, not regarded as 'Other' but as

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<sup>1</sup> *The Young Revolutionist* was completed in 1931, almost at the same time when *Sons*, a sequel to *The Good Earth*, was finished. It depicts a young peasant who joins the Republican army as a firm nationalist. Then after a brutal battle in which all his comrades are killed, the young man falls into such despair that his belief in nationalism and patriotism has collapsed. At the end of the story, the young man decides to serve in a hospital where the injured are attended. For more details of this novel, please refer to Peter Conn, *Pearl S. Buck: A Cultural Biography*, pp. 140-141.

<sup>2</sup> Zhang Boyu, "Boke furen fangwenji" (An Interview with Mrs Buck), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 5 (March 1934), p. 896.

<sup>3</sup> Pearl S. Buck, "The New Patriotism", *The China Critic* 6, p. 1003.

<sup>4</sup> Zhang Boyu, "Boke furen fangwenji" (An Interview with Mrs Buck), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 5 (March 1934), p. 896.

'one' among the Chinese, proficient in both Chinese and English, was apparently very important to Buck's sense of self."<sup>1</sup> Since she did not view Chinese as the Other, nor was she viewed as Other in the eyes of those ordinary Chinese people, Buck tended to represent China as it was in her Chinese novels. She expressed in this autobiography that she did not like the works in which Chinese were portrayed as bizarre or peculiar, and she confessed that "my utmost wish, if I could, is to represent the Chinese people as authentically as they are in their real lives."<sup>2</sup> It was clear that she was believed to have fulfilled her goal in authentically representing a "true" China.

In this section I have discussed the three articles published in *Xiandai zazhi*, which was already quite a considerable number focusing on one single author for the journal. Seen through these articles, Pearl S. Buck, an American writer renowned for her transnational and cross-cultural writings about China, was interpreted as a cosmopolitan critic and novelist in *Xiandai zazhi*. Compared to the negative criticism of Buck by Chinese nationalists, *Xiandai zazhi* again demonstrated its attitude of cosmopolitanism which moved beyond the boundaries between Self and Other. I would like to quote Conn's appraisal of Buck as the ending of this section.

The East and the West meets in her and bring a mature realization of both differences and similarities, and this realization becomes a hallmark of her vision of life. She is the intermediary between two worlds and two cultures.<sup>3</sup>

### **5.3. Chinese Short Stories: Writing on the Other and yet Blurring the Boundary between Self and Other**

Chapter 2 focuses on the translation and introduction of world literature in *Xiandai zazhi*, which demonstrates a cultural attitude of being cosmopolitan and contemporaneous with the West. In this section I will study the cross-cultural writing practice of Chinese writers in *Xiandai zazhi*. If translation symbolized a confident subjectivity of Chinese to embrace the West, the cross-cultural writings about Westerners and Japanese by Chinese writers stepped even further. My main argument in this section is that through writing on the Other, the

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<sup>1</sup> Qian Suoqiao, "Pearl S. Buck/赛珍珠 as Cosmopolitan Critic", in *Comparative American Studies*, Volume 3, Number 2, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> Zhang Boyu, "Boke furen fangwenji" (An Interview with Mrs Buck), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 5 (March 1934), p. 897.

<sup>3</sup> Paul A. Doyle, *Pearl S. Buck*, p. 21.

“exotic” short stories published in *Xiandai zazhi* provided a cosmopolitan perspective that moved beyond the nationalistic distinction between Self and Other.

Before I go into much depth on these short stories, I will first briefly discuss the rewriting of Christian religious stories and anecdotes of western literary celebrities by Chinese authors. The authors of these rewritings were able to manipulate the original texts and incorporate their own interpretation of Western literature and culture. In contrast to a deep sense of failure and anxiety felt by Chinese intellectuals in late Qing dynasty, these writings demonstrated Chinese writers’ courage of gaze into the West. The first piece of writing to be mentioned is a Chinese rewriting of Bible stories Entitled “Xi’nai shan” [Mount Sinai]<sup>1</sup>. It was based on the Book of Exodus, according to which Mount Sinai is the place where the Ten Commandments were revealed to Moses. Although the main plot was adopted from the biblical story of Exodus, the seriousness of the religious text was deconstructed, as Moses in this short story confessed that he was making the Ten Commandments under the guise of God. It was the theme of leading people to fight for independence that was highlighted in this short story. “Jinguo” [Forbidden Fruit]<sup>2</sup> was derived from the Judeo-Christian story of Genesis. It probed into the philosophical question of the nature of love through the story of a man who tried every means to resist the temptation of love but failed at last, and was, in a way, an illusion to the seduction of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. “Bulusai’er de youyu” [Brussels Spleen]<sup>3</sup> was a short story developed on the basis of the life of Charles Baudelaire, who left Paris to go to Belgium in 1864 and stayed there until shortly before his death in 1867. The title was obviously an imitation of “Le Spleen de Paris”<sup>4</sup>, a collection of Baudelaire’s short prose poems which was published in 1869.

In addition to these rewritings based on some well-known Western stories, there were short stories created by Chinese writers set in a completely foreign context and/or depicting foreign characters. I have divided these transnational and cross-cultural writings into four categories: stories with exotic subject matter/Western short stories by Chinese writers, stories depicting the encounters of Chinese and Westerners in a colonial city, stories about Chinese people

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<sup>1</sup> Liu Yu, “Xi’nai shan” (Mount Sinai), *Xiandai zazhi*, 3:5 (September 1933), pp. 632–638.

<sup>2</sup> Xu Xu, “Jinguo” (Forbidden Fruit), *Xiandai zazhi*, 5: 3 (July 1934), pp. 514–524.

<sup>3</sup> Lin Huiyin, “Bulusai’er de youyu” (Brussels Spleen), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4:1 (November 1933), pp. 209–215.

<sup>4</sup> Neither the writer nor the editor gave any explanation on the title. Besides the *Le Spleen de Paris*, a short poem entitled “Brussels Spleen” could also be found in the writing fragments of Baudelaire’s late years in Belgium. See Richard Sieburth tr. Charles Baudelaire, “Brussels Spleen”, in *Harper’s Magazine*, August 2014 issue, pp. 18-19. Web link: <http://harpers.org/archive/2014/08/brussels-spleen/>.

living in Western cities, and writings about Japanese people during the Chinese War of Resistance against Japan. Each of these four categories will be studied in the following sections.

