

The Modern Transition of Chinese Novel

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At the beginning of the 20th century, a literary movement called “the revolution of the novel world” opened the first page of the history of the Chinese novel. The formal suggestion of this slogan was presented only in 1902 by Liang Qichao 梁啟超’s *Lun xiaoshuo yu qunzhi zhi guanxi* 論小說與郡治之關係 (A Discussion of the Relation between the Novel and the Politics by the people).¹ However, the introduction of foreign novels to the literary world, the emphasis on the social value of novel, the insistence of ‘the neo-novel 新小說,’ and so on before and after 1898, the year of Wuxu, can be seen as a prelude to the revolution of the novel world. It might be said that Wuxubianfa 戊戌變法 placed such writers as Kang Youwei 康有為 and Liang Qichao on the stage of politics and the neo-novel on the stage of literature.

Those who played an active role, during the transition period of century, had a sense of hope as strong as a ‘century-consciousness.’ The term ‘the 20th century’ could be found in their discussions on literature. For example, such statements as “the 20th century is the year of the development of novels,” “the opening of the 20th century is the origin of the development of novels in our country,”² and so on, were sufficient

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1. Yinbing 飲冰, “*Lun xiaoshuo yu qunzhi zhi guanxi* 論小說與群治之關係 (discussing relationships between novel and politics)” *Xinxiaoshuo* 新小說, 1, 1902.
2. Cf. Jibai 計伯, *Lun ershi shiji xiaoshuo fada de shidai* 論二十世紀系小說發達的時代 (Discussing that 20th century is a period of development of novel), *Guangdong jieyan xiaoshuo* 廣東戒煙新小說, 1, 1907. Yaogong 耀公, *Xiaoshuo yu fengsu zhi guanxi* 小

to encourage people's hope for the future. Thus, when we are to write about the developing process of Chinese novels, we must consider the impact of foreign novels imported at the beginning of the 20th century as the turning point for the development of the Chinese novel in the century.

In this paper, I am not concerned with the overall characteristic and direction of the development. Instead, I shall examine how the writers during the late-Qing period and the period of the Wusi movement could open the new era, the transition of the Chinese novel, through the change of written styles.

1. The stimulation and the development of foreign novels

The import of foreign novels and the inner change of the structure of Chinese literature stimulated by it were the motive for the development of Chinese novels in the 20th century. If there had not been such a positive reception to foreign novels and a reflection on them, it would have been impossible for Chinese novels to be transformed so much. Considering that China was an immeasurably huge country in terms of literature, it was not at all easy for her to free herself from self-bondage, to develop in response to foreign novels, and to participate in the enterprise of world literature. Moreover, mirroring foreign novels does not imply a mere imitation, but a mutual conflict and a mutual compromise. The most desirable effect was that Chinese translators and novelists read and understood foreign novels from their own perspective, which was gradually changing and, moreover, managed to create the 'modern Chinese novel,' which had their own distinct characteristics. What is most needed here is not merely to describe the general fact that Chinese writers adopted foreign novels, but to investigate what kind of help the former received from the latter, how the latter came to China, and what kind of impact the latter gave to the development of Chinese novels.

From the late-Qing Dynasty to the beginning of the Republic of China, Chinese writers' attitude to foreign novels took the following steps: ignoring negative acceptance positive acceptance voluntary imitation independent creation. The Chinese acceptance of and reflection on foreign novels, which were introduced to the neo-novelists

by their contemporaries, was fundamentally successful. The reason for this success was because Wusi writers五四作家 chose foreign literature in accordance with their tastes, which were based on their own aesthetic standards.

The evidence for the fact that the first encounter of Chinese politicians to the world was around the First Opium War can be found in the *Sizhouzhi* 四洲志 (*A Record of all the Nations in the World*), translated and edited by Lin-Zexu 林則徐, and in the *Haiguotuzhi* 海國圖志 (*A Map and Record of all the Nations in the World*), edited by Wei-Yuan 魏源. However, the translation of foreign novels was rare until 1898, the year of Wuxubianfa 戊戌變法.³ The transition period began not with literature, but with politics. Kang Youwei in the *Xiaoshuomen* 小說門 (*A List of the Items of Japanese Novels*) published in 1897 listed 1,058 kinds of Japanese novels and claimed in the preface that “foreign novels must be translated as quickly as possible.”⁴ In the same year, Yan Fu 嚴復 and Xia Cengyou 夏曾佑 wrote the *Benguan fuyin shuobu yuanqi* 本館附印說部緣起 (*The Reason for publishing Novels in our Press Company*) and described in detail the effectiveness of novels. In the next year, Liang Qichao also claimed the same thing more clearly in a preface to the *Yiyin zhengzhi xiaoshuo xu* 譯印政治小說序 (*The publication of translated Political Stories*). “I have chosen some of the writings by famous foreign writers. And I have also translated on this occasion those that are related to the current situation of China and placed them as an appendix.”⁵ Since then, the translation of, and introduction to, foreign novels have been taken seriously. The reason for the increased value of translated novels, since the pioneering work by Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, was due to the groundless rumor that “European countries, America, and Japan were said to receive help from nov-

說與風俗之關係 (Relationships between novel and folk beliefs), *Zhongwai xiaoshuolin* 中外小說林, 1908.

3. For example, *Yishiyuyan* 意拾喻言 (Aesop's Fables) (1840), *Tanyingxiaolu* 談瀛小錄 (1872), *Yishui qishinian* 一睡七十年 (1872), *Xinxixiantan* 昕夕閑談 (1873-1875), *Anleji* 安樂家 (1882), *Haiguomiaoyu* 海國妙喻 (1888), *Bainianyijue* 百年一覺 (1894) etc.
4. Kang Youwei 康有為. *Riben shume zhi shiyu* 日本書目志·識語, Chen Pingyuan et al. ed. *Ershi shiji zhongguo xiaoshuo lilun ziliao* 二十世紀中國小說理論資料, The First Book p. 13-14, Beijing, Beijing University Press, 1989年.
5. Rengong 任公. *Yiyin zhengzhi xiaoshuo xu* 譯印政治小說序, *Qingyibao* 清議報 The First Book, 1898年.

els at the time of their enlightenment.”⁶ However, since contemporary novels in China “still tended to teach either lewdness or theft,”⁷ it is required for China to receive help from translated novels in order to reform the society.

