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62

FOUR EARLY ESSAYS OF LU HSÜN

FOUR EARLY ESSAYS OF LIU HSÜN

Thesis submitted for the degree of M. Phil. in the

University of London, Faculty of Arts,

Angela Shek-hing Castro, B.A., June, 1968.

PREFACE

The four essays - "The History of Man" 人之歷史 , "The Lesson of the History of Science" 科學史教篇 , "On the Perverted Development of Culture" 文化偏至論 , and "On the Power of Mara Poetry" 摩羅詩力說 - are by no means the earliest works of Lu Hsün 魯迅 , or the only essays he ever wrote in Classical Chinese. In 1903, he wrote in the same medium the following: "The Spirit of Sparta" 斯巴達之魂 , "On Radium" 說鈾 , "A Short Discourse on Chinese Geology" 中國地質畧論 , and in 1908, "On Silencing the Accursed Voice" 破惡聲論 . My reason for studying and translating these four essays and not the others is that these four, collected by the author himself into the anthology The Grave 墳 in 1926, provide a very compact and homogeneous exposition of some of the most important ideas of the famous author, while the others are more or less sketches or elaboration of these ideas.

To my knowledge, these four essays have never been rendered into a Western language. And in spite of the large amount of literature written about Lu Hsün and his works, very little has been mentioned about these essays. Because of these reasons, I am therefore rather apprehensive about the accuracy of my

interpretation and translation of these essays which are so crucial to an understanding of Lu Hsün's life and works. But I hope that my contribution will stimulate more people to take an interest in the author's 'Japan period', the scope of which has not yet been exhausted.

For this study, I have used both the 1938 Shanghai edition and the 1956 Peking edition of Lu Hsün Ch'üan Chi 鲁迅全集. In footnotes they will be referred to as LHCC (1938) and LHCC (1956) respectively. In general, I have tried to adhere as much as possible to the later edition which I have in my own possession, but for references to works not covered in the edition, notably Lu Hsün's translations of foreign works, I have used the earlier edition.

In the course of my research, Mr. D.E. Pollard, my supervisor, has given me tremendous help and much of his precious time. To him, I should like to express my deepest gratitude. I should also like to thank Dr. Berta Krebsová of the Československá Akademie věd Orientální Ústav in Prague for the very helpful discussions we had during my recent visit to Czechoslovakia and for the copies of some of her articles on Lu Hsün's essays she subsequently sent me. Finally, I should like to express my appreciation for the encouragement and assistance given to me by my dear husband Fred Castro and my good friends, especially Anthony Hyder and Christine Street, in the preparation of this thesis.

SYNOPSIS

Foreign aggression in the middle of the nineteenth century forced the door of China open, but it was the attraction of Western science and knowledge of Western civilisation which really succeeded in conquering and transforming the Chinese mind. The process is best illustrated and discussed in these four early essays written by Lu Hsün, acclaimed as one of the most outstanding and patriotic Chinese writers of the twentieth century: "The History of Man", "The Lesson of the History of Science", "On the Perverted Development of Culture" and "On the Power of Mara Poetry". Lu Hsün saw Western science as a promoter of the physical well-being of man, but he was more anxious that his countrymen should have the correct perspective towards Western civilisation as a whole in order to be truly benefitted by it. He therefore spoke out against the two extreme and antithetical tendencies of his age, that of complete obsession with materialism and utilitarianism, and of complacency about the illusionary Chinese superiority in spiritual civilisation. He recommended a critical attitude towards both Western and Chinese civilisations, but advocated idealism in place of materialism and individualism in place of democracy, which, he was convinced, were more urgently needed in the revitalisation of China. He cited Haeckel, Stirner, Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Ibsen,

Byron, Shelley and the Slav romantics like Pushkin, Lermontov, Mickiewicz, Slowacki and Petöfi as exponents of true subjective idealism. Literature he viewed as the best means to instil great thought and noble emotion into man to emancipate him from the pettiness of life and outdated conventions. The optimism and confidence of his beliefs were sustained by a faith in the evolutionary process which was interpreted as the inevitable progress of man. Lu Hsün later modified and discarded some of these beliefs, but on the whole, he never swerved from the most fundamental ones. These essays, the translation of which are incorporated in the second half of this study following their order in the writer's anthology, were executed in a style very different from his later ones. Archaic in places and difficult on the whole, they nevertheless have a richness and a classical charm absent in his later essays.

CONTENTS

PREFACE		3
SYNOPSIS		5
INTRODUCTION		8
PART ONE		
Chapter I	<u>The Spirit of Science</u>	13
	1. Superstition and Western Medicine	
	2. The Student of Science	
	3. Chinese Learning and Western Learning	
Chapter II	<u>New Idealism</u>	35
	1. The Revelations of Evolution	
	2. The Rise of Subjective Idealism	
	3. "Will to Life"	
	4. Subjectivism without Anarchism	
	5. Men and Superman	
Chapter III	<u>The Satanic Rebels</u>	71
	1. The Tempestuous Spirits	
	2. Byron and Shelley	
	3. Pushkin and Lermontov	
	4. The Patriotic Poets	
Chapter IV	<u>Functions of Literature</u>	89
	1. Emotional Origin	
	2. An Educative Role	
	3. The Path to Proletarian Literature	
Chapter V	<u>A Note on the Style</u>	106
PART TWO		
Chapter VI	<u>The History of Man</u>	123
Chapter VII	<u>The Lesson of the History of Science</u>	147
Chapter VIII	<u>On the Perverted Development of Culture</u>	177
Chapter IX	<u>On the Power of Mara Poetry</u>	210
BIBLIOGRAPHY		298

INTRODUCTION

China's contact with Western science dates back to as early as the end of the sixteenth century when the Jesuit missionaries started to arrive in China by sea.<sup>1</sup> They instructed the Chinese in mathematics, astronomy, geography, hydraulics, horology, and the manufacture of cannons, but the interest in science aroused was not general or enthusiastic enough to make a deep imprint on the Chinese mind, because although the Chinese tolerated Christianity, they suspected and distrusted it. It was not till the middle of the nineteenth century that Western science made a massive and spectacular return, following the humiliating defeat of China in the Opium War with England. Vigorous programmes of 'self-strengthening' 自強 were launched to modernize China on the Western model and put her on the path to wealth and power. For the next ninety years, China was gripped by a fervour for science, regarded as the secret of Western power, which bordered on obsession and aroused controversies hitherto unknown.

One of the fundamental programmes supported by both Li Hung-chang 李鴻章 (1823-- 1901) and Chang Chih-tung 張之洞 (1837 - 1907), two of the best-known reformers, was education. Thousands of young Chinese students were sent abroad to Paris, Brussels, and Tokyo by the Manchu government in the hope that,

on their return, they would be able to instruct their fellow countrymen, help solve the military needs, and become the future diplomats of the country.<sup>2</sup> Conscious of the immense responsibilities placed on their young shoulders, these students took a very serious attitude in their studies, and many of them contributed eventually a great deal to their country and made a name for themselves. One of these was Lu Hstn, now generally regarded as the greatest of modern Chinese writers.

The four essays under review here were written by Lu Hstn in Japan in 1907 and appeared as articles in Ho Nan 河南, one of the many student periodicals then published in Japan. "The History of Man",<sup>3</sup> hereafter cited as "Man", was published in the inaugural issue of the said periodical in December 1907; "On the Power of Mara Poetry",<sup>4</sup> hereafter cited as "Mara", was published in two parts in February and March of the following year; "The Lesson of the History of Science",<sup>5</sup> hereafter cited as "Science", appeared in June, all under the pseudonym of Ling Fei 令飛; "On the Perverted Development of Culture",<sup>6</sup> the last of the quartet and hereafter cited as "Culture", was published in August under the pseudonym of Hstn Hsing 迅行. They were later collected by the author himself in an anthology of essays called The Grave in a slightly different order, with "Mara" as the last.

Briefly summarised, "Man" deals with the formulation of the evolutionary theory from Thales to Haeckel, "Science" describes the progress of science from ancient Greece to the nineteenth century, "Culture" exalts idealism and individualism above materialism and democracy, and "Mara" is an introduction to the English and Slav 'Satanic poets'. These essays reflect the two most significant effects of Western science on the mind of one of the most brilliant Chinese intellectuals: namely, the dispelling of many traditional beliefs and the adoption of others suggested by the success of the scientific methods, and the adoption of a new philosophy involving a changed concept of man's place in the universe as a result of the new control over the environment of nature. Lu Hsün believed that the fundamental reform of China should be directed against the internal rather than the external. The external were matters such as military modernisation, financial reform, industry and commerce, which were very much the preoccupation of the leading reformers of the time; while the internal involved a change in customs and in the people's physical, intellectual and moral powers - that is, the basic human material on which China's power would rest. This attitude was held also with varying degree of emphasis by the leading intellectuals of the time like Yen Fu 嚴復,<sup>7</sup> Chou Tso-jen 周作人,<sup>8</sup> Hu Shih 胡適,<sup>9</sup> and Tsai Yüan-pei 蔡元培.<sup>10</sup>

These essays are therefore important from a historical point of view, chronicling China's reception of Western civilisation. They are also significant because they reveal a change in the structure and functions of literature, which became primarily the vehicle for new ideas and knowledge. But above all, they are of particular interest to readers of this almost legendary figure in Chinese literature because they show the formulation of some of his fundamental ideas which he steadfastly maintained throughout his life, and many of them eventually found expression in his later writings. Their style, too, provides a striking contrast to the later one found in his polemic essays <sup>which</sup> and elicited both admiration and censure from his contemporaries but is now generally esteemed as a mark of his genius.

NOTES:

- 1 For a detailed documentary survey of the Jesuit influence in China, see Teng Ssu-yü and J.K. Fairbank: China's Response to the West (Camb., Mass., 1954), Chap. II.
- 2 One of the more recently published work on the early overseas Chinese students is by Y.C. Wong: Chinese Intellectual and the West 1872-1949 (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1966).
- 3 LHCC (1956), vol. I, pp.156-166.
- 4 Ibid. pp.194-234.
- 5 Ibid. pp.167-178.
- 6 Ibid. pp.179-193
- 7 Yen Fu, educated in England, was renowned as a translator of Western books into classical Chinese. His main contribution to China was his introduction of Western political, social, economic and philosophical ideas. For an excellent appraisal of his philosophy, see Benjamin Schwartz: In Search of Wealth and Power (Camb., Mass., 1964).
- 8 Chou Tso-jen, brother of Lu Hsün (Chou Shu-jen), is a very distinguished writer in his own right. With Lu Hsün, he brought new prominence to the essay form in the 1920's and 1930's. For a brief sketch of his life, works and ideas, see Biographical Dictionary of Republican China, ed., H.L. Boorman, (New York, 1967), vol. I, pp.424-427.
- 9 Hu Shih was generally regarded, together with Ch'en Tu-hsiu 陳獨秀, as the two leaders of the New Culture Movement. He has written many articles stressing the importance of new thought, individualism, etc., but his essay "Ibsenism" 易卜生主義 perhaps best summarised his early ideas. The essay is collected in Anthology Of The New Chinese Literature 中國新文學大系, ed. Chao Chia-pi 趙家壁, (Shanghi, 1935-6), vol.I, pp.205-218.
- 10 Tsai Yüan-pei, vice-chancellor of Peking University from 1917 to 1927, was the leading liberal educator of early Republican China. Through his early campaign for freedom in education, the May Fourth Movement of 1919 was fostered and the 'new tide' of thought was made possible. He was an outstanding Chinese scholar, but was, at the same time, well-acquainted with Western philosophy, taking particular interest in Kropotkin, Darwin and Nietzsche.

P A R T O N E

## CHAPTER I

THE SPIRIT OF SCIENCE1. Superstition and Western Medicine

The first intellectual effect of science, to the young Lu Hsün, is that it acts to undermine unfounded but often traditionally accepted beliefs. In "Man", he informed his Chinese readers that just as the Chinese believed that the universe was created by a mythological figure called P'an Ku 盤古 and that the earth and sky were formed out of the corpse of a goddess called Nü Wa 女媧, the West, for many centuries, was convinced that God created the universe, the earth as well as all the living things on it. If religious superstition could be dismantled by science in the West, would not superstition in China be abolished by the adoption of Western science? This appears to be one of the motives behind the writing of "Man".

Lu Hsün's conviction that superstition was one of the major obstacles to Chinese progress and the cause of the suffering of her people, was based on personal experience. For years, as a young boy, he frequented the pawn-shops to offer up whatever valuables the family had to get money to buy the exotic medicines prescribed by

the quack doctors who were treating his sick father: expensive rarities like sugar-cane exposed to three years of frost, winter roots of rushes, and recently-copulated crickets.<sup>1</sup> When his father was at the point of dying, a superstitious woman neighbour instructed him to shout into the ears of the father so as to detain the departing soul and prolong his life. This the young boy did, much to the discomfort of the dying man, and Lu Hsün regretted it for the rest of his life.<sup>2</sup> He saw, too, how healthy Chinese young women were subjected to the inhuman customs of binding the feet and breasts. So by 1902, he had made up his mind to study Western medicine. He later recalled the motives behind this crucial decision: "I dreamed a beautiful dream: I thought of rescuing those patients who were suffering as my father had suffered from wrong medical treatments, while if war broke out, I would become an army doctor. At the same time I could promote my countrymen's belief in reform."<sup>3</sup> Accordingly he obtained a government scholarship and sailed for Japan in February of the same year. After two years of language study, he entered the Sendai Provincial Medical School.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. The Student of Science

In the first three years in Japan, Lu Hsün immersed himself completely in the study of science, reading about the latest development in science and reproducing what he had learnt from Japanese and German<sup>5</sup> books and magazines in articles which he submitted to

Chinese student publications in Tokyo.<sup>6</sup> One of the earliest articles was on radium, which he wrote in 1903, eight years before Marie Curie extracted her first small quantity of pure radium.

In the essay, the young Chinese student asserted boldly that the discovery of radium had altered the theory of the indestructibility of matter. This is wrong, of course, the discovery had only broadened man's scope of the knowledge of elements. Lu Hsün's accomplishment as a scientist or even as a science reporter is in fact highly disputable. The diagram of the genealogical tree in "Man" which he claimed to be the German scientist Haeckel's work is in fact ~~his~~ rather free condensation of Haeckel's hundreds of diagrams interspersed in Anthropogeny and The System of Phylogeny. Moreover, in the diagram as well as in the essay, Lu Hsün misplaced reptilia and mammalia in the Mesozoic Era, while to Haeckel and all other biologists, these species appeared in the Palaeozoic Era. Though the Mesozoic Era is sometimes called the Age of Reptiles since it was during that time that the huge dinosaurs, pterodactyles and many other remarkable types of extinct reptiles lived and flourished, the reptiles in fact made their first appearance in the Permian Period which is towards the end of the Palaeozoic Era according to the geological measurement of time. Towards the end of the same essay, Lu Hsün says that monera, the most elementary stage in the ladder of evolution according to Haeckel, evolved from another more elementary cell called probion.

This explanation of the origin of life is not mentioned in any of the works of Lamarck, Darwin, Haeckel, Naegeli (the scientists Lu Hsün had knowledge of) or in any classical or modern dictionary of biological names. Neither is the following statement of his supported by any historical references: "Recently a French scientist used the transformation of matter and force to change inorganic matter into plants, another killed it with poisonous and mineral chemicals altering its electrical and heat-conducting qualities."<sup>7</sup>

The source of Lu Hsün's scientific information seems to have been an essay written by Thomas Huxley in 1877 called "The Progress of Science, 1837-1887."<sup>8</sup> In this essay, Huxley discusses the physical basis of life thus: "All living bodies contain substances of closely similar physical and chemical composition, which constitute the physical basis of life, known as protoplasm. So far as our knowledge goes, this takes its origin only from pre-existing protoplasm."<sup>9</sup> The name 'probion' in Lu Hsün's essay could have been a mistaken spelling of 'protoplasm', which is not, as Lu Hsün thought, a predecessor of monera, but a basis of life in plants and animals. In his essay, Huxley also mentions the German physiologist Theodor Schwann's cell theory. In 1839, Schwann published his work Microscopic Investigations on the Accordance in the Structure and Growth of Plants and Animals, in which he sets forth his hypothesis that both animal and vegetable tissues ~~are to~~ be traced back to cells

and that the cells of each are identical in character. Accepting the hypothesis of Schwann, Huxley draws the conclusion that "the kingdom of living matter and of non-living matter are under one system of laws, and that there is a perfect freedom of exchange and transit from one to the other."<sup>10</sup> It is possible that Lu Hsün might have mistaken Schwann ~~for~~ a Frenchman and misinterpreted his experiments.