### 5.3.1. “Western short stories”: *Ba Jin and his short stories*

By “Western short stories” I mean the short stories that are set in the West and depicting western characters. Because of their “exotic” style and flavour in every aspect, when reading these short stories one would feel as if one was reading the translations of Western literature. “Zui yu fa” [Crime and Punishment] and “Dianyi” [Electric Chair] were two “Western short stories” written by Ba Jin and published in *Xiandai zazhi*. Both of them were later included in a collection of short stories entitled *Dianyi* [Electric Chair], which was published in 1933. The most distinctive feature of these two short stories, and the whole collection at large, was a completely foreign context against which the plots were established and the foreign protagonists were portrayed.

Although Ba Jin did not declare its allusion to Dostoyevsky’s well-known novel of the same title, his short story “Crime and Punishment” clearly shared the similar plot (jewellery stealing, murder and trial) and probed into the same themes of justice, faith and salvation. Dostoyevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* was well known for its exploration of the possible conflicts between morality and a radical belief in justice. Ba Jin expressed a similar thought in the note attached to the short story, that it hoped to provide a reflection on “the complexity of the criminal world and the function of law”<sup>1</sup>. The universal values of justice and the spirit of law were the central theme of this short story, and it also touched upon love and support that are shared by all human beings.

As the two words in its title suggest, the short story, “Crime and Punishment”, tells a tragic story of a suspect who was charged for murder and finally found guilty in Paris in 1929. In the note attached to this short story, Ba Jin said the story was based on a miserable murder trial that actually happened when he was living in Paris. According to the brief account of this criminal case given at the beginning, a jeweller named Charlie has been charged with murdering John<sup>2</sup>, a jewellery broker who has been doing business with him for a long time. It does not seem to be a complicated criminal case, and the readers of this short story are

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<sup>1</sup> Ba Jin, The note in “Zui yu fa” (Crime and Punishment), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 5 (September 1932), p. 672.

<sup>2</sup> In the original text they are named 查理 and 约翰, both of which are conventional translations of English names: Charlie and John.

persuaded of the crime Charlie has committed and the punishment he will receive. However, a multiple-perspective narrative is applied in revealing the truth of the murder, which will gradually provoke disbelief in the charge. During the trial, Charlie's wife and his sister-in-law as well as other witnesses involved are all summoned to court successively to retell what they experienced when the murder took place. However, out of their love for each other, some of their statements turn out to be contradictory. With the trial going on, their touching statements and dignified behaviour make the spectators in court increasingly sympathetic to Charlie and his family and John's parents as well. As a reader of this short story, one will feel that Charlie was not necessarily the murderer. Without giving a definite answer to the doubt from both the spectators in Paris and the readers, the story ends in tragedy: Charlie's wife kills herself in court right after the death sentence of her husband is announced and Charlie's sister-in-law is faced with a related charge. Considering the statement given at the beginning of the story, as the murderer, Charlie is finally given the death sentence. However, the readers will not feel reassured and will keep thinking of the significance of law and beyond.

The story of "Electric Chair" is set in 1927 in Massachusetts, U. S.A. Justice, as a consistent theme in the collection entitled *Electric Chair*, was examined again in this short story. Unlike "Crime and Punishment", it is declared at the very beginning by the author that the two Italians accused of murder are completely innocent. However, they have been sentenced to death and will be sent to the electric chair in due time. The story focuses on one of these two Italians who has first been enraged by this unfair verdict by the judge, but comforted by his younger sister's farewell visit, he finally chooses to forgive his executioners. At the end of the story, the theme of justice is pointed out by a journalist who says that law-based justice had been replaced by class-based justice, for this unfair trial was manipulated by the privileged class in America.

Central to the short story are a telegram and a letter, through which a consciousness of being multi-national and cross-cultural can be identified. When the protagonist was expecting his sister's farewell visit, he receives a telegram from his French friends, saying "your sister will be boarding tonight, and there should be enough time for her to hug you and kiss you for us"<sup>1</sup>. The telegram was obviously a great reassurance to him. On the day of his execution he receives a letter from a retired soldier in Africa, who declares that he is willing to die in the place of the innocent Italian worker. It could be argued that both the telegram and the letter play a part in his final forgiveness to all those who were involved in the unfair trial.

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<sup>1</sup> Ba Jin, "Dianyi" (Electric Chair), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 1 (November 1932), p. 50.

In addition to the exotic subject matter, the transnational and cross-cultural connections add a cosmopolitan feature to this short story. I am not arguing that the multi-national background of the characters constitutes the cosmopolitan feature. Rather, with the connections between people in America, Italy, France and Africa, the nationalistic line between self and other was becoming blurred. It is the assumption that people from different nations and cultures could understand one another that I take as the cultural attitude of cosmopolitanism. In this “Western short story” by Ba Jin, it is through writing the “exotic” other that the cultural attitude of cosmopolitanism is presented.

However, the “Western short stories” by Ba Jin were received with negative criticism in the 1930s. In Issue 1: 5 of *Xiandai zazhi* there appeared a review essay on Ba Jin’s book *Fuchou* [Revenge], published in 1931. It was a collection of 14 short stories with the same foreign flavour as *Electric Chair*. The anonymous reviewer complained that in the short stories collected in *Revenge*, almost all the short stories depict Europeans characters and are set in Europe.<sup>1</sup> He summarized these foreign features as “Cosmopolitanism” (this word is in English in the original text) and also pointed out that it was the first time that cosmopolitanism was applied in the subject matter of short stories in Chinese literature.<sup>2</sup> This feature of cosmopolitanism, however, was criticised by the reviewer for being irrelevant to Chinese people and society. He argued that many of the “common human sorrows” represented in Ba Jin’s short stories happened to be “the ones that Chinese people would never have”.<sup>3</sup> A clear distinction between Western Other and Chinese self was drawn here, especially when he indicated that some of the sorrows depicted in *Fuchou* were “sublime spiritual sufferings”<sup>4</sup> which were beyond the understanding of ordinary Chinese people, for example, the old man who has been tortured by his memory of his love story. Although the reviewer did not clearly state what Chinese sorrows precisely were, he implied that Ba Jin did not draw his material from real life and inevitably his writings on distant foreign people were irrelevant to the domestic situation of China.