When Liang Qichao suggested to translate and publish political stories, he meant to ‘improve the politics by the people改良群治.’ On the contrary, Lin Shu林森’s translation of the *Bali chahuanu yishi* 巴黎茶花女遺事 (*La Dame aux Camélias*) was to find a way for dissolving personal distress and agony.⁸ Both of them did not anticipate that their works would so much as affect the artistic styles of Chinese novels. When Whou Guisheng周桂笙 and Xu Nianci徐念慈 began to introduce the translation of foreign novels, they saw the positive value of the work and adopted it as the exemplary form for writing a creative Chinese novel. This can be found in their preface to and comment on the translation of their novels.⁹ On the other hand, Lu Xun魯迅 and Zhou Zuoren周作人 published the *Yiwai xiaoshuo ji* 域外小說集 (*An Edition of Foreign Novels*) in order to introduce modern ideas and artistic techniques, and hoped for ‘this to be the first introduction of new fields of foreign literary art to China.’¹⁰

Which particular method of translation they choose depends on how the translators and the readers understand and evaluate foreign novels. Since Lishaojushi 麴勺居士, in a brief preface to the *Xinxixiantan* 昕夕閑談 (*A Conversation in the Mornings and Evenings*), regarded foreign novels as good materials ‘for extending the knowledge of

6. Jidao and Bieshi 幾道·別士, *Benguan fuyin shuobu yuanqi* 本館附印說部緣起, *Guowen - bao* 國聞報 Guangxu 23rd year (1897) October 16th to November 18th.

7. Rengong 任公: *Yiyin zhengzhi xiaoshuo xu* 譯印政治小說序.

8. Cf. Zhang Juncai 張儁才 *Linshu nianpu jianbian* 林森年譜簡編. Refer to “1897 year” See Xue-Suizhi 薛綏之 et al. *Linshu yanjiu ziliao* 林森研究資料 22, Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe 福建人民出版社, 1982.

9. Cf. Zhou Guisheng 周桂笙 “Xueluokefusheng zhentan’an 歇洛剋復生偵探案弁言,” *Xin - mincongbao* 新民叢報, 55, 1904; Juewo 覺我 (Xu Nianci 徐念慈) *Xiaoshuolin yu* 緣起, *Xiaoshuolin* 小說林 1, 1907.

*Xueluokefusheng zhentan’an <歇洛剋復生偵探案> 弁言 is Detective novel of Sherlock Holmes

10. See *Yiwai Jules Vernexiaoshuoji xuyan* 域外小說集序言 (Preface of *xiaoshuoji xuyan* *Yiwai xiaoshuoji* 域外小說集, The First Book, Tokyo, 1909.

Chinese people,¹¹ the effectiveness of translated novels as ‘teaching foreign customs’ was often emphasized. Thus Lu Xun in the *Yiwaixi-aoshuoji* said that he “payed careful attention to what kinds of writings to be included in it and tried not to lose their original meaning in translating them.”¹² To say that we can learn a lot from reading foreign novels and reflecting on their customs, in effect, implicates the scepticism about the artistic value of the novels. A careless or ‘free translation’ indicates that the translator lacks a proper understanding and does not respect the techniques of expression in the original works; and there was such a assessment that freely translated works were better than the originals.¹³ Under these circumstances, foreign novels began to be highly commended. As a result, translators’ attitudes to translation became more sincere and writers such as Lu Xun even proclaimed the necessity of direct translation and practiced it.

The translation of novels and the recommendation of critics do not always go together with and, at times, have nothing to do with the acceptance of the readers. The reputation of foreign writers and the translation of novels in China depended on many accidental factors and did not correspond to whether their works have a high value or a low value. We thus need, at this stage, to ask which had superficial reputation and which gave real influence.

The greatest foreign writer for readers in the late-Qing Dynasty was the French writer, Voltaire (1694-1778). His novel was referred to by some critics including Liang Qichao as a good example which contributed a lot to the progress of Chinese society. However, those critics probably were unable to read any of his works since no novels had been translated for the previous 20 years. Thus, it is difficult to

11. Lishaogushi 亂世書士, *Xinxixiantan xiaoxu* 新新小說, *Yinghuansuoji* 翻譯叢書 3, 1872.

12. Lu Xun 魯迅, *Yiwai xiaoshuoji xuyan*.

13. A typical example would be *Shiwu xiaohaojie yihouyu* 十五小豪傑 譯后語. He says as follows: Frech writer Jules Verne’s *Records of drifting fifteen boys*.

“In the Preface of English translation: I am sure that there are no mistake in free translation rather than direct translation. Japanese Morita comments also in his preface even though there is a transformaton into Japanese style, it preserve original meaning’: My pride is second to none, If Jules Verne read this, he does not feel there are no errorous traslation.” *Xinmincongbao* 新民叢報, 6, 1902.

imagine that a novelist whose novels were not translated at all, though known for a long time, had any immediate and serious influence upon Chinese readers. The same was true of English writers such as Robert B. L. Lytton (1803-1873) and Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881).

The number of translated works did not always correspond to the number of people who accepted them. Lin Shu considered Henry R. Haggard (1856-1925) to be 'the greatest novelist in the West' and translated any of his works he found.¹⁴ Except for the fact that Lin Shu in Chapter 33 of his book adopted Haggard's style of writing, it is difficult to find any of Haggard's influence in the neo-novels during the late-Qing period. On the contrary, the written style of the *Bali chahuanu yishi* 茶花女, a translation of Alexandre Dumas's (1824-1895) *La Dame aux Camélias*, was quickly accepted and imitated by many Chinese writers and readers. Examples are Zhong Xinqing's 鍾心青 *Xinchahua* 新茶花, He Zou's 何譏 *Sinquinlou* 碎琴樓, Lin Shu's 林繡 *Liutingting* 柳亭亭, Su-Mansu's 蘇曼殊 *Suizhanji* 碎簪記, Xu Zhenya's 徐枕亞 *Yulihun* 玉梨魂, and so on. The influence of the book by Dumas was more powerful than the 32 translated works of Haggard.