It is perhaps unjust to blame the inaccuracies of the scientific information on Lu Hsün as it could well have been the fault of the Japanese translators of the books which provided Lu Hsün <sup>with</sup> his major source of material. But what we cannot doubt is the amount of effort Lu Hsün put into his pursuit of science. His knowledge of the achievements of the various scientists and their works revealed in "Man" is indeed amazing. He was fully aware of Cuvier's contribution to comparative anatomy and pale<sup>a</sup>ontology though he regretted the man's misconception of the origin of species. Goethe's main thesis that all the parts of the plant are modifications of a prototype leaf has met with a measure of acceptance, but his categorical neglect of the root is regarded as an unscientific exclusion of a possible area of relevance. Lu Hsün, while dismayed with Goethe's unscientific basis in the formulation of scientific theories, nevertheless appreciated the man's sustained quest for unity and continuity in nature, and hailed him as a forerunner of Lamarck and Darwin.

Haeckel's particular emphasis, as expounded in History of Creation on the "fundamental biogenetic law" that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, that the organism in its development is to a great extent an epitome of the form-modifications undergone by successive ancestors of the species in the course of their historical evolution, was enthusiastically received by Lu Hsün. Lu Hsün then went on to illustrate Haeckel's well-known 'gastreaea' theory based on the above generalization, pointing out that the morula, or fertilised human ovum, corresponded to the multiplying stages in amoeba and hydra: "They [i.e. the amoeba] split and multiply in a geometrical progression to become a cluster of cells, like pandorina, in the shape of a mulberry, <sup>and</sup> this mulberry, which is hollow in the centre, subsides to become the progaster. The animal hydra which we can find in fresh water ditches <sup>today</sup> ~~have~~ a similar development."<sup>11</sup> The progaster is the gastrula that Haeckel believed all higher animals descended from.

Lu Hsün not only strove to give as faithful an interpretation as he could of the scientist's views but also to convey the difficult ideas of foreign scientists in a digestible form for his Chinese readers. Take this passage on the Lamarckian laws which govern the development of the most elementary forms to the higher ones:

"First law: in every animal which is still young, a more frequent and continuous use of any organ gradually

strengthens it and its function increases in importance; its new capacity is proportionate to the length of time it has been so used. To illustrate this simply: the arms of a blacksmith or the legs of a coolie in the beginning are not unlike those of an average man, but when they are used daily, their strength increases. Vice-versa, the permanent disuse of any organ over a period of time weakens it and nullifies its capacity. For example, the appendix, which birds use to digest food but for which man has no use, has become deformed. Likewise, the ear muscles with which beasts move their ears, have lost their function in man and so have atrophied to the point where only traces remain. This is called 'selection'."<sup>12</sup>

The first law, besides being a very faithful rendering of Lamarck's view in Zoological Philosophy which reads:

"First law: in every animal which has not passed the limit of its development, a more frequent and continuous use of any organ gradually strengthens, develops and enlarges that organ, and gives it a power proportional to the length of time it has been so used; while the permanent disuse of any organ imperceptibly weakens and deteriorates it, and progressively diminishes its functional capacity, until it finally disappears."<sup>13</sup>

is also illustrated with simple and easily understood examples - an indication of Lu Hsün's consciousness of his role of 'imparting knowledge'<sup>14</sup> to his countryman.

It is wrong, however, to assume that Lu Hsün's pursuit of scientific knowledge began in Japan. His interest in science was shown long before he took up medicine. In 1898, he wrote a short article on flowers which includes a short note on the chemical properties of the lichen litmus.<sup>15</sup> Even after he gave up his medical studies, he retained a life-long interest in science, particularly in botany and physiology. A colleague of his at the school in Hangchow recalled his lecture on the human reproductive system and his seriousness in approach to the subject, which was regarded as a highly unconventional and even obscene one in those days.<sup>16</sup> His brother Chou Chien-jen 周建人 remembered how enthusiastic he was about plants. He made many field trips to the West Lake to gather samples of plants.<sup>17</sup> The explanations he gave to his brother for making these field trips were: firstly, the subject of botany fascinated him; secondly, it had its important place in science; but, above all, he chose this as his special branch of study because it did not require a lot of expensive scientific equipment and plants were easy and cheap to collect. What he tried to show was that the Chinese should make scientific studies part of their everyday

lives. The subject does not necessarily have to be difficult; the essential part is the close observation of one's environment; and it is beneficial in many ways - such as its function of exercising one's speculative faculties. During the last ten years of his life, he constantly encouraged Chou Chien-jen to take up the formidable task of translating Souvenirs entomologiques, the monumental work of the French entomologist Jean Henry Fabre.<sup>18</sup> In 1930, he reaffirmed his belief in science as a weapon to save China in his preface to Chou Chien-jen's book Evolution and Retardation 進化與退化 (which consists of the translation of ten foreign essays on science), exhorting youth to heed the warning of two foreign scientists on two urgent problems of China: the southward extension of the desert and the danger of malnutrition, and to see what they could do to solve them.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. Chinese Learning and Western Learning

In "Science", Lu Hsün acknowledges the contribution of science to our material comforts. He praised the invention of safety lamps, steam engines, and attributed the victory of the French over their enemies after the Revolution to the superiority and ingenuity of French science. He agreed with Francis Bacon that the hands and machinery were indispensable in any task. But his recognition of the materialistic contribution of science was always accompanied by a clear realisation of its idealism, which actually inspired

its progress. He very much regretted the Chinese reformists' emphasis on material science, and raised his objections on two specific programmes - economic development and military re-organisation.

Both programmes were favourites with the famous reformer of the Ch'ing Dynasty - Li Hung-chang,<sup>20</sup> the minister of 'Foreign Business' 洋務, a term which includes the conduct of diplomatic relations and the importation of Western technology. The foreign-style enterprises in China were begun mainly for military purposes and followed one another in a logical sequence. To suppress rebellions and for coastal defence, there were, first, the establishment of arsenals and shipyards and the construction of forts and vessels. Secondly, because technicians were needed to make these weapons, schools were established, like the Kiangnan Naval Academy and the School of Railways and Mines, where Lu Hsün studied briefly; and students and officers were selected to be sent abroad to study. Since modern defence required modern communications and transport, the construction of telegraph lines and the organisation of a steamship company were undertaken. Eventually, since modern defence also required money and raw materials, a cotton textile factory was built and coal, iron and gold mines were opened. To Li's mind, the wealth and power of the West were derived entirely from these material sources.

Lu Hsün's own frustrating experience at the modern schools in Nanking convinced him that the short-sighted policy of blindly imitating Western technology on half-understood principles could not strengthen China: "I climbed up the masts a few times. Of course I could not even qualify to be half a sailor. I listened to instructions for a couple of years and went down the mines a few times, but did we excavate any gold, silver, copper, iron or tin? It all seemed so vague and unreal to me."<sup>21</sup> To the proposal of militarism, his objections were three: first, military superiority was not a synonym of civilisation. The Mongols had conquered China but their standards of civilisation were far inferior to those of China; second, arms were for self-defence, not aggression; and third, the Chinese were physically too weak to withstand a heavy and strenuous programme of militarisation. As for the doctrine of economic development, he criticized the participants' selfish motives of greed and self-preservation.

The doctrines of militarism and economic development, the two most dazzling imports from the West, were not the "primary roots but merely the flowers and leaves"<sup>22</sup> of Western civilisation. Lu Hsün was convinced that the arbitrary adoption of Western knowledge could not be of any advantage to China: "The writer merely believes that progress comes <sup>in stages</sup> ~~gradually~~ and that expansion has its source. He is afraid that his country will seek the twigs

and leaves and that nobody will look for the roots. Only those who grasp the source will survive while those who go after the end-product will be ruined."<sup>23</sup> The roots were in the scientists and their idealism, and this even Westerners failed to understand. It was his desire therefore to redirect people's attention to these scientists of the West, the harbingers of Western wealth and power, whose pursuit of knowledge was untainted by any worldly desires for profit or prestige - Wallace, Bunsen and Fresnel were the examples given. Lu Hsiin was convinced that the whole machinery of modern industrialization, of modern state bureaucracy and of military organisation could not have been the creation of men exclusively interested in immediate material pleasures, but this seemed to be the spurring motive of all his compatriots who advocated scientific reform for China.

The aim of the Western scientists is the pursuit of truth. This means a life of hardship, constantly confronted with social indifference and hostility. The zeal of the scientists is therefore necessary as a moral driving force for scientific discoveries. But Lu Hsiin believed that there was an even more important prerequisite of the scientist: "Scientific discoveries are always subject to a supra-scientific force, or, to put it more simply, a non-scientific imaginative inspiration."<sup>24</sup> This supra-scientific force, Lu Hsiin informed his readers, was called 'imagination' by

Ranke and 'inspiration' by Thomas Huxley.<sup>25</sup> Lu Hsün did not, however, take the trouble to clarify why he regarded 'imagination' and 'inspiration' as so important to scientific discoveries in "Science" when in "Man" he criticised Goethe as a scientist because "his argument was generally founded on imagination and not on facts." In which means a creative source, a power to shape ideas, both cases, he used the same Chinese term 'li Hsiang' and which has no connection with existing facts. The answer may perhaps be found if we examine the motive behind each usage. In his criticism of Goethe, Lu Hsün refuted imagination because he wanted to point out the certainty and reliability of scientific knowledge. In the case of Ranke and Huxley, however, he wanted to show that science was not a subject to be sneered at. In both cases the motive of his argument was the exaltation of science.

Having raised the status of science to that of the divine, Lu Hsün proceeded to reveal another virtue of the scientists - their thoroughness in their method of research. In their pursuit of knowledge, they did not bow to unsupported authority or imitate a past age as the Arabs did but "formed hypotheses and tested data."<sup>26</sup> He cited Francis Bacon and Descartes as the prime exponents of two different methods of research, namely induction and deduction respectively. Nature presented itself to Bacon's mind as a huge mass of phenomena, the manifestations of some simple and primitive qualities which were hidden from us by the complexity of things.

The world is a vast labyrinth, the clue to which is, according to Bacon, the method of induction. But the method cannot be applied until all the facts have been observed and tabulated. Concealed among the facts presented to our senses are the causes or forms, and the problem therefore is to analyse experience so that we arrive at a true conclusion. But as Lu Hsün correctly pointed out, our experience is very restricted. If the tables were complete and our notions of the respective phenomena were clear, of course the process of exclusion would lead to the detection of the cause, but these conditions can never be adequately fulfilled. "But absolute induction is beyond the reach of man and its accomplishment can never hope to rise beyond actual experience."<sup>27</sup> So the method to which Bacon ascribed the qualities of absolute certainty and mechanical simplicity is not within human reach. Lu Hsün shared the view of Thomas Huxley (from whose essay Lu Hsün derived the majority of his ideas as expressed in "Science"); that science in its progress has not followed the Baconian method alone. The reason is that the progress of scientific discovery is essentially an act of judgment on the part of the scientist. His choice is doubtless limited by the knowledge of his art. He exercises his judgment to choose things which have a certain relationship to each other. In other words, he has to rely on hypothesis. Therefore Bacon's contribution to learning, to Lu Hsün, was his clear discernment of the shortcomings of the prevalent medieval conviction that a wide measure

of truth could be elicited from a very small series of observations by the extensive use of ratiocination. Descartes, on the other hand, was for the deductive method. He substituted a truly scientific method by which, by applying its few highly general principles, conclusions would be seen to follow necessarily and be verified by all. He claimed to have attained knowledge only when the results were as clear, controllable and certain as those in mathematics. Mathematics thus became the exemplar of science in every field, empirical as well as formal; and its excellence, Descartes saw, was due to the exactness of its data and to its power to explain a great deal by means of very little. It has been proved, however, that scholarship is not acquired by either method alone but by both. To support this observation, Lu Hsün cited as examples brilliant scientists like Galileo, Harvey, Boyle and Newton.

Lu Hsün agreed with Thomas Huxley that Bacon did not altogether exclude the possibility of deduction. However, he was unable to provide any explanation. The passage that follows this criticism is not an explanation at all but only a definition of the inductive method and Bacon's support for a materialistic philosophy: "We find that his opinion was not completely biased. He put forward two methods for understanding natural phenomena: to proceed from experience to theories, and from theories to new experience. Thus to quote him, 'Are things completed by the hand or the mind? They are

completed by neither alone, but need machinery and the aid of other things before they can become perfected. Tasks are done by the mind as well as by the hands.' From this we <sup>should</sup> ~~can~~ expect that in the second part of Novum Organum, there would be a further discussion on deduction."<sup>28</sup> Thomas Huxley's opinion on Bacon is justified because Bacon, realizing the formidable task of exhausting data, proposed a pause when a certain stage was reached and a tentative survey be made of the state of the enquiry. This survey, which he called the 'first vintage', is probably Bacon's nearest approximation to the modern conception of the formation of a scientific hypothesis. The proposal is an explicit, though perhaps inadequate, recognition of that need for hypothesis, experiment and deduction which some of Bacon's critics suppose him to have entirely overlooked.

When Lu Hsün extolled the virtues of dedication, honesty, inspiration, and even of the deductive and inductive methods, he was not introducing any new or alien ideas to the Chinese. These virtues are universally acknowledged and the Chinese are quite familiar with the discussions of them in the books of their sages. Note, too, Lu Hsün's Chinese title for Novum Organum: 格致新機 .

The phrase 格致 comes from the opening passage of Ta Hsüeh

大學 : 致知在格物 (the furtherance of knowledge lies in ke wu). Chu Hsi's 朱熹 comments are: 格, 至也; 物猶事也。窮至事物理 (Ke means to reach; 'things' are the same as 'affairs').

To reach to the utmost the principle of things.)<sup>29</sup> 格致  
 is therefore far from adequate to represent Bacon's method, but  
 the desire for knowledge is mutual in both cases. Lu Hsün's motives,  
 therefore, was obviously to reawaken these qualities in the Chinese  
 and to raise the status of scientific studies in the eyes of the  
 overwhelmingly hostile literati by pointing to the highly ethical  
 basis of Western science.

The sentiment of Lu Hsün's older contemporaries towards science  
 was best summed up by Chang Chih-tung's famous slogan: 中學為體, 西學為用  
 (Chinese learning as the substance, Western learning for application).<sup>30</sup>  
 The other variation of the slogan is: "Chinese learning is the inside  
 knowledge; Western learning is the outside knowledge. Chinese learn-  
 ing is the inside control of the body and soul [of the people];  
 Western learning is to be applied to their mundane affairs." Chang,  
 according to Teng Ssu-yü, was echoing the view of an earlier Chinese,  
 Feng Kuei-fen, who said in 1860: "What we have to learn from the  
 barbarians is merely this: solid ships and effective arms." Lu  
 Hsün's criticism of Chang Chih-tung's call to use "Chinese learning  
 as the substance and Western learning for application" was "old  
 thinking, new skill".<sup>31</sup> This was the theme of his attack on the  
 Chinese reform movement throughout the years after the May Fourth  
 Movement. In 1933, he returned to the same theme and supplied  
 examples of the Chinese way of applying Western science: "The

French manufactured gunpowder for defence, the Chinese used it to make firecrackers. The Westerners used the compass for navigation, the Chinese used it for geomancy. The foreigners used opium for medicinal purposes, the Chinese swallowed it down as food."<sup>32</sup> Lu Hsün never swerved from his early belief that it is impossible to divorce Western science from the idealism of its creators.