Considering the nationalistic criticism of Buck that has been discussed in Section 5.2, one can easily identify the problematic nature of modern Chinese nationalism. Seen from a nationalistic perspective, Buck’s legitimacy in cross-cultural writing practice was questioned because ordinary people like Wang Lung were considered too primitive to represent modern

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<sup>1</sup> “Fuchou” (A Book Review Essay on *Revenge*), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 5 (September 1932), p. 728.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 729.



China; Ba Jin was also perceived to have failed to touch upon the true soul of Chinese people, since the sorrows of foreigners, such as the loss of loved ones or the sufferings of an old musician could not be perceived by ordinary Chinese people. The claim to be patriotic to China and the objection to representing China through ordinary Chinese people led to a dilemma for modern Chinese nationalistic intellectuals. Qian Suoqiao has pointed out how this dilemma led to the sense of inferiority in modern China. On the one hand, “in the name of the nation, modern Chinese intellectuals posit themselves as agents of change and harbingers of progress.”<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, they were too preoccupied with Western modernity to realize true Chinese culture that was represented in ordinary Chinese people. In a word, modern Chinese intellectuals were eager to represent a modern China in facing the West while hesitant to recognize the virtues in ordinary Chinese people. There was a part of China that they were ashamed of and this is the cause of the weakness of their Chinese subjectivity.

It takes an attitude of cosmopolitanism to overcome the problematic nature of Chinese nationalism in which self and other are placed in binary opposition.

Ba Jin later clearly articulated his cultural attitude of cosmopolitanism in his “Western short stories”. Since the book reviews in *Xiandai zazhi* were anonymous, Ba Jin mistakenly considered that it was Shi Zhecun, the editor of *Xiandai zazhi*, who produced the critical review. He then wrote a letter to Shi to respond to the review of *Fuchou* and provided his own understanding of literature. He argued against the critic’s nationalistic view by highlighting his relatedness to the common themes of world literature.

I have clearly stated that all human beings are in pursuit of the same things---youth, life, freedom, love --- for themselves and also for others. The sorrows at losing all of these are shared by all mankind.<sup>2</sup>

Appearing together with the letter which was published in Issue 1: 6 entitled “The Author’s Self-reflection” was a short note by Shi Zhecun, who explained the book review was not produced by him and, more importantly, provided his own appreciation of Ba Jin. Shi believed that the “Self-reflection” by Ba Jin was extremely helpful for the readers to have a better understanding of Ba Jin himself as well as his works. One month later, “Electric Chair” by Ba Jin was published in Issue 2: 1 (October 1932) in *Xiandai zazhi*, which served as an

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<sup>1</sup> Qian Suoqiao, “Pearl S. Buck/赛珍珠 as Cosmopolitan Critic”, in *Comparative American Studies*, Volume 3, Number 2, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Ba Jin, “Zuozhe de zipou” (A Self-analysis from the Author), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 6 (October 1932), pp. 863–864.

example of Shi Zhecun's affirmation of the cosmopolitan features in Ba Jin's "Western short stories".

### 5.3.2. *An encounter in the colonial city of Harbin: Jin Yi and his short stories*

Jin Yi was another author who developed an interest in portraying non-Chinese in his short stories. Jin was born in 1905 in Tianjin, China. His grandfather was doing business in Shenyang, a city located in the Northeast of China, so he was brought to Shenyang at the age of three and stayed there until he had to return to Tianjin at twelve. According to Zhang Jiesi (章洁思), daughter of Jin Yi, the cold yet magnificent northern China helped to shape Jin Yi's life and identity.<sup>1</sup> From 1932 to 1933 Jin Yi went back to Harbin to see his grandfather and decided to give up the promising job in a bank to work as a writer instead. According to Zhang's account, it is based on his stay in Harbin during this period that Jin Yi produced the short stories collected in *Sacred Model*<sup>2</sup>, of which two appeared in *Xiandai zazhi*: "Ni" (Drowning), and "Shengxing" (Sacred Models). Both stories involve relations between Chinese and Russians in the early 1930s in Harbin, a semi-colonial city in the Northeast of China.

In a book review published in Issue 4:6 of *Xiandai zazhi*, Wang Shuming pointed out the distinctive features of Jin Yi's works, as shown in Jin's collection of short stories, *Shengxing* [Sacred Model]. "Mr. Jin Yi is a new talent in the world of letters. This is not only because his name is new to us, but also because he has an original writing style." Wang pointed out that Jin Yi was a new name and new talent, and that his works reminded people of Ba Jin's writing. He then associated Jin's style with that of Ba Jin by saying that "a reading of Jin Yi naturally reminds me of Ba Jin."<sup>3</sup>

Although similar in writing style, differences in their writing could be easily identified. Ba Jin wrote completely "Western short stories" with Western characters and Western settings while Jin Yi focused more on the encounter of Chinese and foreigners in the colonial city of Harbin. Although not well recognized as a modern Chinese writer, Jin Yi developed his own characteristic writing style on the encounter of Chinese and foreigners. Wang Shuming has also pointed out Jin Yi's preference for portraying people in colonial cities. "Most of his

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<sup>1</sup> Zhang Jiesi, *Quzhong ren weisan: Jin Yi* (Curtain Falls but People Stay: Jin Yi), pp. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Wang Shuming, "Shengxing" (A Book Review Essay on *Sacred Models*), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 6 (April 1934), p. 1070. It is worth noting that the exotic flavour in Ba Jin's *Revenge* and *Electric Chair* was echoed in Jin Yi's short stories. Ba Jin and Jin Yi co-edited *Shouhuo* (Harvest), a leading bimonthly literary journal in July 1957 in Shanghai.

works featured foreign themes. Ninety percent of his heroes or heroines are not Chinese but foreign sojourners in colonial cities.”<sup>1</sup> Wang Shuming used the term “colonial cities” to summarize the feature of the geographical setting of Jin Yi’s short stories. It should be pointed out Wang did not refer to “colonial city” in its strict sense because the city of Harbin had never been formally colonized. Considering presence of the Russian and Japanese powers in the early decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Wang used the term to highlight the foreign presence and cultural encounters in the city of Harbin.