Translators' understanding of original novels and the neo-novelist's imitation of the translated ones were limited by readers' expectations and attitudes. In particular, translated novels were expected to be used for the purpose of enlightening Chinese people. When translators intended to translate political stories and scientific stories, they focused on the fact that they were good for improving the politics by the people 改良群治. Of course, readers liked the element of entertainment or unpredictable turns in detective stories. However, writers mainly wrote stories in respect to making a strong resolution, respecting militarism, keeping laws, respecting equality, etc. and regarded that they were the most important items to write about.¹⁵

In the late-Qing period, the desire for political novels, scientific novels, and detective stories were all high, but the number of translations of the third were much more than those of the first two. The first

14. Lin-Shu 林繡: *Sakexun jiehou yingxiong lue xu* 撒克遜劫後英雄略序, *Sakexun jiehou yingxiong lue* 撒克遜劫後英雄略, Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1905.

Cf: 撒克遜劫後英雄略 is Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*

15. I have discussed this elsewhere in *Xiaoshuoshi* 小說史: *lilun yu shijian* 理論與實踐 chapter 15, Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1993.

two types of novels were much more famous and played the role of improving politics by the people. However, the exciting and complicated styles of detective stories captured the mind of Chinese readers. For them, welcoming political and scientific novels was based on their tradition which insisted that literary works should convey moral implications, whereas the acceptance of detective stories was due to their aesthetic interests in a new kind of literature. Foreign love stories and social novels were also welcomed, but such works had already existed in China and were not new to the Chinese people. In other words, they preferred writings with fresh and new styles which corresponded to their tastes: detective stories had these elements. In this respect, the translators in the late-Qing period ignored Voltaire and, instead, were very much interested in Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930). Furthermore, in their translations they omitted psychological descriptions and picturesque descriptions which were not directly related to the thread of stories. However, this restricted the artistic vision of readers and, also, the artistic standard of translated works inevitably fell.

Nonetheless, the neo-novelists' tastes were well reflected in the best sellers chart of the time (we do not know the total number of published novels at that time and so we must rely on the number of translated works). Among the translated novels published between 1896 and 1916, Doyle comprises the most (32 novels of his were translated), then Haggard (25 novels), then both Jules Verne (1825-1905) and Dumas (17 novels), and finally Oshikawa Shunro 押川春浪 (10 novels). This chart of best sellers changed dramatically in the period of the Wusi movement. During this period, bestseller writers were Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910, 15 novels), Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893, 13 novels), Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883, 8 novels), Anton Chekhov (1860-1904, 6 novels), and Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1883, 5 novels).

If we compare the artistic trends in the late-Qing period and the Wusi period, we can easily find several differences. Firstly, most neo-novelists liked full-length novels, whereas the Wusi writers 五四作家 commended short novels by Maupassant, Chekhov, and so on. Secondly, the former was in favor of detective, heroic, and scientific stories which were regarded as popular literature in the West, whereas the latter focused on social stories which were classified as heavy literature. Finally, the reason for the neo-novelists' preference to full-length novels and

popular literature is that they liked stories arousing interest. On the contrary, the Wusi writers were in favor of the sentiments and styles of stories¹⁶ and thus, made a different choice.

2. The transition of traditional written styles

At the beginning of the 20th century, stage plays adopted a lot from the Western tradition, whereas prose writings succeeded the Chinese tradition: in the case of novels both aspects were highly valued. This transition was neither for nor against the Western tradition, but there is no doubt that the transition played a major role in creating new types of novel. We have already seen the stimulation and development of foreign novels in China. In what follows, I shall discuss the transition of the traditional written styles in China.

The difficulty that arises in a discussion on the transition of traditional written styles of Chinese novels during the 30 years at the beginning of the 20th century is that the discussion to a large extent is based on unreliable sources. That is, the neo-novelists emphasized their connection with traditional Chinese novels and tried to hide their influence by Western novels. In contrast, the Wusi writers denied the former and emphasized the latter. The point here is to argue neither for nor against the view of Wu Jianren 吳建人, Lin Shu, Lu Xun, and Ye Shengtao 葉聖陶, but to explain why such sincere and intelligent writers took this view.

I have not mentioned much about the transition of traditional written styles of writers because such a transition is completed without their recognition of it. The Wusi writers had studied Confucian classics and histories, recited verses and ditties, and at times read the *Sanguozhi* 三國志 and the *Shuihuzhi* 水滸志. However, they regarded all of them as dealing with humane themes which lacked practicability or public interests, not as something from which they could learn the art of writing. In their youth, they thought that it was possible to learn something from foreign novels. Their interest in them was “to introduce partly Western literature and art, and partly the contemporary thought of the world.”¹⁷ In

16. *Ping xiaoshuo huibao* 評小說匯刊, *Wenxue xunkan*, 43, 1922.

17. Langsun 郎損 (Shen Yanbing 沈雁冰), *Xinwenxue yanjiuzhe de zeren yu nuli* 新文學研

this respect, it is not at all odd that they took foreign novels as exemplars of their novels. They accidentally took their 'tradition' as an exemplar to follow, but they went on to westernize them. It was, on the one hand, an unconscious acceptance and, on the other, a conscious imitation. Most of the Wusi writers were more interested in the latter, and disregarded the former. This is not because the former was 'easy to get,' whereas the latter was 'hard to get.' The main reason for it is that their traditional literary method was something that could be found in their literary activity as a whole, not through some writing techniques, although there is no doubt that visual and detailed techniques are relatively easy for writers and readers to notice.

On the contrary, such neo-novelists as Liang Qichao, Wu Jianren, and Liu E 劉鶚 were different from the Wusi writers in that they deviated from the traditional written styles, but they still used them in criticism. They seemed to have hope in 'transforming Western elements through Chinese ones以中化西.' However, they were not so direct as Lin Shu. They learned writing techniques from foreign novels and, at the same time, looked for alternatives in their traditional literature, for example Sima Qian's 司馬遷 techniques. However, once they found that such techniques were not very different from traditional ones, they used them more freely. Since, in adopting foreign cultures, they did have the rights to choose and interpret their tradition again, in so far as it is not distorted, the attitude of 'transforming Western elements through Chinese ones以中化西' was not something to be blamed. However, this may cause an illusion that everything is no more than archaeological discoveries, which have been hidden for a long time, and that nothing is really new. Any neo-novelist who does not accept the fact that the discovery of antiques is derived from a new perspective may look very antiquated.