In these early essays, Lu Hsün attacked the so-called Chinese spiritualism - the stiff and outdated morality, the complacency, the hypocrisy and, most of all, the Chinese conceit. The anecdote about the stubborn Indians turning up their noses at the suggestion of some Englishmen to build a canal was meant to be a lesson for China to shed her arrogance and come to admit that she could learn something from the West.<sup>33</sup> His mood was very different from an earlier one in 1903 when he spoke in the same manner as many of his patriotic countrymen: "My great and magnificent China! You are indeed the pinnacle of the world, the father of civilisation! You have excelled in all the branches of science, not to mention the humble arts of surveying and map-making."<sup>34</sup> There was a subtle but profound change in his tone by 1907. He realized how pride could blind one's eyes to the better achievement of others and thus impede the path of progress. Benjamin Schwartz has this to say about the Chinese commitment to their past: "A commitment to the national past as a storehouse of good things from which one

can pick and choose at will from outside the tradition, as it were, is a vastly different thing from the commitment to specific values conceived of as universally true. Furthermore, particularly where the nation-state is weak and in peril, the nationalist is hardly likely to find values in those strains of the national past which run counter to the needs of national wealth and power."<sup>35</sup> This was precisely the very thought of Lu Hsün. China had entered a new era and she had to reassess her values.

It would be wrong, however, to label Lu Hsün a 'westernizer'. He was for bringing China up to date, but wanted to retain her "blood vessels"<sup>36</sup> too. The note of disapproval is very obvious in his criticism of the impatient youth of China: "The tendency of the young is to attribute all evils to antiquity, to scorn our literature as primitive, to slander our philosophy as naive and to be carried away by their ardour to replace them all with the creations of the West ..."<sup>37</sup> He gave a very fair and understanding analysis of the predicament of China, blaming her backwardness on the lack of opportunity for proper competition and on the lack of communication with the rest of the world. He attributed the miraculous survival of China in a modern world not to her spiritual superiority but to her good fortune. She could not therefore push her luck too far, but should help herself before it was too late.<sup>38</sup>

Lu Hsin was to become more and more hostile to the Chinese tradition later on in his life. He had hoped that the Chinese reform leaders and people could be influenced to develop and exercise their critical faculties, so that they would be able to adopt the best of the two civilisations. But tradition proved to be indomitable and the Chinese continued to indulge in their arrogance and complacency. He wrote in 1927: "If the Chinese are slaughtered by a steel axe, they will feel the pain and there will still be hope; but if the axe is a soft axe, then they will not know that they are dead even with their heads chopped off, and their doom is certain... Now we often hear people say that the Chinese civilisation is excellent and should be preserved. Even foreigners are complimenting us on that too. This is the soft axe."<sup>38</sup> The soft axe is the indulgence in self-congratulation, which was slowly hypnotising the Chinese mind and sending it to its death. For a thorough regeneration of China, the link with the past should be completely broken, even if it contained many treasures.

NOTES:

- 1 "Introduction to Battle Cries" 吶喊自序, LHCC (1956), vol.I, p.3; "Father's Sickness" 父親的病, LHCC (1956), vol.II, pp.257-262.
- 2 "Father's Sickness", op. cit. p.262.
- 3 "Introduction to Battle Cries", op. cit., p.3.
- 4 "Preface to the Russian Translation of The True Story of Ah Q and Autobiography" 俄譯「阿Q正傳」序及自序 LHCC (1956), vol.VII, pp.79.
- 5 According to Chou Tso-jen's account in Lu Hsün's Hometown 魯迅的故鄉 (Hong Kong, 1962), pp.206-7, Lu Hsün began learning German when he was in Nanking.
- 6 Two of these articles were "On Radium" 說鈾 and "A Short Discourse on Chinese Geology" 中國地質畧論, which he submitted to the magazine Chekiang Ch'ao 浙江潮 in 1903. They are collected in LHCC (1956) vol.VII, pp.18-26 and pp.217-234 respectively.
- 7 "Man", p.166.
- 8 This essay is included in Huxley's Collected Essay (London, 1894), vol. I.
- 9 Ibid. p.114.
- 10 Ibid. p.117.
- 11 "Man". p.163.
- 12 Ibid. pp.160-161.
- 13 J. Lamarck & Zoological Philosophy, trans. H. Elliot, (London, 1914), pp.112-3.
- 14 In his preface to the translation of Jules Verne's Journey to the Moon, Lu Hsün speaks of his reasons for introducing science & "To impart some general knowledge, to shatter traditional superstition, to reform thought, to speed up the progress of civilisation." LHCC (1938), vol.XI, pp.10-11.
- 15 "Miscellaneous Notes on Flowers" 薜花雜誌 LHCC (1956), vol.VII, p.710.
- 16 Hua Kang 華崗 & Logical Development of Lu Hsün's Thought 魯迅思想的邏輯發展 (Shanghai, 1953), p.127.
- 17 Chou Chien-jen was trained as a biologist and worked as an editor of the Commercial Press in Shanghai. His reminiscences about Lu Hsün are in his essay "Mr. Lu Hsün and Science", 魯迅先生與科學, A Study of Lu Hsün 魯迅研究, ed. Hsia Cheng-nung 夏征農 (Shanghai, 1937) pp.57-61.
- 18 Ibid. p.59.

- 19 "Preface to Evolution and Retardation" 「進化與退化」小引 , LHCC (1956), vol.IV, pp.195-6.
- 20 For a biographical sketch of Li Hung-chang, read Teng and Fairbank, op.cit., pp.86-88.
- 21 "Miscellaneous Recollections" 瓊記 , LHCC (1956), vol.II, p.269.
- 22 "Science", p.176.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid. p.172.
- 25 Lu Hsün misinterpreted Huxley's meaning (see my footnote 32 to translation "Science").
- 26 "Science", p.168.
- 27 Ibid. p.174.
- 28 Ibid. pp.173-4.
- 29 See D.C. Lau & "A Note on Ke Wu", Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (London, 1967), vol.XXX, part II, pp.353-7.
- 30 For a biographical sketch of Chang Chi-tung, see Teng and Fairbank, op. cit. pp.164-74.
- 31 "Random Thoughts (48)" 隨感錄(四十八) , LHCC (1956), vol.I, p.409.
- 32 "The Pros and Cons of Electricity" 電的利弊 , LHCC (1956), vol.V, p.13.
- 33 "Science", p.169. For a particularly pungent attack of Lu Hsün on Chinese superiority about their culture, see "Random Thoughts (38)" 隨感錄(三十八) , LHCC (1956) vol.I, pp.387-90.
- 34 " A Brief Discourse on Chinese Geology", op cit., p.217.
- 35 Benjamin Schwartz, op. cit., p.19.
- 36 "Culture", p.192.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 "The Old Melody Has Ended" 老調子已經唱完 LHCC (1956), vol.VII, p.426.

## CHAPTER II

NEW IDEALISM1. The Revelations of Evolution

Thomas Huxley in "Evolution and Ethics" (1893) stressed that evolution was the path of nature and dissuaded people from inferring any purpose from this impersonal cosmic force. Yen Fu, his translator, being a disciple of Spenserian optimism, was unable to accept this scientific truth about evolution. In his translation of Huxley's essay,<sup>1</sup> which is in fact more on evolution than on ethics, and more of an exposition of Spenserian philosophy than a faithful reproduction of Huxley's ideas, Yen Fu was filled with an exultant belief in the cult of energy and in a cosmically sustained, unlimited progress. This belief of Yen Fu, whose T'ien Yin Lun 天演論 was one of the earliest books on the new learning that the young Lu Hsün read, made a tremendous impact on him.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, however, Lu Hsün was aware of the different and opposite ideas of social Darwinism and he frequently referred to them in his writings. In "Mara", he speaks of 'nature red in tooth and claw' to refute the Chinese dream of an ancient paradise on earth. In his later writings he referred on many occasions to the 'ape' and 'worm' elements in man and always advised people to try their best to shed these animal qualities.<sup>3</sup> He condemned

countries which used the principles of 'selection' and 'survival of the fittest' to justify their encroachment on weaker countries. Yet his faith in evolution never wavered.<sup>4</sup> In "Mara", he consoled his reader that behind the seeming misfortunes of life lay the promise of progress: "This [i.e. the irreversible course of evolution] is the cause of grief in the human world, yet <sup>it is</sup> valued as the greatest [force] by the Mara school. A man in possession of this force can evolve and multiply, improve and advance to reach the highest point of human achievement."<sup>5</sup> Like Yen Fu, he refused to accept Huxley's warning of the reversible course of evolution, that evolution includes "the phenomena of retrogressive metamorphosis that is of progress from a condition of relative complexity to one of relative uniformity."<sup>6</sup> Evolution was to him like an arrow that could not return to the bow. It was the assertive energy in man which would direct him ever upwards. In 1919, he reaffirmed his faith in the progress of mankind: "Nature still clashed with the interest of man; many people, too, have chosen to wither and remain behind, but life will not turn back because of these. No matter what darkness comes to obscure thought, no matter what misery comes to attack society, no matter what crime comes to slander humanity, the secret will of man to attain perfection shall always trample down these barbs and march forward."<sup>7</sup> He was convinced that the future must be better than the present,

the young must be better than the old. Therefore when the German philosophers, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, applied a Darwinian slant to their theories on social and spiritual matters, it is not surprising that Lu Hsün should have proved receptive. Their philosophy which extolled the subjective will completely captured the heart of this Chinese writer and he regarded it as a messianic one that would transform China from "a country of sand" 沙國 into "a country of real people" 人國 .<sup>8</sup>

## 2. The Rise of Subjective Idealism

Haeckel, a materialist philosopher, believed that man's soul was in no way superior to that of an animal.<sup>9</sup> Although Haeckel acknowledged on many occasions in his works man's structural superiority to animals, Lu Hsün has chosen to interpret this acknowledgement as an admission of the spiritual excellence of man over animals.<sup>10</sup>

Man's struggle for mental perfection, however, is constantly hindered by the undertow of matter which directs him to a life of rest, stagnation and degeneration. In the West, Lu Hsün said, everything became subordinated to matter, so that people pursued the objective materialistic world and eventually ignored the subjective inner spirit. As a result, society withered and progress halted. But great men like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche,

Kierkegaard, Stirner and Ibsen arose and endeavoured to check the decline by advocating the subjective will. These men were iconoclasts who shattered orthodoxy.<sup>11</sup> In this short passage from one of his essays written in 1919, he explained why Europe had gone so far ahead of China: "There are idols in China and abroad. But there are more idol destroyers in foreign countries, as a result, the Reformation and the French Revolution succeeded. When more old idols are demolished, mankind will become more progressive, ~~so we~~ ... people like Darwin, Tolstoy, Nietzsche are the great idol destroyers of modern time."<sup>12</sup> The idols these men destroyed were religion, government, and democracy. All these European philosophers and writers exerted a profound influence on Lu Hsün's life and helped to cultivate his already very strong innate individualism. It might perhaps be opportune to examine briefly at this point the materialistic philosophy that preceded their emergence and then the main tenets of the ideas of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, two philosophers whose names are frequently associated with many critical studies of Lu Hsün's thought.

In Europe, the priority of mathematics and mechanics in the development of modern science, and the reciprocal stimulation of industry and physics under the common pressure of expanding needs, acted as material incentives to speculation. Despite Descartes' insistence that philosophy should begin with the self and travel

outward, the industrialization of Western Europe drove thought away from the spiritual and directed it to material things. Locke was affected by the Baconian insistence on the importance of experience. Experience is received through the senses and without the senses to communicate the experience to our mind, we have nothing in our mind. Therefore, Locke claimed that the mind at birth is a clean sheet upon which sense-experience caused by matter writes in many ways until sensation begets memory and memory begets ideas.<sup>13</sup> This led to the conclusion that, since only material things could affect our senses, man knew nothing but matter, and must accept a materialistic philosophy. Kant denied that the mind is passive wax upon which experience and sensation make their mark. Rather, it is an active organ which transforms the chaotic multiplicity of experience into the ordered unity of thought.<sup>14</sup> This emphasis upon mind as opposed to matter gradually led in the end to the assertion that only the mind existed. From this, Schopenhauer derived his theory of the will, and Kierkegaard his famous statement that "truth is subjectivity".

Schopenhauer was aware that there was knowledge of a supra-empirical kind which could not be obtained through scientific objectivity. Science has revealed that man is another phenomenal object in nature, but his self-consciousness reveals that he is more than this. It is therefore impossible to discover the secret

essence of reality by examining matter. We must begin with what we know directly and intimately - ourselves. We can never arrive at the real nature of things from without. If we can ferret out the ultimate nature of our minds we shall have the key to the external world. Schopenhauer arrived at the conclusion that human activities were all due to a certain unconscious but vital force, the will in the internal self.<sup>15</sup> The intellect may seem at times to lead the will, but only as a guide leads his master. The will "is the strong blind man who carries on his shoulder the lame man who can see."<sup>16</sup> Character therefore lies in the will and not in the intellect. And since a man's activity is ultimately only explicable as the expression of his will, so it is with everything else in nature: the will is the causality of the world. But if the world is will, it must be a world of suffering. For every wish that is satisfied, there remain more that are denied. Desire is infinite, fulfilment is limited, so man can never be happy. The signs of strife, competition and conflict in nature put an end to all hopes for joy. To minimize pain and grief, the only solution, according to Schopenhauer, is to reduce the will.

The will was sanctified when Napoleon announced to the world the secret of his success: "I succeeded because I willed it: I never hesitated." Napoleon was the national hero of France, but he belonged to the liberals and rebels of Europe as well. For

them, he was a symbol of hope and freedom in an exhausted and suffocating world. All the 'satanic poets' like Byron, Shelley, Pushkin and Lermontov and 'will' philosophers like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche regarded him with awe. Nietzsche, especially, saw the justification of the history between 1789 and 1815 in the birth of this great man: "The Revolution made Napoleon possible: that is its justification. We ought to desire the anarchical collapse of the whole of our civilisation if such a reward were to be its result."<sup>17</sup> The world should prostrate itself before this superman. Only men of such stature should be allowed to walk this earth, not the foolish and the ordinary who are still 'worms' and 'apes'.<sup>18</sup> The superman can be cultivated by careful breeding and subjection to Spartan discipline. He will be master of the world, he will make war upon the masses, and resist the democratic tendencies of the age, for in all directions mediocre people are joining hands to make themselves masters. Thus in expounding his theory of the superman, Nietzsche has raised will from a philosophical context to a political one and changed Schopenhauer's pessimistic note into an optimistic one.

### 3. "Will to Life"

Schopenhauer's voluntarism struck Lu Hsün like a blinding light. He immediately identified it with the life-force in man that enabled him to evolve upward to perfection and with the

cosmic force that promised unlimited progress. He sided himself bravely with the late nineteenth century philosophers, discarding the classical concept that the ideal man should have a perfect harmony of reason and sentiment, and insisting that he should be a man with an absolute control over his own will so that he can strive to realize his ideal in the face of constant setbacks. Lu Hsün's enthusiastic response to voluntarism, seemed to have been subconsciously spurred on partly by his repugnance of the traditional Chinese concept of the ideal man who has to fulfil so many requirements and possess so many virtues and partly by a sense of the urgency. The man of perfection and harmony, therefore, seemed to him to be an impossible dream. The longing and waiting for such a miracle to happen would prevent people from devoting their time and attention to the urgent needs of the time. What China needed was not a saintly recluse but strong individuals of action and endeavour - the 'real people', he called them. The same longing was repeated in another essay in 1925: "If there are anywhere in the world people who really want to live, they must have the courage to speak out, to laugh and cry, hate and fight, to destroy this wretched time in this wretched place."<sup>19</sup>

The will, to Schopenhauer, is far from being a happy force. It is a blind and insatiable force without conscious direction. It has no fixed end which, if achieved, would bring contentment.