The historical and social background of Harbin as a semi-colonial city made it a suitable backdrop for the fictional encounter of Chinese and foreigners. “Semi-colonialism” was a term used by Shi Shumei to “describe the specific effects of multiple imperialist presences in China and their fragmentary colonial geography (largely confined to coastal cities) and control, as well as the resulting social and cultural formations.”<sup>2</sup> Although Harbin was not formally colonized in early decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century, European and Japanese presence were definitely typical elements of the city. Located in the Northeast of China, Harbin endured the power dynamics of Russia, Japan and western European nations.<sup>3</sup> Like Shanghai, Harbin was also contested in the issues of imperialist invasion, national survival and cosmopolitan attitude. It had a large Russian presence which encouraged Russian style, in architecture, fashion etc. The trans-cultural nature of Harbin was summarized as follows.

Many contributors focus on the city of Harbin as an example of the massive presence and density of transcultural processes in urban life. Indeed, the city of Harbin reflects locally what Northeast China experienced on a regional level: the imperial struggle and its consequences for the various ethnic groups. The CER and the SMR met in Harbin, whose sizable multinational population then grew even larger. Harbin became a city of various cultural encounters and, in the course of globalization, a city of transcultural processes.<sup>4</sup>

With the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) and South Manchurian Railway (SMR), “Harbin became Russia’s semi-colonial outpost with a flourishing urban space and a

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Shih Shumei, *The Lure of Modern: Writing Modernism in Semi-colonial China, 1917-1937*, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> The Northeast China is often referred to as “Manchuria”, a term widely used outside of China. Victor Zatsopine and Victoir Laura have outlined the power dynamics of Russia, Japan and other European nations in this area. Briefly speaking, Russia’s colonial claim of the northeastern part of China can be dated back to 1960. It lost South Manchuria to Japanese influence after its defeat in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905. From 1905 Japan occupied South Manchuria, and in 1931, the rest of Manchuria, establishing the puppet state of Manchukuo. During Japanese occupation of Manchuria, French business were eager to invest there. For more information please see “Introduction” in Victoir, Laura and Zatsopine, Victor. eds. *Harbin to Hanoi: The Colonial Built Environment in Asia, 1840-1940*, pp. 1-15.

<sup>4</sup> Dan Ben-Canaan, Frank Gruner, and Ines Prodohl eds. *Entangled Histories: The Transcultural Past of Northeast China*, p. 8.

sizeable Russian population.”<sup>1</sup> Michael Barry Miller has pointed out that it was roughly estimated by French naval intelligence in 1936 that the Russian population in the Harbin colony alone in 1932 had numbered at least one hundred thousand and the number was still increasing.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, there was no wonder that Jin Yi’s short stories depicted the encounters of Chinese and Russians. Jin Yi’s familiarity with the area provided suitable material for his stories of cosmopolitan encounters.

“Ni” (Drowning) is mainly a love story of two Russians, 彼得 (Pyotr) and 琴娜 (Zhanna)<sup>3</sup>, who were once lovers but parted later, never to meet again. The story is narrated in first person. It starts with a piece of news that more than 30 people have been drowned after the collapse of overcrowded pier. Among these victims the first-person narrator recognized Pyotr, a beggar living on his balalaika performance on the street. During his previous stay in Harbin, the first person narrator happens to see him play and sing in the street. Impressed by his performance, the narrator introduces himself to Pyotr and they get to know each other. Five days later, they meet again in a Russian-run pub named “Caucasus”. A little drunk, Pyotr tells the story of his romance with Zhanna. Thirty years ago, the young couple, Pyotr and Zhanna, eloped because Pyotr’s father, a wealthy and noble man, would not allow his son to marry a poor and disreputable woman. They ran away to another city and stayed there until they ran out of money. One day Pyotr went back home, only to find the note left by Zhanna who confessed that she could not live a poor life. Shocked and sad, Pyotr chose to become a poor wanderer living on his playing and singing. The title of this short story, “Drowning” alludes to the life story of Pyotr who had formed a habit of drowning his sorrows in alcohol, and ended his life in a drowning accident. The story ended up with the description of the epitaph of Pyotr, which was believed to be set up by Zhanna, with an inscription: “He was a loyal lover, only he know love, sacrifice and the sorrows therein.”<sup>4</sup>

It is indicated in the short story that it is because of the shared feelings of love and sorrow that Pyotr and the narrator became friends. The narrator of the story is a Chinese young man who travels to this “faraway and exotic city”<sup>5</sup> in hopes of forgetting his beloved woman. The sadness in love was felt both in the narrator and Pyotr. As a Russian living in a Chinese city

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<sup>1</sup> Laura Victoir and Victor Zatspine eds. *Harbin to Hanoi: The Colonial Built Environment in Asia, 1840-1940*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Barry Miller, *Shanghai on the M'aro: Spies, Intrigue, and the French between the Wars*, p. 140.

<sup>3</sup> Their names in Chinese were 彼得 and 琴娜. Since they are depicted as Russians in the short story, their names are likely to be Pyotr and Zhanna.

<sup>4</sup> Jin Yi, “Ni” (Drowning), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 6 (October 1932), p. 751.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 745.

of Harbin, Pyotr is not taken as “other”, nor did the Chinese identity of the narrator hinder a mutual understanding between them.

The “Sacred Model” tells an encounter of a Chinese man and a Russian woman, still in the colonial city of Harbin. One autumn night, the first person narrator offers lodgings to a drunk Jewish woman who he finds lying close to his front door. Thinking that she might have nowhere to go, he invites her to stay in his home for some time. In return, she promises to help him with some housework. After getting to know each other, they realize that they have shared similar experiences and sorrows in their past love stories. The Russian woman was abandoned by her husband while the narrator was still in love with the woman who had been married to someone else. The similar loss and sorrows in their past love stories helped the narrator to understand the Russian woman better. It is not a romantic love story. Again, it depicts the shared feelings and mutual understandings.