Perhaps, the most important thing to be noted here is that the neo-novelists and the Wusi writers were not only influenced by classical Chinese novels, but also by classical literature as a whole. If we only consider the aspect of the succession of novels, there is no way to explain the process of transition from the *Rulinwaishi* 儒林外史 to the

究者的責任與努力 (Responsibility and Effort of New literature researcher),
Xiaoshuoyuebao 小說月報, 12, 2, 1921年.

Kuangrenrij 狂人日記. When we consider the transition of culture at the beginning of the 20th century in a larger scope, we can mend the 'illusion' mentioned above. Chinese novels must not be understood either as the persistence of traditions or as the imitation of Western novels alone; both aspects must be considered. We can perhaps point out four kinds of influence in the development of Chinese novels at that time: (1) the succession of the tradition of classical Chinese novels, (2) the transplantation of the written techniques of foreign novels, (3) the infiltration of traditional written styles into novels, (4) the influence of Western literature. It seems that (2) and (3) were the most influential. And this is closely related to the fact that novels were gradually considered as the core of literature.

The greatest contribution made by the revolution of the novel world is that it elevated the value of novels and novelists. To say that 'A Novel is the greatest of literature' is ambiguous, but it is not without any meaning. It means that readers want to learn various forms of literature from novels and that writers have the right to gain inspiration more freely from other forms of literature. Novel critics in the late-Qing period expressed their confidence rather exaggeratingly that the neo-novels should be read as the books of history, philosophy, chronology, classics, history of military strategies, and overlooked historic records at the time of the Tang 唐 Dynasty and Sung dynasties, folks and ballads at the time of Qi-Liang Dynasty 齊梁.¹⁸ In other words, they thought that all the essential elements from human cultures were integrated in the neo-novels. Thus it was expected that since such novels were broad and profound, they must accommodate all the cultural areas mentioned above.

Novels do not refuse any type of literature. They accommodate the vulgarity of popular songs, the grudges made in boudoirs, the folk songs of woodcutters, and shepherd boys, as well as highly valued classics and hidden masterpieces, and offers them up as material for writings.¹⁹

Of course, it is not the case that the neo-novels always contained all kinds of human culture. However, it is certain that the neo-novelists

18. *Du xin Xiaoshuo fa* 讀新小說法, *Xinshijie xiaoshuo shebao* 新世界小說社報, 6 · 7, 1907.

19. Man 蠶: *xiaoshuoxiaohua* 小說小話, *xiaoshuolin* 小說林, 1, 1907.

were inspired by other forms of literature which include jests, anecdotes, questions and answers, travel notes, short literary creations, fables, letters, and diaries.

The neo-novelists may have written novels for noble politics or for some vulgar profit. The writers at the time did have the term 'the remuneration for writings潤筆料,' but it was given to express the gratitude to their writing. Since the modern publishing business and the system of money for a manuscript began to be established, writers' works have become the sources of the money to live on. However, not all the manuscripts of literary works were entitled to money, but only those which were popular and, as a result, which could bring about a profit to publishers. Of course, famous writers were in a better position to earn money for writings, but less talented writers could also earn money. To earn two yuan元 for a thousand word manuscript was very tempting. Those who used to translate, write, and publish for fun unexpectedly began to earn money for their manuscripts. In consequence, many intellectuals "who were initially satisfied with studying at an academy of classical learning and earning little money for living, began to earn money by means of contributing their writings to journals or from translating books."²⁰ The complaint made by Gong Zizhen 龔自珍 that "Writings have become the means for earning money" became real in the late-Qing Dynasty. The reason for Li Boyuan 李伯元 and Lin Shu 林纾 to refuse the recommendation for a government position is related to the fact that they could live on by means of writing and translating. The first professional writers in the history of Chinese literature began to appear at this time. They were mainly novelists and, also, their influence on novels in the late-Qing Dynasty was great.

By 1905, the state examination was repealed and so the intellectuals assembled to earn money through their writings. Although Yin Bansheng's 寅半生 preface to the *Xiaoshuoxianping* 小說閑評 was somewhat exaggerated, what he says is on the whole true.

About 10 years ago, the world was the world of eight-part essays 八股文. It has now changed into the world of novels. Those who endeavor-

20. Cf. Baotianxiao 包天笑 *Chuanyinglou huiyilu* 鈞影樓回憶錄 (Hongkong: Dahua chubanshe 大華出版社, 1971) *Zaixiaoshuolin* 在小說林 and See two phrases in "Yi xiaoshuo de kaishi 譯小說的開始"

ored to write eight-part essays 八股文 are now posing themselves as novelists.²¹

For example, those who previously worked for the government and who were interested only in poetry, prose, or the literary form of sentimental compositions turned to novelists. A large number of talented writers with various backgrounds gathered to write novels and, as a result, the styles of novels also began to change. For, since they were initially absorbed in composing poetry, prose, and eight-part essays for a long time, it was difficult for them to write novels which required different written styles. In writing novels, Liang Qichao never forgot to use the new type of writing, which is strong for an argument with sentiments, whereas Lin Shu never gave up his habit of writing ancient style prose. Su Manshu 蘇曼殊 was talented with paintings and poems, whereas Xu Zhenya 徐枕亞 had a strong belief in the absolute value of sentimental stories. Since those who were not familiar with writing novels began to write them, it was only natural that their written styles of novels were not in accordance with the previously adopted styles. This enabled Chinese novels to escape from a monotonous style and to create various kinds of styles.

Whether they are the neo-novelists or the Wusi writers, their reflection on the traditional literature was led not to a simple reception of it, but to a transition toward a new kind. Jests, anecdotes, questions and answers, travel notes, letters, and diaries have become the essential elements of novels and have produced new styles of expression and structure. The jests in the *20nian mudu zhiguai xianzhuang* 20年目睹之怪現狀 are different from the jests of novel 笑話小說 in Wu-Yanren's *Xin xiaolin guangji* 新笑林廣記 and the anecdotes in the *Guanchangxianxingji* 官場現形記 are different from those of famous person 名人趣事 in Li Boyuan's *Nanti - ngbiji* 南亭筆記. Similarly, the *Lun shiju liang mingshi shezhan* 論時局兩名士舌戰 (The debate between two notables) in Liang Qichao's *Xin zhongguo weilai ji* 新中國未來記 is not the same as his political writings such as the *Lunjinbu* 論進步 and the *Pohuaizhuyi* 破壞主義, whereas the *daminghu youji* 大明湖游記 in Liu E's 劉鶚 *Laocanyouji* 老殘游記 is also not the same as the *huqiuyouji* 虎丘游記 in the *Yisiriji* 乙巳日記. What is to be noted here is not the value of

21. Yinbansheng 寅半生, *Xiaoshuo xianping xu* 小說閑評 龔, *Youxishijie* 遊戲世界, 1, 1906.

jests or travel notes themselves, but their connection with other elements of novels.