Man is, therefore, a tragic being. He has no claim to happiness. The closest thing to happiness is the diminution of pain, which can only be achieved by reducing one's desires to a minimum. This implied a minimum of action, which was quite the contrary of Lu Hsün's vision of life.

Lu Hsün does not comment on the pessimism of Schopenhauer in these essays, but he reveals his strong objection to the Chinese philosophy of passivism, which has<sup>an</sup> affinity with the ideas of the German philosopher. He attacked the Taoist teaching of non-interference of the heart, which he regarded as unnatural and impossible. The Taoists believe that if a man could leave his heart undisturbed and establish the rule of non-interference, then there would be peace in this world. Lu Hsün did not think that<sup>that</sup> was right or feasible. In later writings, he pointed out how the Taoist principle of non-action 無為 has poisoned and paralysed the minds of China. It stopped the very springs of human action and took the vitality of life out of the individual, the community and the country. It was this principle which led the Chinese people to play the role of disinterested spectators. Their passivity was further nourished and encouraged by those who ruled them. The subjects were taught to regard peace and tranquility as the highest goal in the individual, the family and the state. Political peace was thus maintained but it was accompanied by intellectual and social retrogression.

Therefore, in an age of science, amidst the sounds of guns and trains, the Chinese could still believe in the unchangeable character of the order of things and in the immortality of the 'national heritage'

國粹 . Lu Hsün's most forceful satire against the absurdity of Taoism is contained in his story about Lao Tzŭ 老子,<sup>20</sup> the Taoist master who was completely absorbed in the contemplation of his inner self. Lu Hsün put him in situations where he was obliged to act, and he revealed himself to be a poor, foolish and unresourceful fellow. This explains why Lu Hsün was so incensed when some of his contemporaries misinterpreted the story "Leaving the Pass" 出關 as a sentimental tale which evoked sympathy for the pathetic and insulted old man.<sup>21</sup>

Schopenhauer, therefore, like Lao Tzŭ, instead of welcoming the realisation of all the potentialities of man, drives force back to its source of nothingness, or, as Lu Hsün puts it, "reversed the arrow". Instead of welcoming the unobstructed thrust of human energies, he yearns for the quiet oblivion of Nirvana. By Nirvana, the individual achieves the peace of will-lessness and finds salvation. But what about the whole human race? Life laughs at the death of the individual - it will survive him in his offspring. Is there a way to save our children from this eternal suffering? Schopenhauer finds the obvious solution in stopping the source of life - a final and irrevocable conquest of the will. He explains

why shame is associated with sexual desires by arguing that it reveals a sense of irresponsibility in prolonging the suffering of the world: "If, now we contemplate the turmoil of life, we behold all occupied with its want and misery, straining all their powers to satisfy the infinite needs and to ward off its multifarious sorrows, yet without daring to hope for anything else than simply the preservation of this tormented existence for a short span of time. In between, however, and in the midst of this tumult, we see the glance of two lovers meeting longingly, yet why so secretly, fearfully and stealthily? Because these lovers are the traitors who seek to perpetuate the whole want and drudgery which would otherwise speedily reach an end."<sup>22</sup> Lu Hsün took a very different view altogether. In this statement made in 1919, which is echoed by many other similar ones, he raises and answers the question: "Why must life be propagated? So that it can develop and evolve. Each individual is mortal and evolution has no limits. Therefore life must continue, advancing along the path of evolution. For this, a certain inner urge is needed, like the urge of a unicellular creature which in time enables it to multiply, or the urge of the invertebrate animals which in time enables the vertebrae to appear. This is why the later forms of life are always more significant and complete, hence more worthwhile and precious. Thus the earlier forms of life should be sacrificed to the later ones."<sup>23</sup>

The cause of evolution was transformed into the purpose of evolution: the desire for sexual union, Lu Hsün maintained, was motivated by a nobler aim than mere physical pleasure. This purpose sparked off a naive faith in the perfectability of youth which Lu Hsün sustained till 1927 when reality broke the illusion:

"I have always believed in the theory of evolution, considering that the future is necessarily better than the past and young people better than old men ... But later on I came to realize that I was wrong not because I was bewitched by the writings of historical materialism or by writings of revolutionary literature, but because I have witnessed at Canton the young people dividing themselves into two big camps and informing on each other to the officials which led to many being arrested. My way of thinking was therefore destroyed. From that time onwards, I have often looked at youths with an eye of suspicion and ceased to honour them undeservedly."<sup>24</sup>

But Lu Hsün's faith in the bright future of the whole of mankind never weakened. While Schopenhauer spoke of grief and nothingness, Lu Hsün spoke of a will to life - a life of energy that was sublimated in creativity. Lu Hsün was never a fatalist like Schopenhauer, as a few of his critics maintained.<sup>25</sup> They mistook the all-pervading gloom and melancholy of his works for

fatalism. Lu Hsün believed that a writer's duty was to criticize the present in order to hasten the coming of the bright future. He therefore considered that it was his vocation to expose evil, corruption and inhumanity.<sup>26</sup> His two collections of short-stories, (Battle Cries 吶喊<sup>27</sup> and Hesitation 彷徨<sup>28</sup>) which put him on a level with the best short-story writers in the world, and his tsa-wen 雜文 were all written with this aim in mind. Chou Tso-jen once commented on his brother as follows: "One distinctive feature of Lu Hsün's stories and essays which is absent in other writers is his keen observation of the Chinese race. I doubt if there is another one among the modern writers of China who held such a tragic view of the Chinese. He had been very fond of unofficial historical chronicles since childhood and was very much under their influence. The truth he gained from books plus his own actual experience in society had bred an outlook on life that was full of pain and gloom."<sup>29</sup> Yet Lu Hsün was sure that although the road to national rebirth was long and tortuous, light would eventually come and his battle cries would arouse the people in the 'iron chamber' of China.<sup>30</sup> His melancholy, John Chinnery observes, was more intuitive than rational.<sup>31</sup> In these essays, melancholy and gloom were brushed aside by youthful vigour and the messianic gospel of evolution.

It is obvious that Schopenhauer's doctrine of the primacy of the will, like Darwin's evolutionary theory, has no logical

connection with pessimism. Pessimism only came to Schopenhauer as a result of his own temperament. Like Nietzsche, those who held it after him frequently found in it a basis for optimism. Lu Hsin found in the will a philosophical synonym of scientific evolution - the source of energy, action and development. Youth and motive joined hands to convert him into a worshipper of the life-force. The conspicuous absence of his comments on the pessimism of Schopenhauer - a frequently quoted feature of the philosopher which no reader can overlook - was perhaps deliberate and shows Lu Hsin's uncompromising stand against a negative philosophy.

#### 4. Subjectivism without Anarchism

Men in control of vast organisation or responsible for formulating or interpreting codes of laws or morals have tended to be abstract in their outlook, to forget what actual human beings are like, and to try to fit men to systems rather than systems to men. They have therefore restricted or destroyed individualism which is indispensable for the progress of society, the country and the world. It was in reaction to this, Lu Hsin points out, that subjectivism arose. Kierkegaard's subjectivism was meant of course to counter the materialistic tendency and the 'herd-instinct' of his age to give man a richer inner life. This is, however, only one of the reasons for his advocacy of the subjective philosophy; the more important reason is that he wanted man to justify himself and be

responsible for himself. When he said that objective knowledge was removed from truth, he did not mean that truth was revealed in some personal and incommunicable premonition, he was aiming to attribute more honour to the individual. The statement simply means that everything a man does gets value from the way it is willed and decided by him. In the words of his disciple, Jean Paul Sartre, "man to begin with, he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself."<sup>32</sup>

Kierkegaard felt that man should stop treating objectivity as emotional crutches or scapegoats, and carry responsibility on his own shoulders. Lu Hsün seemed to have overlooked this purpose of Kierkegaard's subjectivism. He regarded it simply as a desire for the emancipation of the human mind.

How far, then, should subjectivism be allowed to go? Lu Hsün did not specify whether he accepted the anarchist Max Stirner's radical view that a man should be absolutely free, but he seemed to have been very much against anarchism: "Alas! how <sup>extreme</sup> ~~perverted~~ are those anarchist who try to overthrow everything and abolish class."<sup>33</sup> He was hitting out at anarchism in defence of government by the superman.

Lu Hsün's attitude towards anarchism oscillated between tolerance and outright opposition. The anarchist movement was gathering speed in Japan during Lu Hsün's stay there. The Japanese

socialists began to take increasing interest in anarchist ideology, and several books were published on anarchism between 1902 and 1904. One of these, Hatayama Sentairo's Modern Anarchism, in fact a history of the Russian revolutionary movement containing details of organised assassination groups and explosive factories, was translated into Chinese in 1904. Between 1906 and 1907 two Japanese anarchists published a periodical called The Review of Revolutions, which was intended primarily for Chinese students in Tokyo. Some articles in that periodical were discussions of the Russian anarchist Kropotkin's ideas as put forward in his Mutual Aid, but the majority of articles were on assassination and terrorism. By 1906, Min-pao 民報 the journal of the T'ung-meng Kwei 同盟會, which was edited by Sun Yat-sen 孫中山 and Wang Ching-wei 汪精衛 and published in Tokyo, devoted more and more space to anarchist or terrorist tracts. In July of the same year, the editorship of the paper was taken over by Chang T'ai-yen 章太炎, a Chinese scholar whom Lu Hsün greatly admired, and whose philosophy, fusing Taoist and Buddhist ideas, came close to that of philosophical anarchism. In the summer of 1907, the "Society for the Study of Socialism" was officially inaugurated. Its avowed aim was to study and disseminate the principles of anarchism.<sup>34</sup>

Lu Hsün, like the avant-garde intellectuals of the time, was attracted to the iconoclastic, idealistic spirit of anarchism.

But he did not agree with all its ideas. In an anarchist society, there would be no government, no armies, no laws, no marriage and no religion. Instead, there would <sup>be</sup> freely organised groups whose only guide would be the natural, ethical code of 'mutual aid'. Science would be for the benefit of everyone, not just for the capitalists. There would be free education for all up to graduate level, which would be conducted in Esperanto, thereby causing national languages to disappear. This society would be achieved in three stages. Firstly, there would be a period of intense propaganda. This would be followed by one of resistance and terrorism. Finally, there would be a world mass revolution. Lu Hsiün agreed that the individualist should be completely free, but his distrust of the ability and sincerity of the masses turned him away from anarchism and made him want to retain the organ most hated by the anarchist, the government, which he believed should be vested in the hands of 'a superman' or 'a superior mind'.<sup>35</sup> The goal of his individualism was nationalism, not universalism. He abhorred the nihilistic violence of the anarchist,<sup>36</sup> but he also dismissed the passive, non-resistant anarchism of Tolstoy, a writer he greatly admired, as naive and unscientifically optimistic: "His [i.e. Tolstoy's] opinion is wonderful as an ideal, but when put to the test of reality, its effect is far removed from his intention ... the rate of human evolution varies with the individuals: some still retain the

'worm' characteristics, others the 'ape' - they can never be uniform even in a thousand years."<sup>37</sup> Although on his return to China he showed a definite interest in Esperanto and even taught part-time in an Esperanto school,<sup>38</sup> and translated the works of Mushakoji,<sup>39</sup> Artzibashev,<sup>40</sup> and Eroshenko,<sup>41</sup> who all had anarchist backgrounds, he never professed a conviction for anarchism. He respected the blind Eroshenko but regarded his views as impractical: "Mr. Eroshenko is an anarchist, a universalist, a poet, a musician, a writer of children's tales. But the world he lives in is not a real world, it is the world of beauty of the future, it is utopia, a land of freedom - a poetic world like that of his tales. His anarchism and universalism are merely the products of this beautiful and poetic world."<sup>42</sup>

##### 5. Man and Superman

Lu Hsün's rejection of anarchism was based on the conviction that because men were basically different they could not be relied on to govern themselves. For the same reasons, he objected to democracy. Democracy, the rallying cry of the French Revolution, was considered by Lu Hsün as an inevitable but unfortunate phase in Western civilisation. It was inevitable because it was a logical reaction on the part of the subjects to tyrannical despotism. The French kings had exhausted the wealth of the country

by engaging in too many foreign wars, shattered their subjects' confidence in them, and abused their loyalty by not being able to give them a fair and efficient government. Consequently, the people rose up against them and democracy was introduced. Privileges granted to the aristocrats and to the Church and restrictions on the common people were withdrawn; equality and liberty were glorified. But democracy was a great mistake. To begin with, its principles were unsound. Good government was only possible when the participating members were equipped with the right qualities for the task. Lu Hsián cited the foolishness of the people who crucified Christ, poisoned Socrates and exiled Brutus, to support his argument. Moreover, democracy brings about the undesirable effect of conformity. To ensure fairness and equality among the compact majority, an average standard is created. But conformity means the denial of individuality and superiority and the support for mediocrity. Therefore, democracy, like materialism, must not be blindly adopted for China because it would wreck the survival chances of the individual genius: "Right and wrong must not be determined by the people, for their pronouncement would not be true, Affairs of government should not be determined by the people, for, if they are, good government will never come. The world can achieve peace only with the emergence of a superman, <sup>failing this</sup> or, ~~in other words,~~ of a superior mind."<sup>43</sup>

The influence of Nietzsche was complex. One aspect of it was the scorn for democracy. In his student days in Japan, Lu Hsün was surprisingly untouched by socialist theories and seemed to have no real sympathy for the role of the common people in history. He spoke of the people loosely as the majority, the mob, the crowd, and his dissatisfaction seemed to point at all the classes in society: the rich as well as the poor, the aristocrat as well as the commoner, the powerful as well as the weak. I am therefore inclined to disagree with Professor J. Průšek who says that Lu Hsün "refused to accept bourgeois democracy, which seemed to him to be a fiction, a fraudulent game played by intriguing politicians, and not genuine democracy."<sup>44</sup> The examples of the killing of Jesus and the banishment of Brutus, which supported the conviction that government must not be entrusted to the people, were directed at the common people and not at intriguing politicians or at the bourgeoisie, although he did mention, in the beginning of "Culture", the intrigues of the politicians and merchants in China who both claimed to act for public good. He has not ruled out the possibility that some advocated democracy with a noble motive. Some people suppressed their individuality to serve their country and made themselves the slaves of a collective will which was unfortunately often removed from truth. The reason for this is that, as Lu Hsün himself said, there are

very few truly wise men among us. Democracy which was based on the will of the majority could therefore never work: this, Lu Hsün makes very plain in "Culture".

John Chinnery has suggested that Lu Hsün's apprehensive attitude towards the Chinese masses was possibly a common one among the Chinese thinkers of the author's generation for, to them, the mass movement closest to their experience was the Boxer Rebellion.<sup>45</sup> The Rebellion was a collective effort of a section of the masses to express their patriotic sentiment, but it had negative features which did not appeal to reformers and to those who believed in the age of science. This probably influenced Lu Hsün to suspect the combined effort of the people. On the other hand, Lu Hsün was horrified by the cold indifference of the masses, who would gaze with complete unconcern upon the suffering of their fellow countrymen. One instance was the Japanese lantern slide he saw in early 1906 which showed a Chinese, bound and awaiting execution by the Japanese as a Russian spy, surrounded by able-bodied but apathetic Chinese.<sup>46</sup> Lu Hsün re-enacted a similar occasion in his short-story called "On Public View" 示衆.<sup>47</sup> In the latter a fettered Chinese was exhibited before being put to death by his own countrymen, and spectators treated the sight as an amusing holiday event.