The cosmopolitan reality of Harbin made Chinese-Western encounter possible. The city is exotic and far-away from inland China, yet plausible as a fictional backdrop. It would be natural in Harbin that a Chinese man would make friends with a Russian sojourner and offer lodging to a Jewish woman. Harbin is a city where the pub would be called “Caucasus”<sup>1</sup> and a German edition of “A Selection of Modern Poems from England and America”<sup>2</sup> would be accessible to ordinary people. Moreover, in both “Drowning” and “Sacred Model”, encounters between different national and cultural identities were never perceived as a problem. None of them was understood as “other”. Rather, they shared similar feelings and mutually understood each other. As pointed out by Ben-Canaan, Gruner, and Prodohl, in the 1929 entry “Charbin” in the famous German encyclopedia *Brockhaus*, Harbin was characterized as “peculiar” because eastern European and Asian characteristics stood side by side and intertwined with one another.<sup>3</sup>

It is especially interesting to note that the problem of language was totally ignored in these two short stories. In the encounters between Chinese and Russians portrayed by Jin Yi, it was not stated which language was used in their communication. The language barrier, which could most possibly set up a distinction between self and other, was left behind. Moreover, the decline of Western imperialism was shown in Jin Yi’s short stories in the way that the Russian people narrated in his works were in need of help from Chinese people. In both of the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Jin Yi, “Shengxing” (Sacred Model), *Xiandai zazhi*, 3: 4 (August 1933), p. 480.

<sup>3</sup> Dan Ben-Canaan, Frank Gruner, and Ines Prodohl eds. *Entangled Histories: The Transcultural Past of Northeast China*, p. 9.

short stories by Jin Yi, the first person narrator was a young Chinese man, and it is a Chinese man who offered help to both the street singer and the divorced woman, both of whom were Russian sojourners in the Chinese city of Harbin. The sense of inferiority of Chinese people which had existed since the Late Qing dynasty was thus displaced by confidence and a ready-to-help consciousness.

### 5.3.3. *Chinese people living in Western cities: China imagined as a dream place*

As the title “Sai’na hepan” [On the Bank of the Seine]<sup>1</sup> suggests, this short story was set in a totally “exotic” location: Paris. The first person narrator is a young Chinese man who is in his twenties but has been living in France for about six years. This short story depicts his experience in Paris working in an enamel factory beside the River Seine. Ever since the early years of 20<sup>th</sup> century when Chinese new literature emerged and developed, there have been literary works on the theme of Chinese people living in the West, for example, “Sinking” (Chelun, 沉沦, published in 1921) by Yu Dafu. What makes “On the Bank of the Seine” stand out is that the Chinese narrator was attractive to a French woman and China was even imagined as a distant, heavenly dreamland by the woman in this short story.

The Chinese narrator has attracted the attention of the female protagonist Mary from the first day he starts to work in the enamel factory on the bank of the Seine. Having known each other for some time, the narrator and Mary become very good friends. Mary develops an interest in China and regards China as her Dream Land, because, as the narrator of this short story explained, “she believed that China, this far-way nation, must be totally different from France. In her eyes, France is hell while China is like Utopia.”<sup>2</sup> In the 1930s China was an under-developed nation, striving for modernity through learning from the West. However, in this story, China was regarded as a prosperous and fascinating place by a French woman. In this mirror perspective, the boundary of a superior other and an inferior self was overturned, even though Mary’s China was imaginary.

The significance of this short story will be better demonstrated by comparison with other works on Chinese people living in the West. I would like to cite *Mr Ma and Son* (二马, 1929) by Lao She (老舍, 1899-1966) to see how racial prejudice toward Chinese was dominant in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in England and also other parts of Europe. *Mr Ma and Son* was written

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<sup>1</sup> Wang Xuemei. “Sai’na hepan” (On the Bank of the Seine). *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 1 (November 1933), pp. 185-197.

<sup>2</sup> Wang Xuemei, “Saina hepan” (On the Bank of the Seine), *Xiandai zazhi*, 4: 1 (November 1933), p. 189.

during Lao She's stay in London (1924-1929), teaching Chinese in the School of Oriental Studies. According to Julia Lovell's introduction to this novel, "Mr Ma and Son - his third novel, completed in 1929- was probably the first Chinese novel to confront directly British racism towards China."<sup>1</sup> The novel dramatizes anti-Chinese prejudice and racism that Mr Ma and his son, Ma Wei, meet in their settlement in London in the late 1920s. During their stay in London, they were living with their landlady, Mrs Wedderburn. Mr Ma falls in love with Mrs Wedderburn and his son is infatuated with Mary, daughter of Mrs Wedderburn. However, because of distrust of China and racial prejudice toward Chinese people, Mr Ma and his son are not accepted by the English mother and daughter.

"On the Bank of the Seine" turns out to be quite different. It excels in portraying a young man admired and respected in a French factory and the French women protagonist who imagined China as a faraway but utopian nation. Although it was more an imagination of Western people embracing Chinese than a depiction of social reality, it is a cosmopolitan perspective that sees people beyond the national and ethnographic boundary.

#### **5.3.4. Writing about Japanese people during the Chinese War of Resistance against Japan**

It has been mentioned in the introductory chapter that *Xiandai zazhi* was founded after the Shanghai Incident in 1932<sup>2</sup>, one of the opening military invasions of the full-scale Chinese War of Resistance against Japan in 1937. After this battle, writings on the War of Resistance against Japan began to emerge in *Xiandai zazhi*, such as *Zhuiji huoxianxia sanshiwu xiaoshi de shenghuo* (A record of 35 hours on the front line)<sup>3</sup>, which depicted the widespread human suffering of ordinary Chinese people when faced with War. However, what I am going to discuss in this section are the short stories written by Chinese writers while depicting the sufferings of ordinary Japanese when faced with War.

"Zhuanxing qi" (转型期 Transforming Period)<sup>4</sup> depicts a Japanese family who live in Tianjin, a Northern Chinese city, and a change in their views of the War. This piece of writing was finished on September 19, 1932, which was exactly one year after the Manchurian Incident<sup>5</sup> on September 18, 1931. Considering the fact that the Manchurian Incident marked

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<sup>1</sup> Julia Lovell, "Introduction", in William Dolby tr. Lao She, *Mr Ma and Son*, unpaginated.

<sup>2</sup> For more details of Shanghai Incident in 1932, please refer back to the introductory chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Ke Shi, "Zhuiji huoxianxia sanshiwu xiaoshi de shenghuo" (A Record of 35 Hours on the Front Line), *Xiandai zazhi*, 1: 6 (October 1932), pp. 829-840.

<sup>4</sup> Jin Ding, "Zhuanxing qi" (Time for a Change), *Xiandai zazhi*, 2: 5 (March 1933), pp. 709-721.