The formal structure of full-length stories became loose due to the use of many jests and anecdotes, and it offered ground for short novels in that it enabled the neo-novelists to take on new styles of description. Ignoring the thread of a story and, instead, focusing on argumentation were new in traditional Chinese structures of narration. By adopting the method used in travel notes, psychological descriptions were limited to the traveller only and the story was told from the viewpoint of the traveller. In this respect, full-length stories deviated from the traditional way in which writers developed stories in an omniscient position. In the case of writing stories by adopting the styles of diaries and stories, the traditional written style, in which the writer played the role of storyteller telling stories to audience, was given up. If one can emphasize the sentiment of characters and the aesthetic perspective of the writer, one can avoid the effort to connect the thread of each installment in serial stories and from the narrative pattern adopted in traditional Chinese novels.

Historical biographies and poetry are forms of literary and aesthetics. When I emphasize the fact that they have been adopted in novels for a long time, I focus on the earlier form. And when I emphasize their influence on the neo-novelists and the Wusi writers, I focus on the latter. The traditional adoption of the styles of historical biographies forced writers to write about great historical periods by introducing minor and trivial characters. When the historical stages are limited to the viewpoint of such characters, novels can avoid the traditional styles of narration in which the writer played the role of storyteller. Thus, the traditional adoption of the styles of historical biographies accelerated the change of the narrative styles of novels. On the contrary, the tradition of poetry made Chinese writers to accept lyric novels.²² If one exposes the sentimental atmosphere and the artistic conception and emphasizes the extempore and emotional aspect, the significance of the thread of novels is necessarily decreased. This was indeed the motivation for the change occurring in the narrative structure of Chinese novels.

22. Zhou Zuoren 周作人: *Wanjian de laike yihouji* 晚間的來客譯後記, *Diandi* 點滴, Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1920.

To sum up, historical biographies and poetry were thus two major elements in the development of Chinese narrative literature and caused the change of the narrative structure of Chinese novels. The neo-novelists valued historical biographies and so utilized the forms of anecdotes and travel notes in their novels, whereas the Wusi writers valued poetry and so utilized the forms of diaries and letters in theirs. Thus, the written styles of the neo-novels and the Wusi novels were closely related to which kind of the two forms of literature they preferred.

3. The fashion of publishing novels

The outbreak and development of the revolution in the novel world and the rapid spread of the neo-novel around Shanghai and seaside cities depended largely upon the change of their whole cultures. Apart from the formation of the conception of the city culture and the civic value, there were the two important elements of change in the late-Qing Dynasty such as the trend of political revolution and the rise of the new way of education. The trend of political revolution was the immediate motivation for the slogan “the revolution in the novel world” which possessed a generative power in the transition of literature, whereas the rise of the new way of education was the origin of producing many neo-novelists and readers and caused the transition of the classic forms of novels into the modern form. Moreover, the development of the printing business and the newspaper business was critical to developing the neo-novels. Due to the import of new technologies for publication and the increase in the readers’ desire for knowledge, the number of published books inclusive of novels and that of books sold were rapidly increased. Since books have already been published from earlier times, the direction of change of the novel in the late-Qing Dynasty cannot only be explained by the increase of the number of published books. In examining the pattern of Chinese novels, it is also significant to consider the rapid development of the modern newspaper business.

Ma Lixun 馬禮遜 published the first modern journal in Malacca in Chinese, the *Cha shisu meiyue tongji zhuan* 察世俗每月統紀傳, on August 5, 1815, but the first modern Chinese newspaper would be the *Zhongwaixinbao* 中外新報 published by Wu Tingfang 伍廷芳 in Hongkong in 1858. By

the end of the 19th century, many publications were produced. Between 1815 and 1861, eight kinds of publications were produced and, according to the *Qingyibao* 清議報, there were approximately 124 in 1901. After the revolution of 1911 辛亥革命, “as ‘people’s freedom of the press’ was specified in a temporary law, a large number of newspapers were published almost simultaneously” and with around 500 different kinds.²³ After Yuan-Shikai’s 袁世凱 seizure of political power, publications were prohibited, threatened, and persuaded. However, although the publication of journals and newspapers was temporarily frustrated, it did not stop completely. There were 1,104 kinds of publications in 1921 and 2,000 kinds in 1927.

As the number of publications increased, there began to appear magazines specializing novels. Various types of publications in the late-Qing Dynasty including newspapers and periodicals on politics, education, economy, agriculture and so on, inserted a serial story in order to secure the number of readers. In particular, the section of literary supplement in newspapers and the production of literary magazines directly influenced the development of novels. In 1897, Yan Fu 嚴復 and Xia Cengyou 夏曾佑 in the *Guowenbao* 國聞報 wrote a column on “the reason for printing novels in our publishing company 本館附印說部緣起” and planned to ‘collect’ novels and to publish them ‘in newspapers,’ but this plan did not succeed. In the same year, the *Zilinhubao* 字林圖報 in Shanghai printed a supplement and, also, the *Xiaoxianbao* 消閑報 and delivered them with newspapers. In 1900, the *Zhongguoribao* 中國日報 printed a supplement entitled *guchuiliu* 鼓吹錄. Later on, most newspapers spared some columns in newspapers for supplements (they sometimes had fixed titles). However, the columns for supplements were not very spacious, but only 3,000-5,000 words per copy; nonetheless, their influence was enormous.

The advantage of newspaper publication is that the reader’s column in a newspaper is larger than that in magazines and that its cycle of publication is more frequent than the latter as well. During the Wusi movement, between 1917 and 1919, the four literary supplements, *xuedeng* 學燈 in the *Shishixinbao* 時事新報, *juewu* 覺悟 in the *Minguoribao* 民國日

23. Gegongzhen 戈公振, *Zhongguo baoxueshi* 中國報學史 178, Beijing: Sanlianshudian 三聯書店, 1955.

報, *chenbaofujian* 晨報副鑄 in the *Chenbao* 晨報, and *jingbaofukan* 京報副刊 in the *Jingbao* 京報, played a major role in the earlier literary revolution.