The inability of the masses to understand the idealism of the 1911 Revolution was a constant theme in Lu Hsün's later works. In "Upheaval" 風波<sup>48</sup> and in "The True Story of Ah Q" 阿Q正傳,<sup>49</sup> the ignorance of the village people was exposed: they had no idea what was going on and followed the way the wind blew. The theme of "Medicine" 藥, Lu Hsün told his pupil and friend Sun E-yüan 孫伏園, was the sorrow of the revolutionaries caused by the ignorance of the masses: "To put it in a more direct way, revolutionaries sacrifice their lives in the struggle for the ignorant masses, but the latter did not even know for whom it was that the former had sacrificed their lives. Not only that, they even thought, because of their ignorant views, that this sacrifice could be a source of enjoyment and could be used to increase the personal welfare of certain individuals."<sup>50</sup> In "Waiting for a Genius" 未有天才之前,<sup>51</sup> a lecture he delivered in 1924, Lu Hsün grieved that China had not produced the right soil, that is, the right public, to nourish a genius. The people, he agreed with Nietzsche, were still 'apes' and 'worms'.

But there was one very essential difference between Nietzsche and Lu Hsün in their attitude towards the common people. Whereas Nietzsche desired their total suppression and annihilation for the creation of a genius, Lu Hsün looked forward to a genius for their final salvation. His lifelong fight for their regeneration was the

most convincing proof of his deep affection. He was continuously vexed by their stubbornness and lack of response, but he never longed for their extinction from the face of the earth as Nietzsche did. The latter said: "The object is to attain that enormous energy of greatness, which can model the man of the future, by means of discipline and also by means of the annihilation of millions of the bungled and the botched."<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, Lu Hsin continuously emphasised the need to reform the difficult Chinese language and to promote education to save the common people from ignorance.<sup>53</sup>

Lu Hsin did not regard the creation of a genius as the end either, but as a means to another end. He made it very clear that he expected his superman to educate and care for the common people: "The wise /i.e. the supermen/ must thoroughly understand the situation of the world, weigh, compare, remove the extremes, <sup>and</sup> choose the ideas most suited to the country ~~and apply them~~. In this way, she will not lag behind the world in thought, externally speaking; internally too, she will not lose her <sup>inherent constitution</sup> own blood vessels. She can adopt the new and revive the old to establish a new school of thought, and give more depth to the meaning of life. Her people will then have greater self-awareness and can assert their individual characters. In this way, our 'country of sand' can be transformed into 'a country of real people.'<sup>54</sup> His superman is a kind, patriarchal figure. He returned to the same idea in a later essay: "So what we cherish and

hope for is a man who refuses to go with the crowd and who can hold his own. He sees penetratingly into everything and criticizes civilisation without trying to please the uninformed and ignorant masses ... He is unperturbed by the world's praise or censure ... He is not afraid to stand alone. He will bring light to darkness and self-realization to our people, who will then be in full possession of themselves. China will rise."<sup>55</sup>

The superman of Nietzsche is a military man. At Frankfurt in 1870, on his way to the front to fight in the war with France, Nietzsche saw a troop of cavalry passing with a magnificent clatter through the town. There and then, he says, came the perception, the vision, out of which his entire philosophy was to grow. "I felt for the first time that the strongest and highest will to life does not find expression in a miserable struggle for existence, but in a will to war, a will to power, a will to overpower!"<sup>56</sup> He was for war: "a good war halloweth any cause".<sup>57</sup> War is good, because times of strife bring out the latent goodness of individuals who before had insufficient opportunity to use these qualities. Lu Hsün, on the other hand, was opposed to violence, militarism and aggression.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen, <sup>58</sup> <sup>the</sup> great leader of the 1911 Revolution and the founder of the Republic of China, who symbolised Lu Hsün's warrior, was not a militant man. In fact he differed in every

respect from Nietzsche's superman. He cared for his people and was a lover of peace. He did not, like the superman, make conceit into a duty, nor was he narcissistically hypnotised by the contemplation of his own wisdom and goodness into bringing about the creation of a new tyranny.

Lu Hsün was against his countrymen's idea that military strength was proof of civilisation. He reaffirmed this stand in a later essay: "The path of human evolution is not equal in every man, so in some there will still be the 'worm' or 'ape' elements ... hence, the desire to kill, to encroach upon another, and to raise one's country to become masters of the world is an animal kind of patriotism. If man is to surpass the beast, he must eradicate this desire!"<sup>59</sup> He went on to say: "Physical strength and militancy are to be commended only when used for self-preservation, and not when used to encroach on innocent nations. Once man has gained security for himself, he should use his remaining strength in a constructive way ... The English poet Byron's championing of the Greek cause is an assertion of the principle of liberty."<sup>60</sup> He admired Byron for his perfect application of this inherent right of man. Thus his abhorrence of war did not stem from any vague philanthropism or pacifism. He did not condemn every armed struggle, but sharply distinguished the causes and motives of each conflict.

In spite of these fundamental differences between the ideals of Nietzsche and himself, Lu Hsiin was immensely fascinated by the German philosopher and his larger-than-life hero.<sup>61</sup> The superman vision encouraged his faith in the future of man: "Although Nietzsche's concept of the superman is too vague, from mankind's present record we can be fully confident that, in the future, a higher and more perfect mankind would emerge."<sup>62</sup> He also fused the image with the great and noble figure of Ibsen's Stockmann,<sup>63</sup> the shining example of the modern man who refused to be polluted by the depravity of knaves. He exhorted the young people of China to listen to the call of Nietzsche: "I wish Chinese youth to strive upward, disregarding mockery and underhand attacks. Nietzsche said: 'Verily, a polluted stream is man. One must be a very ocean to receive a polluted stream without becoming unclean. Behold, I teach you the superman: he is that ocean, in him can your great contempt be overwhelmed.'<sup>64</sup> He frankly admitted his admiration for Nietzsche and the influence this philosopher had on him. He kept a German copy of Thus Spake Zarathustra in his possession and translated the prologue into Chinese in 1920.<sup>65</sup> He more than once praised the supple, vigorous and impassioned style of the book and in his later polemic essays, resorted frequently to Nietzsche's clever use of hyperbole and shocking statements. The image of the superman "Free from the happiness of serfs, redeemed from gods and worship, fearless and fearful, great and

solitary,"<sup>66</sup> has inspired him to write some of his most beautiful prose poems. This extract from one of them is evidently very Nietzschean in feeling and flavour: "A rebellious fighter has arisen from mankind, who, standing erect, sees through all the deserted ruins and lonely tombs of the past and the present. He remembers all the intense and unending agony ... he understands all that is dead and all that is living, as well as all as yet unborn. He sees through the Creator's game. And he will rise to save or destroy mankind, these loyal subjects of the Creator. The Creator, the weakling, hides himself in shame. Then heaven and earth change colour in the eyes of the fighter."<sup>67</sup>

Lu Hsün's attack on democracy was never repeated again after 1907. While he continued to criticize the ignorance and stupidity of the people, his main target was the upper strata of the Chinese society. He gradually acquired the view that the country was responsible for the backwardness of the people, that the rich and the powerful deliberately kept the poor people in a state of servitude. The Chinese language was kept difficult intentionally to deprive the poor people of the chance to acquire knowledge.<sup>68</sup> He would even be prepared to renounce some of his former prejudices against his people when he felt overwhelmed with feeling for them. For example, once he refuted a contemporary's denunciation of the lack of principles of the citizens in

Shakespeare's play Julius Caesar - a view that he<sup>himself</sup> held in 1907 - by the argument of a Russian writer Lev Shestov who said that the mob were no fools.<sup>69</sup> They were the spectators for whose entertainment the heroes like Anthony and Brutus destroyed each other. So the common people were raised from fools to cool observers of life. He pledged his faith in these proletariat in a public reply to questions asked by a literary magazine: "In the past I was conscious of the corruptness of the old society and looked forward to the rise of a new society, without knowing, however, what form the 'new' would take. Nor could I be sure that after the rise of the 'new' all would be well. Not until after the October Revolution did I learn that the creator of this new society was the proletariat; but owing to the hostile propaganda of the capitalist countries I remained somewhat indifferent to the October Revolution and retained certain doubts. Now the existence and success of the Soviet Union have convinced me that a classless society will certainly come into being."<sup>70</sup>

Lu Hsián's identification with the proletariat cause was, in part, a historical inevitability. The coup of Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 in 1927<sup>71</sup> completely shattered his faith in the Kuomintang 國民黨 as a revolutionary party. Its persecution of the progressive youth and its co-operation with the reactionary sector of the country have given it an image not unlike that of the old

Manchu government. Lu Hsün's personal experiences and his own observation of the exploitation of the poor and the weak in the country threw him naturally onto the side of the proletariat. But it was by no means a sudden decision spurred on by the deterioration of the political situation of the country, it was a logical development of his philosophy of individualism in 1907.

Lu Hsün's conception of individuality, as we have seen, was basically Darwinian, which simply posits a blind self-assertiveness on the individual's part, and for this reason, is characterised by strength, defiance, and iconoclasm. This suited Lu Hsün's intention very well, as he was convinced that what China needed was men of singular willpower who could free her from the fetters of tradition. But he did not champion individualism for its own sake, his individualism was directed towards a definite goal: to reform society and revive China. For this reason, he refused to interpret will as an unruly and purposeless force that was responsible for human grief and suffering, but saw it as a manifestation of the forward-marching life-force in nature. He refused, too, to regard the creation of the superman as the final goal of individualism; the superman was only the leader of men who would emulate his goodness. He was not concerned about the existentialist's motive of conferring essence on the individual; he saw in subjectivism only the emancipation from orthodoxy and conventions:

to enable the individual to release his highest capacity for the service of society and country. He did not welcome anarchism whose principles were diametrically opposed to patriotism, discipline, and organisation. He therefore insisted on the altruistic qualities of the individual and believed that the self-assertiveness on the individual's part could be reconciled with the notion of an innate moral sense which would inspire the individual to act in the interest of other men. Lu Hsün's individualism is, of course, as unscientifically optimistic as anarchism, which he himself objected to for precisely the same reason. Benjamin Schwartz's criticism of Spencer can be applied equally well in the case of Lu Hsün: "If human society is, in fact, a field of action in which the behaviour of the individuals is completely determined by Darwinian mechanisms, the notion of respect for the liberty of others is entirely unwarranted, at least during the stages of evolution preceding the final utopian equilibrium."<sup>72</sup>

The incongruity in Lu Hsün's early thought plus the fact that the salvation of the people was the culminating goal of his individual explains a great deal his later identification of himself with the people. The New Idealism has provided him with a modern frame of mind, a critical outlook on life, but it has not suggested any really positive or practicable means to transform life and Lu Hsün, as he himself admitted in the

reply to the International Literary Magazine, has not been able to envisage what the future of China should be like. The notion of self-realisation was too vague and idealistic to solve the many problems of China. The image of the defiant and anti-social hero did not quite fit into the picture of suffering humanity in China.

Yet Lu Hsün's own scholarly background, lack of contact with the working class, and his strong individualistic traits prevented him from becoming an actual unit of the 'majority'. Maybe, this is the reason why his many manifestations of allegiance to the cause of the proletariat have not quite the same brilliance and persuasiveness that characterise his usual writings in which he castigated the old Chinese society. Lu Hsün's fascination, to many of us, lies in the many facets of his nature, his anxiety, his passion, rather than in his innovations and propositions on political matters.

NOTES:

- 1 Yen Fu: T'ien Yin Lun, A Collection of Yen Fu's Translated Works 嚴譯名著叢刊 (Shanghai, 1931).
- 2 For Lu Hsün's own account of his first reading of Yen Fu's work, see "Miscellaneous Recollections", op. cit., p.268.
- 3 "Culture", p.168.
- 4 "On Silencing the Accursed Voice"  
LHCC (1956), vol. VII, p.245.
- 5 "Mara", p.199.
- 6 Thomas Huxley: Evolution and Ethics, (New York, 1925), p.6.
- 7 "The Road of Life" 生命之路, LHCC (1956), vol.I, p.434.
- 8 "Culture", p.192.
- 9 For a criticism of Haeckel's materialistic monism, see W.P.D. Wightman's Science and Monism (London, 1936).
- 10 c.f. Chou Tso-jen: "A Literature of Man" 人的文學  
Art and Life 藝術與生活 (Shanghai, 1940), p.14.
- 11 "The sort of 'man' we are talking about is ... 'man who evolved from the animal' ... we recognise that man is a type of creature; the phenomena of his life are in no way different from those of other creatures. So we believe that all man's vital instincts are good and beautiful and should be completely satisfied; all unnatural customs which are at variance with man's nature should be eradicated ... We believe that man's animal life is the basis of his survival, yet his internal life has gradually distanced itself from the animal and can eventually aspire to a lofty and serene sphere. All vestiges of beastly nature and those of the ancient rules of conduct which obstruct the upward development of human nature should be cast off or corrected."
- 11 "More Thoughts on The Collapse of Leifeng Pagoda" 再論雷峯塔之倒掉, LHCC (1956) vol. I, p.246: "Men like Rousseau, Stirner, Nietzsche, Tolstoy or Ibsen are, in Brandes' words, destroyers of old tracks."
- 12 "Random Thoughts (46)" 隨感錄 (四十六), LHCC (1956), vol.I, pp.406-7.
- 13 John Locke  $\ddagger$  Essays on the Human Understanding (1689)
- 14 Immanuel Kant  $\ddagger$  Critique of Pure Reason (1781)
- 15 Arthur Schopenhauer  $\ddagger$  The World as Will and Idea (1844)

- 16 Arthur Schopenhauer = Collected Works, ed. Will Durant (New York, 1928), vol.II, p.42.
- 17 As cited in Bertrand Russell: A History of Western Philosophy (London, 1948), pp.729-30.
- 18 Friedrich Nietzsche = Thus Spoke Zarathustra (Penguin Classics, 1961), p.42 -  
 "You have made your way from worm to man, and much in you is still worm. Once you were apes, and even now man is more of an ape than any ape."
- Lu Hsün made constant reference to these metaphors in his criticism of the Chinese national character.
- 19 "Sudden Notions (5)" 突然想到(五), LHCC (1956) vol.III, p.34.
- 20 "Leaving the Pass" 出關, LHCC (1956), vol.II, pp.38-97. Berta Krebšová's excellent review on this story and the others in Old Tales Retold 故事新編 in Archiv Orientální (Prague, 1961), vol.XXVIII and XXIX.
- 21 "The Pass in 'Leaving the Pass'" 「出關」的關, LHCC (1956), vol.VI, pp.421-26.
- 22 Schopenhauer = Collected Works, op.cit., vol.II, p.374.
- 23 "What is Required of Us as Fathers Today" 我們現在怎樣做父親, LHCC (1956), vol.I, p.248.
- 24 "Introduction to Three Leisures" 「三閑集」序言, LHCC (1956), vol.IV, p.5.
- 25 Ts'ao Chü-jen 曹聚仁 = A Critical Biography of Lu Hsün 魯迅評傳, (Hong Kong, 1961), pp.50-51.
- 26 "Introduction to Essays of Ch'ieh Chieh T'ing" 「且介亭雜文」序言 LHCC (1956), vol.VI, p.3.
- 27 Battle Cries is in LHCC (1956), vol.I, pp.3-152.
- 28 Hesitation is in LHCC (1956), vol.II, pp.5-154.
- 29 Chou Tso-jen = "About Lu Hsün" 關於魯迅, Ts'ao Chü-jen: (Hong Kong, 1967), p.161. Chronological Biography of Lu Hsün 魯迅年譜.
- 30 "Preface to Battle Cries", op. cit., p.7.
- 31 John Chinnery = Problems of Literary Reform in Modern China, Ph.D. Thesis submitted to University of London, 1955. Chap.V.
- 32 Jean Paul Sartre: Existentialism and Humanism, trans. P. Mariet (London, 1948) p.28.