<sup>5</sup> Manchurian Incident, also known as September 18 Incident in China, marked the invasion of China by Japanese military troops in the Northeast of China.

the Japanese invasion of Northeast China, it might be expected that a strong sense of nationalism would have been represented. However, instead, sympathy for ordinary Japanese people was expressed in the work.

At the beginning of the story, the father has a strong hatred of Chinese people because he believes that, as a result of his being Japanese, he has been unfairly treated in by Chinese people in business. The son was recruited into the Japanese Army, and then wounded. He is now living with his father and sister in Tianjin, reflecting on the evils of the war. The mother and her younger daughter return to Japan, but are unable to make ends meet there. The elder daughter, who stays in Tianjin, changes her understanding of the war through her relationship with a young Chinese man in Tianjin who is learning Japanese from her. Following the family's repeated sufferings, the story ends with the father's realization that the war is cruel and destructive to both the Chinese and Japanese peoples.

Obviously, what underlines the short story is the anti-war theme, but it goes beyond national boundaries because Chinese and Japanese suffered from the war, both in China and Japan. This sympathetic attitude toward Japanese people could also be found in "Duizhang" (队长, Captain)<sup>1</sup>, a short story by Liu Fei. The Japanese army captain is at first brave, patriotic, and extremely loyal to the Japanese Emperor, but eventually decides to quit from the army because he can not bear any more killing. He is then court-martialled for desertion. The direct cause of this sudden change is that in the deserted end of a small town the captain and his soldiers find an old Chinese woman praying with her granddaughter for those who has started the war and kept killing in the war.

Almighty God, I beg you to punish me but forgive these enemies. They have forgotten you, but you will surely remind them of you. God, I wish you could clean all their contamination with your blood.<sup>2</sup>

In the next morning, the captain confesses that he has been possessed by a demon for ten years and it is the old women he met on the previous night has exorcized the demon. It is clear that the demon denotes the war. The demon of war has haunted another soldier who "hates the war but does not dare to react, nor could he rescue himself from the war"<sup>3</sup>. He commits suicide after one of the battles. The captain, This story shows that through a trans-national belief in the "Almighty God" the evils of War can be cleansed.

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<sup>1</sup> Liu Fei, "Duizhang" (Captain), *Xiandai zazhi*, 3: 4 (August 1933), pp. 536-541.

<sup>2</sup> Liu Fei, "Duizhang" (Captain), *Xiandai zazhi*, 3: 4 (August 1933), p. 540.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 538.



Liu Fei has another short story that depicts the Chinese War of Resistance against Japan from the perspective of ordinary Japanese people. It is entitled “Zufu de shuohuang” (祖父的说谎 A Lie of Grandfather)<sup>1</sup> in which the “lie” refers to the commitment of a grandfather to the nation: “it is sweet and honourable to die for ones country”<sup>2</sup>. The grandson in the story is recruited into Japanese army and immediately sent to the battle line. Severely wounded in the battle, he sends a letter to his father and wife, confessing that

I don't love the Emperor of Japan.

Nor do I love killing.

The black badge has been thrown away in the mud.<sup>3</sup>

The black badge is awarded to his grandfather for his contribution to the nation. It is the military medal and is also the symbol of national fervour for war, which was thrown away by the grandson. Faced with Japanese aggression, Chinese intellectuals differentiated two kinds of Japanese, the Japanese imperialists and Japanese ordinary people. The first group was the military and civil officers who stood for the imperialist drive to invade China. The Head of the Civilian Society of Japanese Settlers and the officer of the Japanese Consulate depicted in “Zhuanxing qi” were considered imperialist and therefore depicted as hypocritical and dishonest. The ordinary Japanese people, on the contrary, were believed to be in the same line with Chinese to fight against Japanese imperialism. Such trans-national and cross-culture narrative effectively blurred the boundary between the Chinese and Japanese as national entities.

#### 5.4. Conclusion

To summarize my main argument in this chapter, engaging in the discussion of the translation and introduction of Pearl S. Buck and Chinese writings on the West and Japan, I have argued that these trans-national and cross-cultural writings about the Other move beyond the nationalistic opposition between Self and Other. I have argued in Section 5.2 that although Buck received some negative criticism from both Chinese Nationalist and Communist camps in 1930s, she was translated and introduced as a cosmopolitan critic and novelist in *Xiandai*

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<sup>1</sup> Liu Fei, “Zufu de shuohuang” (A Lie of Grandfather). *Xiandai zazhi*, 6: 1 (November 1934), pp. 273–277.

<sup>2</sup> Liu Fei, “Zufu de shuohuang” (A Lie of Grandfather), *Xiandai zazhi*, 6: 1 (November 1934), p. 276.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277.

*zazhi*. I have also identified a writing practice of cosmopolitanism in the four categories of short stories: Ba Jin's short stories with a distinctive "exotic" subject matter, Jin Yi's writing about the encounter of Chinese and Russian in the colonial city of Harbin, the works depicting Chinese living in Western cities and the short stories on Japanese people written in the period of the Chinese war of resistance against Japan. These writings on the Other presented a transformative subjectivity in understanding China-West and China-Japan relations. By "transformative" I mean this alternative Chinese subjectivity in early 1930s in China was not resorting to Chinese nationalism only, but embracing a broader sense of universality and mutual understanding.

An all-embracing and yet dual critical attitude toward cosmopolitanism can be identified in these writings, and a cosmopolitan cultural attitude was one of the most distinguished features of *Xiandai zazhi*. I have argued in Chapter Two that the translating and editing practices of *Xiandai zazhi* demonstrated an all-embracing cultural attitude featuring cosmopolitanism and contemporaneity. Chapter Five echoes the Chapter Two and yet focuses on the novel and short stories as cross-cultural writing practices to overcome the "East (China) and West" opposition constructed from a nationalist perspective.