The first literary magazine in China was published in 1872 and all of its items except for one British novel, translated as the *Xinxixiantan* 昕夕閑談, were composed of poetry and prose. The *Haishangqishu* 海上奇書 published solely by Han Ziyun 韓子雲 in 1892 mainly included full-length stories, short novels, and short sketches from previous generations. For the 25 years between 1872 and 1897, five kinds of periodical literary magazines, three of which were revised editions of *Yinghuansuoji* 羣芳叢記, were published. And, there were 57 kinds of such magazines appearing between 1902 and 1916, and more than 143 kinds between 1917 and 1927. Among the works that appeared in the magazines, the proportion of novels was higher than that of any other literary kinds. The number of magazines entitled 'Xiaoshuo 小說' numbered more than 29 between 1902 and 1917.²⁴

The decisive influence of, in particular, magazines specializing novels on the revolution of the novel world were undeniable. Firstly, a group of writers and literary organizations put their literary claim into practice beginning with printing their own publications from neo-novels. In the late-Qing period, there were not that many literary organizations and, also, what their issues were was obscure. In the same period, the publication of magazines was restricted by the reader's taste and market demand. It was different in the Wusi period in that writers of the period called out for people to have the same mind and formed the morale for their intention. Between 1921 and 1923, there were 40 literary organizations and 52 kinds of literary magazines. And by 1925 there were 'at least more than 100 literary organizations and magazines' and all of them have their own literary claims.²⁵ Secondly, there was the tendency that writers themselves published and edited literary magazines. In the late-Qing Dynasty and the Wusi period, most editors of

24. Cf. *My Ershi shiji zhongguo xiaoshuoshi* 二十世紀中國小說史, The chapter 3 of the first book, Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1989.

25. Cf. *Zuijin wenyi chubanyu bianmu* 最近文藝出版物編目 (Recent list of publishing literature), *Xinghai* 星海 (上), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1924; Mao Dun 茅盾, *Zhongguo xinwenxue daxi xiaoshuo 1 ji's preface* 中國新文學大系·小說一集 導言 (中國新文學大系·小說一集), *Zhongguo xinwenxue daxi xiaoshuo 1*, 中國新文學大系·小說一集, Shanghai: Liangyou tushu yinshua gongsi, 1935.

famous literary magazines were notable writers of the time. Thirdly, most writings during both periods were first published in magazines and then edited in book form. This might be described as the literary age centering on magazines. Thus, when writers wrote, they had to consider the characteristics that serials of magazine would have. In corresponding to these characteristics, there occurred significant changes in the styles of the neo-novels and the Wusi novels.

It was often criticized that the neo-novelist lacked sincerity in writing and that he/she completed his/her manuscript in the morning, published it in the evening, and became famous in a few days; this was not really untrue. We cannot ignore the fact that at that time newspapers and magazines restricted the writer's creation of an original work. The *Xiuxiaoshuo* 新小說 published by Liang Qichao made a point of this matter as follows:

The previous writers were deeply concerned with making the whole thread of serial stories consistent. And they could produce a satisfactory work after many revisions. However, it is now difficult for writers to produce such a work since they cannot review stories which are written in a monthly installment according to the system of the publication of newspapers and magazines.²⁶

It would be ideal if a work could be published after several revisions. However, in the late-Qing period, literary works were published as soon as they were written. And the serial publication was discontinued suddenly when a personal problem might have happened to the writer or reader's interests changed. Although a certain novel was completed after a long period, there was 'a tendency of discontinuity of the thread in the stories.'²⁷ That is, since serial stories are in general published as soon as writers complete them, they tend to lack consistency. Thus writers must put their heart and soul into each installment of their serial stories.

Although a few chapters of a novel were good and the rest were bad,

26. *Xinxiaoshuo di 1 hao* <新小說>第一號, *Xinmin congbao* 新民叢報 20, "Shaojie xinkan 紹介新刊欄," 1902.

27. Liang-Qichao 梁啟超, "Xin zhongguo weilai ji's xuyan 新中國未來記·緒言," *Xinxi - aoshuo* 新小說 1, 1902.

readers did not have the room to condemn it. However, this edition will be printed monthly and so none of the chapters should be badly written, and if that is the case, the whole volume will read bad.²⁸

What does it mean to say that “none of the chapters should be badly written?” This means not that writers must do their best in their writings, but that they must be able to attract readers. The *Hongloumeng* 紅樓夢 is not a loosely written book, but, if it were published serially in magazines, then it would not attract readers so much as the book did. For it did not consider the division of the book into chapters and installments, and mainly focused on making the whole structure consistent. Each installment in a serial story must have its own conclusion and provide amusement. This characteristic of serial stories required writers to adjust their stories for such a purpose.

Han Ziyun 韓子雲 published the *Haishangqishu* 海上奇書 in 1892 and inserted his serial stories, the *Haishanghua liezhuan* 海上花列傳 which is a traditional Chinese novel containing chapter and the *Taixianmangao* 太仙漫稿 which is a classical Chinese novel. At the beginning, it had a period of 15 days and, later on, a period of a month from the 10th series because “it was too difficult to write within the deadline.” For the readers who complained that serial stories in magazines were not good for a novel, he explained the merit of writing and stopping to write for a writer and that of reading and resting for a reader.²⁹ About 20 years later when a pedantic reader continuously sent letters to Xu Zhenya 徐枕亞 concerning his serial novel, the *Yulihun* 玉梨魂, which had not yet ended, and condemned that other readers did not know how to appreciate ‘*Baozhangxiaoshuo* 報章小說.’ In response to this, Xu Zhenya sent a letter to him to ‘read one page a day,’ to contemplate it for half a month, and, if he ‘cannot understand it even after several days,’ to enquire after it.³⁰ There will be no more than one person who would suggest such a distinct method for reading. The superficial impression of this is that the writer fairly admonished the reader, but, as a matter of fact,

28. *xiaoshuo* 新小說 1.