33. "Culture" p. 188.
- 34 My source of information on anarchism in China is R. Scalapino George T. Yu's book: The Chinese Anarchist Movement (Berkeley, California, 1961).
- 35 "Culture" p.188.
36. His criticism of the nihilistic anarchist is contained in a letter to his wife, then his student, in 1925. See LHCC (1956), vol. IX, pp. 17-18.
- 37 "On Silencing the Accursed Voice" op.cit., p.244.
- 38 Diary of Lu Hsün 魯迅日記 (Peking, 1962), vol.I, p.474.
39. Lu Hsün's translations of Muskakoji's works are collected in LHCC (1938), vol.XII.
- 40 Lu Hsün's translations of Artzybashev's works are collected in LHCC (1938), vols.XI; XVI.
- 41 Lu Hsün's translations of Eroshenko's works are collected in LHCC (1938) vol.XII.
- 42 "In Memory of Mr. Eroshenko" 憶 魯 羅 先 珂 華 希 理 君, LHCC (1938) vol.XII, p514.
- 43 "Culture", p.188.
- 44 J. Průšek: "Lu Hsün, the Revolutionary and the Artist", Orientalistische Literaturzeitung (Berlin, 1960) No.55, p.231.
- 45 J. Chinnery: "The Influence of Western Literature on Lu Hsün's 'Diary of a Mad Man'", Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, vol.XXIII, part II, 1960. For the Boxer Rebellion, see Jerome Ch'en: "The Nature and Characteristics of the Boxer Movement - A Morphological Study", pp. 287-308 of the same issue of the Bulletin.
- 46 "Introduction to Battle Cries" op. cit., pp.4-5.
- 47 "On Public View", LHCC (1956) vol.II, pp.67-72. Prof. Průšek cites "K'ung I-chi" 孔乙己 as another masterly picture of the dull, cold indifference of the mob in his Essay "Lu Hsün, the Revolutionary and the Artist" op. cit.
- 48 "Upheaval", LHCC (1956) vol.I, pp.52-60.
- 49 "The True Story of Ah Q", LHCC (1956) vol.I, pp.72-114.
50. The quotation is taken from Dr. Huang Sung-k'ang's Lu Hsün and the New Cultural Movement (Amsterdam, 1957), Chapter 7.
51. "Waiting for a Genius" 未有天才之前 , LHCC (1956) vol.I, pp.276-278.

- 52 As cited in B. Russell: A History of Western Philosophy, op.cit., p.731.
- 53 The need is discussed in "Silent China" 無聲的中國, LHCC (1956) vol.IV, pp.9-14, and in many other essays.
- 54 "Culture" p.192.
- 55 "On Silencing the Accursed Voice", op. cit. pp.237-8.
- 56 E. Förster-Nietzsche: The Young Nietzsche (London 1912), p.106.
- 57 Thus Spake Zarathustra, op. cit. p.74.
- 58 "The Warrior and The Flies" 戰士與蒼蠅, LHCC (1956) vol.IV, p.30; "The First Anniversary of Mr. Sun Yat-sen's Death" 孫中山先生逝世週年 LHCC (1956) vol.VII, pp.393-4.
- 59 "On Silencing the Accursed Voice" op. cit. p.245.
- 60 Ibid. p.247.
- 61 According to Ts'ao Chü-jen in A Critical Biography of Lu Hsün, Lu Hsün admitted Nietzsche's influence on him.
- 62 "Random Thought (41)" 隨感錄(四十一), LHCC (1956) vol.I, p.400.
- 63 Henrik Ibsen: "Enemy of the People"
- 64 "Random Thought (41)", op. cit., pp.400-1.
- 65 Lu Hsün's Hometown, op. cit., p.207.
- 66 Thus Spake Zarathustra, op. cit., p.217.
- 67 "Amidst Pale Blood-Stains" 淡淡的血痕中 LHCC (1956) vol. II, p.209.
- 68 "About the New Language" 關於新文字, LHCC (1956) vol.VI pp.126-7.
- 69 "An Eye for An Eye" 以眼還眼, LHCC (1956) vol.VI, pp.93-97.
- 70 "A Reply to International Literary Magazine" 答「國際文學社」問 LHCC (1956) vol.VI, p.14.
- 71 In 1927, Chang Kai-shek carried out a purge of Communists.
- 72 Benjamin Schwartz, op. cit. p.61.

## CHAPTER III

THE SATANIC REBELS1. The Tempestuous Spirits

The name 'Satanic poet', Lu Hsün noted, was first given by the English poet-laureate Robert Southey to Byron whose writings were distinguished by their "strength, defiance, destructiveness, and challenge."<sup>1</sup> Lu Hsün, in the title of his essay, substituted the name "Ma-lo" 摩羅 for 'Satanic', which, according to a note by Chou Tso-jen, was a transliteration of 'Mara', the Hindu God of destruction.<sup>2</sup> The satanism of Byron and his school, Lu Hsün explained, lay in their refusal to conform to society, and to accept established values, and above all, in the iconoclastic and revolutionary note in their poetry: "they never tried to please the world with verses. No sooner had they uttered a single cry, than all who were able to hear their voice rose to rebel against the heavens and turned against all mediocrity."<sup>3</sup> For this reason, they were feared and disliked by society whose aim was peace and order.

As can be expected, Lu Hsün was not in the least repelled by these satanic qualities in the Romantic poets. He regarded them as the characteristics of a genius. What attracted him in the rebellious spirit of the Romantics was no more than what attracted him in Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. In the poets' Dionysian,

ecstatic emotion and inspiration, in their instinct and arrogance, he perceived the source of the progress of life. They rebelled against the social fetters, mediocrity and ignorance then thriving in their respective countries and fought for the realisation of their ideals. Thus they became the seers of the people, opening their eyes and minds to a better, newer world. The circumstances in China seemed to Lu Hsün to demand such tempestuous spirits, in view of the passivity and docility of the general population. China's power depended on her human material and, if she had a few 'spiritual warriors' like the Romantic poets to transform the broad masses, she would be able to rise out of her present state of desolation and take her place among the nations of the world.

These poets, who felt that their ideas were superior to the common men and who would allow nothing to obstruct the realisation of these ideas would certainly come into conflict with society. They therefore took a very scathing view of society and keenly felt their separation from their fellow men. The final words of Dr. Stockmann, the hero of Ibsen's play <sup>An</sup>/Enemy of the People, sums up their feeling: "The greatest man on earth is he who stands alone."<sup>4</sup> Society was always hostile to these individuals who refused to conform. Morality was its pretext for suppressing them. Thus they labelled Byron 'satanic' and Shelley 'mad'.

The banishment of these two great poets by the 'hypocritical English society'<sup>5</sup> confirmed Lu Hsün's belief that democracy was an enemy to true individuals - for it, conformity was right and non-conformity was wrong.

Lu Hsün felt that Chinese society was very similar to the English society in Byron's day. People were told to value harmony and peace above honesty and action. Writers were told to write of things which conformed to conventional morality and if they touch upon intimate feelings in their writings, they would be condemned by Confucian scholars. The writer closest to the "Mara poets" that China ever had was Chi K'ang 嵇康 .

Lu Hsün loved him for his courageous anti-Confucianism and opposition to rigid conventions and ritual, and spent subsequently over ten years in editing the works of this writer.<sup>6</sup>

In a later essay, Lu Hsün explained again why he loved these arrogant and unconventional rebels: "Individual conceit is eccentricity, it is a declaration of war on the common crowd. Apart from megalomaniacs, according to Nordau and others, these people possessing individual conceits all have a certain degree of talent. We might even call it a form of madness. Because they come to feel that their ideas and perception are superior to the crowd, which does not understand them, they begin to hate the world and become misanthropes and 'enemies of the people'. But all new thoughts come from them."<sup>7</sup>

The lessons Lu Hsün drew from the Romantics are exactly the same as those he learnt from the Western philosophers. He came to believe that people must be made to see truth before any improvement can be made, that social morality is <sup>a</sup> cruel entrenched custom, that religion is a yoke to imprison human nature, that the individual and organised society are at odds as the latter exists to suppress free action and independence, that common people are stupid and despicable. The most important thing is the great revolution of the human heart.

## 2. Byron and Shelley

To Lu Hsün, the greatest of the rebels was Byron. Of the nine chapters in "Mara", three were devoted to this poet. He refused to see Byron as a libertine, but looked up to him as a serious young man, who had dedicated himself to the causes of 'independence, liberty and humanity'<sup>8</sup> at the cost of being exiled permanently from his homeland. From the outset, Lu Hsün maintained that Byron, unlike the Poet-Laureate Southey, had no inclination to write poetry in honour of his own countrymen. Southey flattered England and was rewarded with prestige and honour, whereas <sup>Byron,</sup> he who educated and chided it, was spurned. He sought freedom to think outside the common dogmatic conventions, to compose poetry without paying lip-service to public opinion, to act according

to his own wishes, without the interference and malicious judgment of those shallow men who clamorously and mercilessly condemned his genius.<sup>9</sup>

Byron's generous assistance to the Greeks in their struggle for independence struck Lu Hsün as the noblest example of the conduct of a fighter for freedom. Byron's cosmopolitan view of freedom particularly impressed our exceedingly patriotic writer when his own country was surrounded by aggressors hankering after her rich natural resources. He was not unaware that the theory of evolution had been used as an excuse for the strong to encroach upon the weak: "The beast-like patriots were usually born in strong countries which, on account of their magnificent reserves of power, are prone to aggression. They esteem only their own countries and despise others, use the theory of survival of the fittest to rob the weak, and will not stop until the whole world has become their slave."<sup>10</sup> But Byron, who came from a strong country, did not look down on the weaker races. Moreover, he used his 'reserve of power' to help them, to rid them of the heavy yoke. Byron's help to the Greek cause filled the young patriot with admiration and awe closely resembling hero-worship. Lu Hsün recalled his youthful enthusiasm in 1925: "Some people say that Byron's poetry is usually admired by younger people. I think there is a great deal of truth in this. For myself, I

still remember how I was carried away by his poetry and that portrait of his painted before his fight for the cause of Greek Independence in which he wore a scarf round his head."<sup>11</sup>

In his criticism of Byron's works, Lu Hsün was particularly interested in the rebellion of Lucifer and Cain.<sup>12</sup> The temptation of Eve, to him, marked the true beginning of mankind. Satan therefore had done humanity a good turn. Out of the destruction of Eden, a new race of man was born who took their lives into their own hands instead of leading a dictated existence. Cain represented the human mind's thirst for truth and knowledge instead of spoonfed catechism and the Devil's incitement to rebellion was the liberation of that desire. Apparent evil had resulted in positive good. The evil name of Satan and the good name of God therefore needed a re-examination. Byron let Satan speak for himself:

"I have a victor - true, but no superior.  
 .  
 .  
 .  
 He as a conqueror will call the conquer'd  
 Evil, but what will be the good he gives,  
 Were I the victor, his work should be deem'd  
 The only evil ones."<sup>13</sup>

This designation of evil reminded Lu Hsün of the English society's labelling of Byron as a 'Satanic poet'. Lu Hsün's aversion to orthodox morality in "Mara" later found expression in his first

story "Diary of a Madman" 狂人日記<sup>14</sup>, in which the only man who saw through the cannibalism of Chinese society was condemned by everyone as a madman.

But Lu Hsün's attack on orthodox morality did not mean that he had done away with morality. His study of the works of the Romantics had encouraged him to acquire a more radical view of morality. He was not a dogmatic believer in out-of-date Chinese ethics like unquestioning loyalty to one's ruler and filial piety to one's parents. As a matter of fact, he scoffed derisively at it in the volume of reminiscences entitled Morning Blossoms Gathered at Dusk 朝華  
夕拾.<sup>15</sup> He believed that morality should move with time and be more directly related to individual action. Beatrice Cenci's<sup>16</sup> patricide should not be condemned as beastly as she had purged the world of an abominable villain who had remorselessly slaughtered many innocent people and even raped his own daughter. Man could take the law into his own hands if he had a good reason. The Giaour's<sup>17</sup> slaying of Hassan was an act of revenge on the latter's drowning of his loved one and so was a debt of blood repaid. The Corsair's<sup>18</sup> career of piracy was to avenge the wrong done to him by the world.

The romantic belief in vengeance as a moral duty left a deep imprint on Lu Hsün's mind. His own actual experience further convinced him that if a man was to hold his own in a competitive

and unsympathetic world, he must follow the principle of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" - a principle that he later gave full vent to in his very famous essay "On the Postponement of Fairplay" 論「費厄瀆賴」應該緩行<sup>19</sup>. He carried this principle into his polemic essays and made himself the most hated and feared man among contemporary writers. He did not hesitate to scratch his enemy's eyes out with his 'dagger essays' 匕首雜文,<sup>20</sup> and saw nothing wrong in using violence in his writings. He was particularly good at picking out the most vulnerable spots in his enemy. He then concentrated his attack on them with the most dramatic results. The names of several of his fellow-writers like Chên Yuān 陳源 and Ku Shieh-kang 顧頡剛,<sup>21</sup> were so ridiculed by him that to some people they have come to stand for the most despicable qualities of the intellectual blackguards of the Chinese Nationalist regime. In a satirical essay which he jokingly declared to be his will (and which indeed became his will, for he died shortly after writing it), he told his wife and son to stay away from "those who hurt others, yet who object to revenge and advocate forgiveness".<sup>22</sup>

Vengeance is not a predominant theme in Shelley's poetry. Unlike Byron, Shelley's genius was not the sort to waste too much <sup>energy</sup> of his/satirising the distortions of the age. He was therefore quite different from Byron whom Lu Hsün admired. Nevertheless, he impressed Lu Hsün with his sublime vision and his humanitarianism.

Iu Hsün made a very apt comparison of Shelley with Alastor, the hero of one of his poems, who met his death in the pursuit of his ideal of beauty and pointed out that Shelley's quest was fulfilled when he was drowned in a storm off the shores of Italy - as far as he was concerned, the mystery of life was solved.

Iu Hsün noted that nature played a significant part in Shelley's life and related how Shelley from childhood showed a remarkable affection for nature. John Buston, in his recently published study of Shelley and Byron, tells us that Shelley as a boy had been fascinated by paper boats which he would launch on any available pool of water.<sup>23</sup> Shelley found sailing a means of identifying himself with the unforeseen forces of nature. When Byron grasped the tiller he harnessed the wind to propel the boat in whatever direction he chose, feeling "the waves bound beneath him as a steed that knows his rider." But Shelley, with a book open in one hand and the other resting on the trembling tiller, felt that he was a part of the waters beneath him and of the winds which propelled him. His communion with nature was complete.

Shelley and Byron symbolize two types of idealistic temperaments: the former bringing to mind soaring skylarks, blue skies and foaming seas; the latter, night riders, roaring winds and dark castles. The influence of Byron on Iu Hsün was more apparent, for he inherited the poet's scorn and harshness; while he remained

relatively unaffected by Shelley. He had no personal love for nature<sup>24</sup> and scenic beauty made no impression upon him. In his essays and short-stories, the description of nature is kept to a minimum and used only for setting and certain effects. Nevertheless, Laon<sup>25</sup> and Prometheus<sup>26</sup> are perhaps closer to Lu Hsün's ideal of patriot and superman than are Byron's Lara and Manfred.<sup>27</sup>

### 3. Pushkin and Lermontov

In 1907, the giant figure of Byron dominated Lu Hsün's writings. Even Pushkin, the father of Russian literature, was dwarfed in Byron's presence. His 'superfluous men' were rated lower than the tempestuous heroes of Byron and his love and loyalty for Russia was unfavourably criticised by Lu Hsün, who obviously had at the back of his mind Byron's stand for Greece.