The translation and introduction of Pearl S. Buck and the publication of the "exotic" short stories written by Chinese authors were due to the journal's curiosity to look at Westerners looking at China, and, at the same time, to look back at or imagine Westerners. This constant gaze over Self and Other was a feature of cosmopolitanism in Chinese modernity. Although the discourse of cosmopolitanism often involves a critique of nationalism, they did not exclude each other in Chinese modernity. As I have pointed out in Section 5.1 of this Chapter, the concept of Other claims a prerequisite Self in order to formulate the mirror representation of each other. The Self/Other distinction is therefore indeterminate and transformative, and accordingly they represented two basic discourses of Chinese modernity. Situated in the historical context of early modern China, the distinction between self and other along the line of nationalism was awakened by western imperialist encroachment in China. Qian Suqiao has pointed out that in early modern China the nationalistic response to Chinese modernity arises from the intellectuals' desperate desire to save China from the overwhelming power of the Western modernity.<sup>1</sup> It was the case, however, that the majority of modern Chinese intellectuals had to adopt Western learning in order to fulfil the socio-political goal of nation building of China. Cosmopolitanism, therefore, became an integral element in the

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<sup>1</sup> Qian Suoqiao, *Liberal Cosmopolitanism: Lin Yutang and Middling Chinese Modernity*, p. 38.

construction of Chinese modernity. As Qian put it, “the combination of cosmopolitan discourses of Enlightenment with nationalist narratives”<sup>1</sup> was the defining feature of Chinese modernity.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 50.

## Conclusion

This thesis has provided a textual analysis of *Xiandai zazhi* in the historical context of early 1930s China in terms of its literary and cultural practices which were alternative to the dominant discourses of nationalism and the Chinese Left-wing paradigm. Engaging in the issues of cosmopolitanism, Chinese tradition, liberal attitude and modern Chinese identity, my empirical findings are chapter specific and summarized as follows. In Chapter Two I have identified a cosmopolitan view featuring contemporaneity and all-inclusiveness. This observation has touched upon the temporal and historical dimension of Chinese modernity which was no longer striving for a closer distance to the West, but standing out and proclaiming its contemporaneity with the West. In Chapter Three I have examined how the Chinese traditional literature was forced to be silent in the translation of Western Imagist poetry but implicitly transformed in modern Chinese poems published in *Xiandai zazhi*. In Chapter Four I shift my focus to the debate on the “Third Category Men” and argue that to be “Third” suggested an attempt to go beyond the class-based stratification of people and literature. In Chapter Five I have studied the trans-national and cross-cultural writing practice of Pearl S. Buck and also some Chinese writers as a way to overcome the ethnographic and national boundary of self and Other. A cosmopolitan attitude involves not only the effort in translating and introducing the latest world literature and culture into Chinese, but also the recognition of a modern identity that goes beyond the distinction between Chinese and the Westerners/Japanese.

It has to be made clear that the cosmopolitanism as revealed in the literary and cultural practices of *Xiandai zazhi* turned out to be limited. When Shi Zhecun was interviewed by a Singapore writer in 1992, he explained the political stand of *Xiandai zazhi* and of himself. As Shi recalled, *Xiandai zazhi* had a very liberal view of literature. The journal accepted works from the Left-wingers, but it did not accept works by writers from the Nationalist Party.<sup>1</sup> Armed with this archival finding, the revisionist critics may argue that *Xiandai zazhi* was Left-leaning, which is a misinterpretation of the alternative voice of *Xiandai zazhi*. I would argue that its limited cosmopolitanism has again demonstrated the hegemony over literary scene. In this case, the hegemony was more likely to be from the Left-wing camp, because the Nationalist government did not close down the journal for its rejecting works written by those who were from the Nationalist Party. The final closure of *Xiandai zazhi* was, however, partly

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Da Liu Huijuan wen: wei zhongguo wentan caliang ‘xiandai’ de huohua” (Shi Zhecun’s Answering Liu Huijuan’s Questions: Striking a Spark of “Modern” for Chinese Literary World), in Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), p. 181.

due to its debate with the Left-wing camp. Considering the historical context of 1930s China, it is difficult for cosmopolitanism to take root because nationalism easily takes precedence over what I would call a less radical and non-revolutionary cosmopolitanism as revealed in *Xiandai zazhi*. As Lee Ou-fan has points out, in face of Japanese invasion in late 1930s, “the leftists took upon themselves the ideological task of arousing the patriotic emotions of the Chinese people against the aggression of Japan”<sup>1</sup>. A discourse of nationalism directed against imperialism soon displaced the cosmopolitanism that Shi Zhecun advocated in *Xiandai zazhi*. In the following years until 1980s, both *Xiandai zazhi* and Shi Zhecun were largely neglected.

Organized around the theme of rethinking Chinese modernity, my focus on the journal’s cultural attitude can be seen from the same point of view as the studies of alternative responses to Chinese modernity contextualized in the first decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century China. Examples can be found in Qian Suoqiao’s study of Lin Yutang and Daruvala’s research into Zhou Zuoren, both of which are pioneering in reflecting on the paradigmatic position of Lu Xun while looking into the dynamics in Chinese intellectuals’ response to modernity. My critical reading of *Xiandai zazhi* has thus shed some light on the diversity of 1930s, especially in my discussion of the Debate of the “Third Category Men”. The different sides involved in this debate included Hu Qiuyuan the free intellectual, Su Wen the third category writer, Yang Cunren the revolutionary Petite Bourgeois, as well as Shi Zhecun and the Left League, not to mention different voices within the Left League itself. In discussing the cultural attitude of *Xiandai zazhi*, this thesis thus contributes to unveiling the spectrum of dimensions of Chinese modernity in the 1930s.

On a more general note, a historical reading of alternative visions of Chinese modernity in the 1930s will contribute to highlighting the gap between the New Culture and May Fourth Movement in the late 1910s and the “opening up” of China in the 1980s. Both periods resorted to westernization for the sake of Chinese enlightenment, but neither of them completely fulfilled this task. In the early 1990s the launching of a “Farewell to Revolution” marked a reaction to the rigid rhetoric of Post-Mao China and a claim to open up the scope of Chinese modernity in terms of the relationship between the West and China, modernity and tradition, individual and the nation. This was in some ways a repeat of the “Modern School” in Shanghai half a century before in the 1930s, when some intellectuals began to reflect on the May Fourth paradigm and challenge the dominant Left-wing discourse at that time, and *Xiandai zazhi* obviously played an important part in this endeavour.

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, Leo Ou-fan, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945*, p. 150.