29. Cf. Han Ziyun 韓子雲, *Taixian mangao's example words* 太仙漫稿·例言, *Haishang qishu* 海上奇書, 6, 1892.

30. Cf. Xu Zhenya 徐枕亞 *Dahan suo yulihun zhe* 答函索<玉梨魂>者, *Minquansu* 民權素 2, 1914.

'Baozhangxiaoshuo 報章小說' was written to conform to readers' tastes.

Due to the limitation of space of newspapers and magazines, it can take two or three years for a single full-length novel to be completed. If there is no way to correct this characteristic of 'Baozhangxiaoshuo,' then there are two other ways to conform to readers' tastes. One is to publish some of the chapters and sections of a novel until they attract readers, finish printing them in a magazine, and edit them as an independent volume. The other is to make the thread of each installment of serial stories relatively complete and polish the beginning and the ending of each installment. The first way is often the reason for ending serial publications. And this is often because of the fact that readers are not patient enough to wait for the publication of the completed volumes. On the other hand, the second way is appropriate and practical. Also, this is worth noting, for it was a major influence on the writer's creation of an original work in the late-Qing period.

The readers' requirement for a complete thread in each installment of a serial novel forces writers to polish the beginning and the ending of each installment, but to neglect the overall plot of the novel. A full-length novel can be easily transformed to an excellent short novel. This might be an inescapable disaster for a full-length novel, but a splendid chance for a short novel. It is difficult to find any full-length novels with a perfect plot in the late-Qing period and, also, to shorten any of them into excellent shorts or medium-length novels. If so, why not adopt more short stories which will be appropriate for magazines? In effect, in 1906 Wu Jianren and Zhou Guisheng 周桂笙 edited the *Yueyuexiaoshuo* 月月小說 into short novels. Later on, the magazines for novel form carried both short stories and full-length stories, but short stories became more important.

The main influence of the publication of serial stories on the plot of novels might be in that it made writers ponder over their previous relationships with readers and create new ones. The creation of an original novel was no longer something to be preserved and passed on to the next generation. That is, it was no longer possible to revise a novel five or so times over 10 years. The creation of an original work is 'to complete manuscripts in the morning, publish them in the evening, and

31. Jietao 解坡, *Xiaoshuohua* 小說話 116, Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1919.

distribute them all over the country within 10 days.’³¹ Most ancient novelists had been unable to see their own work published in their lifetime, whereas the novelists in the late-Qing Dynasty could expect their works to be read by readers within a day or two or, at the most, within 10 or 15 days. This was a great incentive. Writers no longer considered themselves as storytellers on a stage telling stories to an audience, but as those who wrote a novel for isolated individual readers. This might seem to make ‘a small difference in thinking,’ but, as a result of this, the right conception of the novel was eventually established in China through various stages for hundreds of years.

Considering that the transmission of novels was changed from ‘telling-listening’ to ‘writing-reading,’ the tone of storytellers was no longer important. The traditional Chinese novels with chapters including such a colloquial expression as ‘Expect the next time!’ gradually disappeared. Also, those literary trials that had been banned were lifted. This ‘small difference in thinking’ that novels were not to be told to an audience, but to be read by readers, created various styles of expressions, and made novels easy to read and to be accepted by readers. ‘The sudden beginning’ that Liang Qichao once mentioned is perhaps difficult to practice on stage, but easy to print on paper. The point of view in a long debate in the *Xin zhongguo weilai ji* 新中國未來記 and in the description of scenery in the *Laocanyouji* 老殘游記 respectively by Wu Jianren and Lin Shu can be properly sensed when they are read. The tendency to publish novels in book form was prevalent in the late-Qing Dynasty, but it was not used to accommodate the convenience for the change of the narrative style. One of the reasons that the Wusi novelists could successfully complete the transition of the traditional narrative style of Chinese novels is that they distinguished themselves from storytellers.

The narrative time of Chinese novels is changed in the following cases: 1) Since it is not the case that writers describe particular psychological states of the characters in particular circumstances or write intricate and interesting stories, the order of time does not correspond to the depth of the characters’ mind described. 2) Since the change of the time span in novels does not follow the causal relation of stories, but reveal the writer’s individual feelings, the overlapping and contrast of different times and spaces produces a kind of special effect. The narra-

tive angle of Chinese novels is changed 1) when the viewpoint of the narrator in a limited position goes beyond his knowledge, which will damage the veracity the novel strives after, and 2) when there is no room for the reader to view the viewpoint of the narrator from a different angle. The elements that made the narrative style of Chinese novels changed are thus: 1) The Wusi writers' focus on their 'intention' emphasized the expression the artistic trend and the ordinary life of ordinary people and resulted the tendency to go against the plot. 2) The tendency of the Wusi novels to become psychological and poetic required the writers to focus on the experience, feeling, free association, dream, illusion, and subconsciousness of characters and to emphasize elements in novels such as emotional appeal, poetic flavor, and artistic conception. However, these were neither understandable nor acceptable to storytellers and their audiences. The Wusi writers' works did not aim at 'the audience' who had a vague expectation from them, but at 'the reader' who had certain literary attainments, wanted a serious reading, and ponder over the message it meant to deliver.³²

4. The works of two generations

The transition of the narrative styles in Chinese novels was initially started by Liang Qichao, Wu Jianren and Lin Shu, and, later on, completed by Lu Xun, Yu Dafu 郁達夫, Ye Shengtao 葉聖陶. The former writers practiced their viewpoints in the *Xinxiaoshuo* 新小說 published in 1902 and this hastened many works of transient characteristics which were quite different from modern novels prevailed after the Wusi period; people called these 'Xinxiaoshuo.' On the other hand, the latter writers did not declare something like 'the revolution of the novel world,' but, starting from the *Kuangrenriji* 狂人日記 published in 1918, created modern novels whose themes, written styles, and narrative styles were completely different from traditional novels.