In "The Captive of the Caucasus," Pushkin creates from his own experience a psychologically exact portrait of the rising Russian generation in the early nineteenth century. The hero, disappointed with love and friendship and dissatisfied with society in the Russian capital, ~~sought~~ freedom in the primitive beauty of the Caucasus and in the simple rural life untainted by civilisation. He is taken prisoner by the Circassians but set free by a native girl who loved him. He <sup>could</sup> cannot, however, respond to the passion of this maid because at heart he is cold and prematurely old, and she drowned herself in a mountain stream. In "Eugene Oegin,"

Pushkin returns to the same idea and presents another young nobleman of the eighteen-twenties, intelligent, well-read, but superficial. Leisure and lack of any useful activity soon breed in him boredom and cynicism. He refuses the love of a gentle girl and causes the death of his best friend through his triviality and thoughtlessness. These two heroes of Pushkin are examples of the 'superfluous men' which later find expression as Lermontov's Pechorin, Turgenev's Rudin, and finally culminate in Goncharov's Oblomov. These men share a common disposition for daydreaming, rationalizing and passivity, and have neither character nor passion enough to make something of their lives. They are not the right type of individual to lead a society or a nation, because "if a man who lives at a time of constant change and takes part in the real world, lacks strength of will, he will surrender his individuality to the crowd and be submerged in its receding waves, without knowing where he was heading; the quintessence of civilisation would thus be instantly destroyed. Only the strong and the resolute, who refuse to bow to circumstances, would become the pillars of society. Since human dignity was composed of the power to surmount countless obstacles and of the inner urge to progress, men with exceptional strength of will are extremely important."<sup>28</sup>

Pushkin was for a long time under the spell of Byron. The captive and Aleko, the hero of the poem "Gypsies," are disenchanted souls like Byron's Childe Harold. But the resemblance was merely superficial, Lu Hsün points out, for Pushkin did not adore his heroes, he made them objects of parody and satire: in characterization and setting, Pushkin is indeed much more realistic. Instead of Manfred's dark castle, the sinister landscape in "The Giaour," and the Corsair's secret hideout on the edge of the great, flowing sea, Pushkin chose the familiar setting of the Caucasus and Russian society. "What in Byron is endowed with the glamour of the strange has with Pushkin the clear-cut splendour of the actually known," writes Professor Helen Muchnic.<sup>29</sup>

Pushkin's alienation from the English romantic poet, Lu Hsün agreed, was due to the clash of their personalities. But Lu Hsün seemed to think very little of Pushkin as a person. He chided Pushkin for abandoning his radicalism and submitting to the pressure of the Czar; and this prejudice led him to misjudge completely Pushkin's masterpiece "The Bronze Horseman." He failed to see Pushkin's conflict of love for Peter the Great and of sympathy for the Russian people. Pushkin was aware of the fundamental clash between the fate of the individual and the destiny of the state. The individual's longings for peace and happiness were crushed by the merciless progress of the nation. This tragic

and universal paradox is the theme of this great and hauntingly beautiful poem, but it was completely ignored by Lu Hsün in his enthusiasm for Mickiewicz's Polish nationalism. The hero of Pushkin's poem is a minor official called Eugene who lost all his dreams of happiness in the 1824 flood of St. Petersburg. In utter despair, he threatened the bronze statue of Peter the Great and the rider and horse leapt down to chase him through the empty streets of the silent city. The symbolism of the story is very obvious. Pushkin felt sympathy for the little man, despite his acceptance of historical necessity. It is not just a colourful and emotional tale, it is a symbolic examination of the problem of individual freedom with which Pushkin was preoccupied and which Byron took for granted. Lu Hsün's ignorance of Pushkin's theme was therefore very significant.

Pushkin's loyalty to Russia as expressed in "The Bronze Horseman" and in his ode "To the Calumniators of Russia", which defended the reprisals taken against the Polish rebels in the 1831 insurrection was described by the Danish critic Georg Brandes as 'beast-like', an opinion that Lu Hsün obviously shared. He praised the patriotism of another of Pushkin's fellow-Russians: Lermontov, whose love, Lu Hsün said, was extended even to the Caucasians who had rebelled against Russia.

Lu Hsün saw all the Byronic qualities in Lermontov at their peak of intensity. But what Lu Hsün did not understand is that

Lermontov did not become Byron-like by choice: the passions that rent his heart came to him at birth and his poetry, which was an exact transcript of his thoughts and emotions, is therefore entirely free of affectation. Lu Hsün also failed to point out that the characters in his poems are also very different from Byron's. The demon<sup>30</sup> is more human than Byron's Lucifer. His love scenes with the gentle girl are full of pathos and tenderness. Pechorin, the leading character in A Hero of Our Time, is realistic and sober, without the exaggeration and pompous artificialities that usually accompany Byron's characters. Pechorin realizes that he is continually wasting his exceptional energy and his rich potentialities: "Why do I live? For what purpose was I born? And yet that purpose must have existed, and my destiny must have been a lofty one, for I feel, in my soul, boundless strength. But I did not divine that destination, I became enticed by the lure of hollow and thankless passions. From their crucible, I emerged as hard and cold as iron, but lost forever the ardour of noble yearning - the best blossom of life ... my love brought happiness to none, because I never gave up anything for the sake of those whom I loved. I loved for myself, for my proper pleasure; I merely satisfied a bizarre need of my heart, avidly consuming their sentiments, their tenderness, their joys and sufferings and never could I have my fill."

Pechorin, in the words of his creator, "is indeed a portrait, but

not of a single individual; it is a portrait composed of all the vices of our generation in the fullness of their development."<sup>32</sup> The misanthropy and pessimism of the writer and his hero were the products of an age groaning under the yoke of autocracy.

#### 4. The Patriotic Poets

During the years in Tokyo from 1909 to 1909, Lu Hsün read many Japanese translations of the works of the 'oppressed peoples' of Eastern Europe and the Balkans. With Chou Tso-jen, he published two volumes of European and Russian short-stories under the title of Tales of Other Lands 域外小說集.<sup>33</sup> The objective was to portray to the Chinese the spirit of resistance to autocracy shown by peoples in other unfortunate lands. For the same reason, "Mara" contains a short introduction of the life and works of four great Slav patriots: Mickiewicz, Slowacki, Krasinski<sup>34</sup> and Petöfi.

Mickiewicz, author of the famous poem "Dziady", was referred to as the 'Poet of Vengeance' 復仇詩人<sup>35</sup> by Lu Hsün because of the recurring theme of revenge in his poetry. Slowacki, another famous Polish poet, also approved the use of deceit and cunning in dealing with one's enemy. The unethical means of revenge narrated in Mickiewicz's "Wallenrod", "Alpujarras", and Slowacki's "Lambro" and "Kordyan", in the eyes of Lu Hsün, were perfectly

justified when one's country was being attacked : it was a 'sacred licence',<sup>36</sup>

The other favourite writer of Lu Hsün, apart from Mickiewicz and Slowacki, was Petöfi. Again, ~~like~~<sup>as</sup> in the case of the Polish poets, what attracted Lu Hsün in Petöfi was his patriotism. He recalled his fondness for this poet in 1928 : "When I received a copy of the Life of Petöfi, the memory of my youth came back to me. He was my favourite poet then. It was natural for a man living under the Ch'ing government to sympathise with a hero who rose up against his enemy."

The patriotic poets continued to enjoy Lu Hsün's respect after 1907; their spell over him, however, was broken with the crumbling of the Ch'ing government. Lu Hsün's early attraction towards the Romantics gradually gave way to an interest in more sober realistic writings, particularly those of the Russian realists and revolutionary writers. The romantic vision of a young man was replaced by a more practical outlook of life.

NOTES

- 1 "Mara" p.205.
- 2 Hometown of Lu Hsun, op. cit. p.198.
3. "Mara" p.232.
- 4 Henrik Ibsen: An Enemy of the People , trans. E. Marx-Aveling. (London, 1951 ), Act V.
- 5 "Mara" p.214.
- 6 Chi K'ang Chi 嵇康集 , LHCC (1938) vol IX, pp.19-146. For a discussion of Chi K'ang's influence on Lu Hsun, see Wang Yao 王瑤 : Lu Hsun and Chinese Literature 鲁迅與中國文學 (Shanghai, 1952) pp.33-5.
- 7 "Random Thought (38)", LHCC (1956) vol. I, p.387.
8. "Mara" p.214.
- 9 Lu Hsun seemed to have been very much influenced by Georg Brandes in his admiration for Byron. Many of his ideas about the English Romantic can be found in Brandes' Main Currents of Nineteenth Century Literature (London, 1905).
- 10 "On Silencing the Accursed Voice", op. cit. p.245.
- 11 "Miscellaneous Reminiscences" 雜憶 , LHCC (1956) vol.I.p.317.
- 12 They are characters in Byron's poem "Cain".
- 13 "Cain", op. cit., act II, scene II, lines 429-46.
- 14 "Diary of A Mad Man", LHCC (1956) vol.I, pp.9-19.
- 15 "The Picture on the Twenty-four Examples of Filial Piety" 二十四孝圖 LHCC (1956) vol.II, pp.232-38.
- 16 Beatrice is the heroine of Shelley's poem "Cenci".
- 17 The Giaour is the hero of Byron's poem of the same name.
- 18 The Corsair is the hero of Byron's poem of the same name.
- 19 "On the Postponement of Fairplay", LHCC (1956) vol.I, pp.352-59.
- 20 A Critical Biography of Lu Hsun, op. cit. p.213. Lu Hsun once described his own essays as 'daggers', see "Crisis Facing Essays" 小品文的危機, LHCC (1956) vol. IV, p.443.
- 21 His attacks on these two men are interspersed in Splendid Cover 華蓋集 No Option 而已集 Three Leisures 三閒集.
- 22 A Chronological Biography of Lu Hsun, op. cit. p.154.
- 23 John Buston : "First Meeting of Two Poets", The Times Saturday Review , March 23, 1968.

- 24 Hsi Shou-shang 許壽裳 : Impressions of My Deceased Friend Lu Hsin 七友魯迅印象記 (Hong Kong, 1957), p.33.
- 25 Laon is the hero of "The Revolt of Islam."
- 26 Prometheus is the hero of "Prometheus Unbound". ~~Manfred is the hero of Byron's poem of the same name.~~
- 27 Lara is the hero of Byron's poem of the same name.
- 28 "Culture" p.191.
- 29 Helen Muchnic: An Introduction to Russian Literature (New York, 1964) p.65.
- 30 The Demon is the hero of Lermontov's poem of the same name.
- 31 Lermontov: A Hero of Our Time, trans. V. Nabokov (New York, 1958). pp.159.
- 32 Ibid. Author's preface.
- 33 A Chronological Biography of Lu Hsin op. cit., pp.29-30.
- 34 Lu Hsin only mentioned Krasinski but did not cite any of his works for discussion.
- 35 "Written after editing Torrent" 「奔流」編校後記  
LHGC (1956) vol. VII, p.204.
- 36 "Mara" p.229.
- 37 "Written after editing Torrent", op. cit. p.208.

## CHAPTER IV

THE FUNCTIONS OF LITERATURE1. Emotional Origin

Between 1908 and 1909, with Hsü Shou-shang 許壽裳, Chou Tso-jen and five other Chinese students, Lu Hsün attended a philology class conducted by the famous classical scholar Chang T'ai-yen, who had come to Tokyo after serving a prison sentence in China for publishing provocative political articles. To Chang T'ai-yen's question on the function of literature, Lu Hsün's reply was: "Literature and philosophy are different; philosophy is to broaden the intellect, literature is to move the feelings."<sup>1</sup> The master did not entirely agree with the definition given, but the pupil maintained this view throughout his life - a view he first propounded in "Mara".

Poetry originated, Lu Hsün said, as man's desire to express his feelings of mystical communion with nature and subsequently became an expression of personal emotions like love, joy and grief. He quoted the Book of Odes 詩經 to support the emotional theory of the origin of poetry. However, as the poet gives voice to only what he himself wants to say, he does not objectively weigh the consequences of his feelings. The individuality of the poet must inevitably come into conflict with the ruling faction in

societies and countries. Plato denied the poets a place in his utopian republic and, in China, poetry was subjected to the fetters of conventional morality. The Book of Odes, having been recognised as a literary gem bequeathed to posterity by the ancients, naturally became an example on which all poets coming after had to model their verses. It would create a threat to social stability if they were inspired by the unrestrained individuality of the odes and carried this spirit into their daily lives. Hence the theme of the odes was interpreted by the ruling classes as one of complete purity and they took the view that poetry was used "to harness human nature."<sup>2</sup> Lu Hsün objected gravely to this 'establishment' interpretation of the odes: "If the poems are expressions of human feelings, how can they be used to harness human nature? To insist that they should be pure and innocent is to disprove the claim that they are genuine human expressions."<sup>3</sup> Poetry is essentially to express one's emotion, not to expound moral precepts.

The emotional origin of poetry is its greatest asset, for it gives the power to evoke feelings in others. The writer is individualistic, but he also speaks for mankind: he is its minstrel, because he expresses what everyone wants to say but cannot: "A poet puts into words what men feel, so that when he fingers the chord, the listener's heart leaps up in response."<sup>4</sup> The rise of literature and its influence on human affairs were humorously

described in a later essay: "Our ancestors were primitive men who could not even speak, but they gradually mastered some complicated sounds when they had to express themselves in a working community. They might have been unloading some heavy wood one day and wanted to express their feelings of exhaustion. If one shouted: 'Hang-yü! Hang-yü!' - this was an artistic creation admired by everyone, and people began to adopt this sound into their vocabulary. This worked in much the same way as publishing. And if they put it down with the aid of marks and symbols, it became literature - the man would be a writer of the 'hang-yü school!'"<sup>5</sup> Because the feelings a writer writes about are the same in every man, he is therefore destined to have a universal reception. Literature cannot be restricted by time and place. As D.E. Pollard says: "In ancient times the ballads expressed simple aspirations that were held in common; now the man of advanced sensibility expresses things ignored or felt indistinctly by people, but these are still common experience."<sup>6</sup>

## 2. An Educative Role

One of the characteristics of literature cited in "Mara" that Lu Hsün tried to play down as much as possible in his later writings was its potential to please: "From the point of view of <sup>the literary</sup> purest literature, the basic quality of all the arts is their stimulation of interest and pleasure in their audience and viewers. It follows

that literature, being a branch of the arts, should possess the same quality ..."<sup>7</sup> But he was no disciple of pure aestheticism: the pleasing quality of literature could be turned to good use to realize one's ideals. After commenting on the pleasing quality of literature, he quoted Dowden's comparison of the reader to a swimmer. Just as a swimmer finds himself transformed after a good swim, the reader has the same feelings after reading a literary masterpiece, even if it has no moral message. It refreshes him physically and teaches him more about life, than history, axioms, or all the other subjects put together. Evocation of emotions and broadening the intellect are not antitheses in literature, but are complementary; hence the greatness of literature, hence the natural educative and effective role of literature. This was the conviction that made Lu Hsün give up his medical study for literature in 1906. Literature, which reaches the masses, and not medicine, which treats the individual is the best means to change the spirit ~~of the~~ spirit of the Chinese.<sup>8</sup> The writer is a 'spiritual adventurer'<sup>9</sup> who rides on the throbbing, reeling life-force away from commonplace objectivity to a new horizon as yet undiscovered by the majority. He is the 'vates', the precursor of truth.

On this assumption, the writer has a twin role to play: first, to point out the superficialities and illness of our age, and second, to describe the ideal life, that which men are capable of achieving.