The heterogeneous features of *Xiandai zazhi* invite much deeper exploration than what I have presented in this thesis. I have focused on the journal's cultural attitude toward the many facets of Chinese modernity, but potential research can be further conducted in different ways. First of all, the rediscovery of *Xiandai zazhi* was related to the popularity of Modernism in Mainland China around the 1980s when the political and ideological control over literature and culture was loosened. Modernism remains an important topic in the research of *Xiandai zazhi*. Comparative studies can be made between Modernism in the 1930s and in the 1980s. I have very briefly mentioned the difference in Chapter Four of my thesis, but it deserves much more examination. Another topic is the travel route of Modernism from Shanghai in the 1930s to Hong Kong in the 1950s and 1960s and then later in Taiwan. It is interesting to note that Liu Yichang (刘以鬯, 1918- ), who has been considered the most important Modernist writer in the 1960s in Hong Kong, is inspired by the School of New-sensationalism of the 1930s Shanghai, China.<sup>1</sup> It is even more interesting to observe that since Liu founded the literary journal entitled *Xiang'gang wenxue* (香港文学, Hong Kong Literature) in 1985 in Hong Kong, Shi Zhecun had been a regular reader of and a contributor to the journal.<sup>2</sup> Located in different stages of the development of Modernism in China, both Shi and Liu deserve more examination in terms of their similarities, differences and interactions. *Xiandai Zazhi* in this sense was essential in drawing out the development of the Modernist School in China, which, in a way, reflected the historical and social changes of China in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Second, I would also like to explore into the "Familiar essay", or *Xiaopin wen* in Chinese, which was a constituent of *Xinjing Wenxue*. It can be argued that the promotion of the "Familiar essay" demonstrated a tolerant cultural attitude toward both the expression of individuality and transformation of Chinese tradition. This aesthetic approach to Chinese modernity has been studied in both Daruvala and Qian's research. In addition to Zhou Zuoren and Lin Yutang, Shi Zhecun himself also showed great interest in Familiar essay. As I have briefly mentioned in Chapter 4, after *Xiandai zazhi* was shut down, Shi Zhecun launched a new literary journal entitled "Wenfan Xiaopin" [Literary Vignettes, 文饭小品], which was established to publish light and leisurely literary works. This was the first time that Shi Zhecun acted as an independent publisher, rather than merely as an editor of a journal. There

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<sup>1</sup> For more details please refer to Lin Shaoyang, "Wen" yu riben de xiandaixing (The Conflict of Wen in Japanese Modernity), pp. 143-171.

<sup>2</sup> Shi Zhecun's eight letters written to Liu Yichang during the period from 1980 to 1992 are included in Gu Jian ed. *Shi Zhecun haiwai shujian* (Shi Zhecun's Correspondences with Friends Overseas), pp. 77-81. The correspondences between them two are also recollected in Liu's article in memory of Shi. See Liu Yichang, "Yi Shi Zhecun" (In Memory of Shi Zhecun), in Chen Zishan ed. *Xiari zuihou yiduo meigui: jiyi Shi Zhecun* (The Last Rose of Summer: In Remembrance of Shi Zhecun), pp. 1-14.

were six issues of Literary Vignettes published before it was closed in July 1935. Works by Lin Yutang, Zhou Zuoren, and others who were among the most famous writers who advocated familiar essays, were published in this journal. This short-lived literary journal has so far been rarely studied. In April 1935, Guangming Shuju [Guangming Publishing House] published a collection of late-Ming familiar essays which was compiled by Shi Zhecun. In response to the debates and controversies over familiar essays in the 1930s, this book provided a liberal and negotiable attitude. “Those who advocate [familiar essays] are not necessarily asking everyone to read familiar essays of Ming dynasty, while those who oppose it are possibly over-misjudging the ancient people”.<sup>1</sup> A study into Shi’s interest in Familiar Essay will also contribute to the rediscovery of a mild, conciliatory and aesthetic approach to Chinese modernity in the early decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century China.

In addition to the textual analysis of *Xiandai zazhi*, this thesis has also touched upon the cultural attitude of Shi Zhecun as demonstrated in his editorship of *Xiandai zazhi*. The early 1930s was perhaps the time when Shi made the greatest achievement in both writing and journal editing. The feature of *Xiandai zazhi* was to a large extent shaped by Shi’s cosmopolitan perspective and concerns, and the journal in turn served as essential text sources to look into the cultural attitude of Shi himself. Shi always spoke highly of the development of modern Chinese literature in 1930s. According to Shi Shumei’s account in 1990, Shi believed that

“if the Sino-Japanese War had not interfered, the modern Chinese literature that was so vibrant during the Nanjing Decade would have had more time to mature and develop, and a new chapter of modern Chinese literary history would have been written.”<sup>2</sup>

Two years later in 1992, Shi expressed a similar view that it was in the 1930s that modern Chinese literature made the greatest accomplishments<sup>3</sup>. As regards the reason for the unfulfilled “new chapter” of modern Chinese literature, Shi pointed out that the literature of his kind was failing with the rise of Left-wing writers.

“...The second half of the decade of 1930s, or more specifically, the years between 1935 to 1940, literary practices of my generation were repressed by the prioritized need

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zhecun, “‘Wanming ershi jia xiaopin’ xu” (Preface to *A Collection of 20 Late-Ming Essayists*), in Shi Zhecun, *Shi Zhecun Xuba* (A Collection of the Forewords and Afterwords of Shi Zhecun), p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Shi Shumei, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semi-colonial China, 1917–1937*, p. 256.

<sup>3</sup> Shi Zhecun, “Da Liu Huijuan wen: wei zhongguo wentan caliang ‘xiandai’ de huohua” (Shi Zhecun’s Answering Liu Huijuan’s Questions: Striking a Spark of “Modern” for Chinese Literary World), in Shi Zhecun, *Shashang de jiaoji* (Footprints in the Sand), p. 183.

to do political propaganda and to fight against Japan in the War. It is at the same time that the Left-wing writers became more and more influential.”<sup>1</sup>

The years before 1935 when *Xiandai zazhi* was still in circulation and Shi Zhecun was still active in literary creation and journal editing are especially significant but generally overlooked. In terms of the understandings of Chinese modernity which were alternative to the dominant and yet rigid Left-wing discourse in the early 1930s, both *Xiandai zazhi* and Shi Zhecun are still to be further investigated.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 179.



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