There is no doubt that there was a big difference between the Wusi

32. Cf. My *Zhongguo xiaoshuo xushi moshi de zhuanbian* 中國小說敘事模式的轉變 *Xiaoshuo de shumianhua qingxiang yu xushi moshi de zhuanbian* 小說的書面化傾向與敘事模式的轉變 and *Ershi shiji zhongguo xiaoshuoshi* 二十世紀中國小說史

writers and the neo-novelists called 'Laoxindang老新黨 (a group of elderly people who seek something new' in their ideologies and artistic techniques. Nonetheless, I would like to consider them together. This is not to belittle the significance in the Wusi novels, but to emphasize their relationship with the neo-novelists. In effect, the Wusi writers never hid their influence by the neo-novels. The novel by Lin Shu stimulated young students, who later went on to become the Wusi writers, to be interested in foreign literature. Moreover, the theory of *shuoyuqunzhi* 小說改良群治論 by Liang Qichao was closely related to 'the art for life' of the Wusi writers and, also, the novels by Wu Jianren, Li Boyuan李伯元, Liu E and Zeng-Pu曾朴 were the main theme of the Wusi writers' debate. Although there is a different view,³³ the Zhou brothers, Lu Xun (his real surname is Zhou) and Zhou Zuoren, Lin Shu, and Liang Qichao imitated the styles of translation by Chen Lengxue陳冷血, whereas, as is well known, Liu Bannong劉半農 and Ye Shengtao葉聖陶 were rooted in the area of the neo-novels. The consideration of both generations together is to emphasize that both of them were influenced by foreign novels and deviated from the traditional ways of literature, and, also, they began to search for a new type of artistic forms with richer expressions.

Considering them from the viewpoint of 'pure literature,' the writers in the late-Qing period were unfortunate. They did not have the maturity of the novels, which existed in the Ming period and the early Qing period, and the vitality of the Wusi novels. Although 'the four great masterpiece,' were artistically very crude, such crudeness is not due to the writers' incapability, but to the tottering which infants at the first stage of walking cannot avoid. Considering them from a different angle in terms of the history of novels, they are fortunate. If one is interested in the distinction between ancient and modern novels, the questions of how foreign novels were imported to China and what their influence on Chinese novels or the inner mechanism of Chinese novels

33. Cf.: Xu Shoushang 許壽裳, *Wangyou Lu Xun yinxiangji · Zatan mingren* 亡友魯迅印象記·雜談名人 (miscellaneous on excellent person's Impression of dead friend Lu Xun, Guo Moruo 郭沫若, *Shaonian shidai · Wode tongnian* 少年時代·我的童年》(My Youth), Zhou Zuoren 周作人, *Zhitang wenji · Wo xue guowen de jingyan* 知堂文集·我學國文的經驗》(My experience of learning mother language) and *Guadouji · Guanyu Lu Xun zhi er* 瓜豆集·關於魯迅之, and In the *Xinqingnian* 新青年 3.4. Hu Shi and Quan Xuanton's letter that discussed modern literature.

was, then one cannot ignore the writers in the late-Qing period. By tracing their pleasure and pain, we can see the developing process of Chinese novels. On the contrary, if one ignores their activities, the success of the Wusi writers will be wrongly understood as the transplantation of foreign novels.

The superficial distinction between the writers in the late-Qing period and the Wusi writers is that the latter took the writing techniques of foreign novels as their exemplars more than the former. Focusing on this point, the transition of written styles of Chinese novels may be understood simply as the importing process of foreign novels. This is to simplify the intricate process of accepting foreign novels. Under their historical circumstances, the writers in the late-Qing period did not have the strength to escape from the idea that 'China is the center, whereas the West is to be used for it,' and had the illusion that they would accept new techniques, while preserving their old moral virtues. 'A literal translation' and 'imitation' asserted by Zhou Zuoren, Lu Xun, and Mao Dun茅盾 recommended learning ideas as well as techniques³⁴ which was a suggestion to accept the 'content' and the 'style' of foreign novels as a whole. The difference between the writers in the late-Qing period and the Wusi writers is not in their techniques of expressions, but in their ideologies and values that decided those techniques. When there is a change in the writer's understanding of the world and the self, the narrative styles of novels can be properly transformed. The Wusi writers emphasized the elements of non-plot, used the first person narration which easily constitutes the intensity of feelings, and edited time and sequence in accordance with the inner mind of the characters; all of these were to emphasize the writer's personal feelings and individuality. Thus, it is difficult to understand such characteristics without understanding the distinct trend of the Wusi writers.

To highly praise the transition of the narrative style of novels does not imply the exclusion of all the works that employed traditional

34. Cf. Zhou Zuoren周作人 *Diandi · Xuyan* 點滴 · 序言 and *Riben jin sanshi nian xiaoshuo zhi feda* 日本近三十年小說之發達 (Development of modern Japanese novel for recent 30 years), Mao Dun茅盾 *Xinwenxue yanjiuzhe de zeren yu nuli* 新文學研究者的責任與努力 (Responsibility and effort of new literature researcher), Lu Xun魯迅, *Guanyu fanyi de tongxin* 關於翻譯的通信 (Concerning fluency and correctness in translation).

narrative styles. For there is no reason that the adoption of new styles of narration does not guarantee the artistic value of the work. However, there is no doubt that the diversified kinds of the narrative time, the narrative angle, and the narrative structure enabled writers to create better works which were suitable for their contemporaries.

It seems that the various techniques of narration used in modern novels were already tested in the Wusi period. However, they imitated the superficial characteristics of the new styles of narration without understanding their real aesthetic effect. Thus, as writers became more mature, their interest in adopting the new styles of narration decreased. This is not to say that Chinese novels in the 1930's and 1940's regressed without any development, but that they were not good enough to impress readers. The stories of the Wusi novels were monotonous and exaggerated. The novels on everyday life were too emotional, whereas the prose novels were too short. And so, both were not good enough in expressing all the extensive stories of everyday life and to find and actually use the aesthetic effect of new styles of narration.

The susceptibility of the Wusi writers on the novel form and their passion for the trial of new styles of narration turned into the search for various kinds of characterized art. In sum, the artistic value of Chinese novels in the 1930's and 1940's was more mature than those in the late-Qing period and the Wusi period. For example, the full-length novels by Mao Dun茅盾, Lao She老舍, Ba Jin巴金, Li Jieren李劫人 and the medium-length novels and the short stories by Shen Congwen沈從文, Zhang Tianyi張天翼, Xiao Hong蕭紅, and Zhang Ailing張愛玲 are considered the best of. The effort made by Zhang Henshui張恨水 who succeeded the tradition of the neo-novel and by Zhao Shuli趙樹理 who reproduced the tradition of storytelling showed a different direction in the development of novels. However, I was unable to discuss them in detail due to the limitation of space. (trans. by Dr. Weon-Ki Yoo)