Both will bring him into conflict with society and put him into a position of isolation. The reason is that <sup>the</sup> public, led astray by the pettiness of life, its anxiety, and greed, has no time for literature. Furthermore, writers regard it their duty to criticize the way of life that the common people lead, with the result that they naturally become hostile to the writers. Under such circumstances, a writer must not yield to public pressure and renounce his idealism. He must stand ready to fight. The protestations of the poet Ch'ü Yüan 屈原 were admirable, but they were not defiant enough to effect any change of spirit in people. In the West, the 'Satanic poets' shook the fossilised societies with their battle-cries: "No sooner had they uttered a single cry than all who were able to hear their voice, rose to rebel against heaven and turned against all mediocrity ..."<sup>10</sup>. Inspired by these rebel writers, Lu Hsün himself never bowed to social opinion, as submission to authority meant removing the spring of his literary life. He never gave up his idealism, as he considered that <sup>shaping</sup> living the future for mankind was the greatest contribution of literature. In "About the Intelligentsia" 關於智識階級, a speech he delivered in Shanghai in 1927, he described the incompatibility of the intelligentsia (the writer, being educated, is included in this category) and society: "The intelligentsia is always dissatisfied with the action of others; they pick faults with this,

they pick faults with that. When the Russian Czar killed the rebels, they opposed what the Czar did; when the rebels killed the members of the royal family, they opposed that too. What should be done? They could not help themselves. Hence under monarchy, they suffered; in times of revolution, they suffered too - this is a weakness inherent in themselves."<sup>11</sup> From the modesty shown in this speech and the apologetic tone, it is obvious that he was speaking from personal experience and that the problem he raised is universal to the intelligentsia. The genuine intellectual is forever at war with society, never satisfied with the present, and is thus always in agony. This is because his sensibility enables him to see further than any one else, and when his prophecy is fulfilled, he is appreciated, but by then, he has travelled even farther and championed newer truths. He is not a Prometheus whose task is finished when he has brought man fire, he is a Sisyphus whose toil never ends.

Holding such an uncompromising attitude on the moral obligation of the writer, it was not surprising that Lu Hsin should become involved in the literary controversy between the Creation Society 創造社 and the Literary Research Society 文學研究會.<sup>12</sup> The Creation Society writers believed that art should be divorced from social life, that it should be merely the self-expression of the artist whose creative impulses are formed by divine inspiration

and a love of beauty. The Literary Research Society writers did not deny that art was self-expression and they also resented the fetters of feudalistic morality on art, but they objected strongly to the concept of literature as a pastime. It advocated not 'art for art's sake' but 'art for life'. Lu Hsün's insistence on the individuality of the writer thus bore a superficial resemblance to the former school, but his awareness of the messianic role of the writer made him find the narrow and personal interest of the former wanting in depth. He affiliated himself to the art-for-life group. In "How I came to write short-stories" 我怎樣做起小說來, he repeated his pledge: "I still adhere to the view that I held ten years ago, that literature must be for life, for the improvement of life. I detest the former attitude to short-stories - that they are dispensable books - and the slogan of 'Art for art's sake' because it was just another new term to signify the dispensability of short-stories. Hence my plots are drawn from the poor people of this sick society. My motive is to diagnose the sickness and draw attention to it so that it may be cured."<sup>13</sup> The seed of this conviction was sown as early as 1907, but the sickness that was exposed then was more of a spiritual kind. The writer was envisaged as a lone figure, standing slightly apart from the main currents of the age. Lu Hsün did not pin too much hope on the immediate response of the multitude, his faith "lies in the firm stand of one or two

writers who will be examples for the people; their presence will save us from total extinction."<sup>14</sup>

In the early essays, the interdependence of writer and society was explicitly denied, though implicitly admitted or subconsciously taken for granted. In later writings, the tie was more and more strongly asserted. In 1927, he wrote: "The words of the writer are still the words of society. He only speaks sooner because, being more sensitive, he feels the urge to speak up more keenly than any one else - sometimes he speaks too soon and society rises to oppose and ostracise him."<sup>15</sup> In 1933, he put the relationship in a nut-shell: "The relationship between literature and society is this - literature first depicts society sensitively, and then effects a change in society."<sup>16</sup> The reactions of the writer arise in response to social repression, and their rebellion and iconoclasm, which hasten the disintegration of the existing society, are to herald the reconstruction of a new and better one.

### 3. The Path to Proletarian Literature

The year 1927 seems to have been the turning point on more than one level. His emotional revulsion to the brutality and censorship perpetrated by the Kuomintang authorities associated with Chiang Kai-shek led Lu Hsün to reappraise his liberal political stand and his ideas on literature.

He became increasingly aware of the provocative power of literature and its effective use as a propagator of ideas. At the same time, he continued to insist on the truthfulness and sincerity of the writer. In answer to a reader's objection to the new slogans of revolutionary literature, he agreed with her that grandiose slogans and labels could not redeem the poverty and insincerity of the contents of a work, "I feel that we ought to try to substantiate the contents and improve the technique rather than hurriedly hang up sign-boards."<sup>17</sup> He returned to this same requisite in 1936: "What we need are not additional slogans and labels, but true life, courageous struggle, vibrating pulse, thoughts and passion in literature."<sup>18</sup> But was it enough just to write about what one felt? Could we view this chaotic society from above, surrounded by comforts and blessed with security, pouring out our sympathy to the underprivileged and the insulted? The question that had lain at the back of his mind for twenty years demanded to be answered. He tried to work it out in the numerous essays written between 1927 and 1934 with admirable courage, but not without pain and discomfort, without modifying some of the principles that were dear to him.

In "Mara", he credited the birth of literary masterpieces to the common people of China in order to emphasise the humanism and freedom of literature, but he was not prepared to exalt them

above the individualist writers. In 1934, he returned to the Book of Odes again in an essay, but this time he was all out to emphasize the contribution of the illiterate rustics to literature: "Even the works in 'Kuo Feng' 國風 were mostly by anonymous and illiterate authors, which were preserved verbally for their relative excellence, and selected by kings and officials for their archives ... many of our greatest works of literature were by unknown authors, chosen and polished by later scholars. The preservation, however, was accompanied by substantial meddling with their originality, which is truly regrettable. We still have folk songs and fishermen's songs, which are by illiterate poets, and children's tales and folk-tales which are by illiterate storytellers."<sup>19</sup> His witnessing of the suffering of the common people outweighed his scorn and contempt for them. The voice of justice inherent in his passionate nature called out for recognition of the 'have-nots', despite the naivety of their art. He made himself the champion of proletarian literature.

Between 1928 and 1930, he re-examined his views on literature in the light of an increasing sympathy for the unfortunate and of knowledge newly acquired from the conscientious study of Marxist-Leninist dialectics on literature. He became immersed in the debate on the class character of the writer. A reader wrote to ask for his opinion on the following statement of a communist theoretician: "The

propertied class and the proletariat have only class character and no humanism." Lu Hsün's reply was cautious and modest: "Trotsky referred ~~was referred~~ to 'the fear of death' as a common feeling between ancient and modern men to illustrate that literature does not have class character ... To me, if I hold the view that one's character emotion, etc., are governed by 'economics' (i.e. based on economic organisation or dependant on economic organisation) or such theories, then these character, emotions, etc. will carry class character. Note that I say 'will carry' and not 'have only'. I therefore do not believe that there can be great writers whose works can leap over the barriers of class and time to remain as immortal as the sun and the moon, nor do I believe in those revolutionary writers, owning houses and sipping coffee, who declare, "I can grasp the consciousness of the proletariat, so I am a bona-fide proletariat."<sup>20</sup>

The same issue was raised again in 1933, when Liang Shih-ch'iao 梁實秋 resorted to Trotsky and to Lu Hsün's former argument of humanism to refute the theory that there was class or national barrier in literature. Liang, while admitting the possibility of hereditary, educational and economic differences between capitalist and worker, claimed that they shared the universal emotions of fear and love, hate and joy etc., which were the themes of all writers. He quoted Tolstoy, Karl Marx and Johnson as writers who had managed to leap over the barrier of class. But Lu Hsün retorted: "Literature

cannot express humanism without man, but man, as long as he lives in a society where class exists, must have his class character ... a writer who thinks he can transcend class is in fact governed by the consciousness of his own class."<sup>21</sup> In other words, in a world where class antagonism exists, there can be no love of mankind which transcends class. Indirectly, this statement is a refutation of his former belief in the humanitarianism of the Romantics (especially Byron and Shelley) and a denial of his own nature.

The logical way to free a writer from the fetters of class is to ask him to go over to the proletariat, to be emotionally and physically involved. Moreover, it was impossible for anyone to remain a bystander when the country was on the brink of disintegration, when his fellowmen were groaning under the burden of life. He therefore castigated mercilessly the 'Third Category of People' 第三種人 who resented the political orientation of literature and sought to steer a neutral path. "To live in a class-society and yet want to be a writer transcending class, to live in an age of struggle and yet want to stay away from the struggle, to live in the present and yet want to write for the future generation - these people are as unreal in this world as their illusions."<sup>22</sup>

Even if one was emotionally involved, and wrote sympathetically and observantly, it was not enough. In 1931, he raised the question whether the leftist writers could produce good proletarian literature.

He could not agree with the Japanese critic H. Kuiriyakawa that a writer could write by observation and not from experience: "If a writer lives in an old society, he understands the conditions of the old society and is familiar with the people, so he can rely solely on observation. But when it comes to the proletariat with which he has no affinity, he will not be able to do this without presenting them in a false light. Hence a revolutionary writer must live amidst revolution or feel the pulse of revolution."<sup>23</sup>

By the same token, he criticised the want of involvement of the Russian 'fellow-travellers'. They had lived through fire and hell, so their depiction of the fear, suffering, pathos and excitement was from experience and hence realistic enough, but the fact that they did not wholly plunge into the heart of the revolution left visible traces in their works: "By 1927, the fellow-travellers were awakened to reality and began to understand the Revolution, and the revolutionaries, by diligence and industry, had learnt about literature. But a few years could not remove the traces from the past. When we read their works, we feel that though the former were talking about revolution or reconstruction, they still had a touch of the by-standers, whereas when the latter wrote, they put all of themselves in their writings and everything written was their experience."<sup>24</sup>

Lu Hsün's passionate personality made it impossible for him

to stand aside from the main currents of events and, like his equally gifted brother, to quietly "cultivate his own garden". The idealistic pursuit of poets "who could get across their fine music and their inspiration to refine our nature and exalt our thoughts"<sup>25</sup> was replaced by a much more urgent desire for action. The function of literature was not so much to please us and reveal the mystery of life as to fight injustice: "The living essays must be like a dagger, a spear, which can hack out a path of life together with the reader. Of course, they can give us pleasure and relaxation, but this does not mean that they are objects to be displayed, a consolation or a sedative - the pleasure and relaxation they give is nourishment and preparation for work and fight."<sup>26</sup>

In the midst of all these controversial arguments about the functions of literature, we see that Iu Hsün maintained with amazing consistency his early conviction that the man and the writer must be true to his real self. We may criticise him for his optimism in the future of proletarian literature, but we must respect his insistence on the truthfulness of the proletarian writers. Iu Hsün maintained his artistic conscience to the end by refusing to claim to be a proletarian writer despite his close friendship with revolutionary writers like Jou Shih 柔石, whose execution by Kuomintang in 1931 inspired him to write a spirited defence of proletarian writers.<sup>27</sup> His good

American friend Agnes Smedley recollected what he said ~~on his~~ on his fiftieth birthday party: "In later years, he had studied German and Russian and translated a number of Russian novels and essays. His purpose, he said, was to lay before Chinese youth the best of modern socialist literature. He was now asked, he said, to lead a movement of proletarian literature, and some of his young friends were urging him to become a proletarian writer. It would be childish to pretend that he was a proletarian writer. His roots were in the village, in peasants and scholarly life. Nor did he believe that Chinese intellectual youth, with no experience of the life, hopes, and sufferings of workers and peasants, could -- as yet -- produce proletarian literature. Creative writing must spring from experience, not theory."<sup>28</sup> Though this was spoken twenty-three years after "Mara", it did not differ fundamentally from the idea contained in the essay that writers must only write from heart-felt experience. Lu Hsiin remained till the very end a writer of the intelligentsia and I feel that we should accept him as he was instead of putting him in the rank of the proletarian writers.

NOTES:

- 1 Impression of My Deceased Friend Lu Hsün, op. cit., p.27.  
It is interesting to note that Chou Tso-jen also says in his preface to his translation from H.R. Haggard in 1907 (in K'u-yü-chai hsü pa wen 苦雨齋序跋文, 1934, p.3): "Study is to broaden the intellect, literature is to move feelings."
- 2 "Mara" p.200.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid. pp.199-200. Chou Tso-jen also expresses the same thought in One's Own Garden 自己的園地 (Shanghai, 1929) p.17:  
"From first to last I believe that literature is individualistic, but because it can put into voice what every man wants to say and yet distressed at not being able to say, I also say that it is of mankind."
- 5 "A Layman's View on Literature" 門外談, LHCC (1956) vol.VI, p.75.
- 6 D.E. Pollard: "Chou Tso-jen and Cultivating One's Garden", Asia Major (London, 1965) N.S.11. p.190.
- 7 "Mara" pp.202-3.
- 8 "Preface to Battle Cries" op cit. p.5.
- 9 See H. Kuriyakawa: "Symptoms of Frustration" 苦悶的象徵 trans. Lu Hsün, LHCC (1938) vol.XVI, p.90. See also Sir Philip Sidney: A Defence of Poetry
- 10 "Mara", p.197.
- 11 "About the Intelligentsia", LHCC (1956) vol.VII? p.453.
- 12 Li Ho-lin 李何林: On the Currents in Literary Thought of China in the Last Twenty Years 近二十年中國文藝思潮論 (Chungking and Shanghai, 1939).
- 13 "How I came to write Short-Stories"  
LHCC (1956) vol.IV, p.392.
- 14 "On Silencing the Accursed Voice", op. cit. p.235.
- 15 "The Crossroad between Literature and Politics" 文藝與政治的歧途, LHCC (1956) vol.VII, p.106.
- 16 LHCC (1956) vol.X. p;197.
- 17 "<sup>Literature</sup>Art and Revolution" 文藝與革命, LHCC (1956) vol.IV, p.68.
- 18 "On Our Present Literary Movement" 論現在我們的文學運動, LHCC (1956) vol.VI, p.477.

- 19 "A Layman's View on Literature", op.cit., p.76.
- 20 "Class Character of Literature" 文學的階級性  
LHCC (1956) vol.IV, p.100.
- 21 "Hard Translation and the Class Character of Literature"  
硬譯與文學的階級性, LHCC (1956) vol.IV, p.164.
- 22 "On the Third Category of People" 論第三種人  
LHCC (1956) vol.IV, p.336.
- 23 "A Look at Shanghai Literature" 上海文藝之一瞥  
LHCC (1956) vol.IV, p.237.
- 24 "Preface to One Day's Work" 一天的工作, 前序  
LHCC (1938) vol.XIX, p.260.
- 25 "Mara" p.202.
- 26 "Crisis Facing Essays" op.cit., p.443.
- 27 Jou Shih was one of the six young Communist writers executed  
by the Kuomintang in 1931. Lu Hsün wrote a memoir on him which  
is now collected in LHCC (1956) vol.IV, pp.219-220.
28. Agnes Smedley: Battle Hymns of China (New York, 1943) p.81.

## CHAPTER V

A NOTE ON THE STYLE OF THE FOUR EARLY ESSAYS

If there is any real polarisation in the writings of Lu Hsün, it is in the style of these comparatively little-known early essays. The later 't'sa-wen' were written for a wide audience which included the intellectual as well as the moderately educated man-in-the-street, and are executed in an emancipated language, hence they are extremely lively, colloquial, witty and humorous. But they were also written as 'daggers' to fight hypocrisy and inhumanity,<sup>1</sup> therefore they contain a high density of malice, satire and venom against the intended enemy. The writer's <sup>attack on the</sup> national administrative policy and its officials, got him blacklisted, so he often had to camouflage his meaning by using twisting phrases and deft allusions.<sup>2</sup> The uncertainty and confusion of the political scene which made it impossible for him to feel settled and at ease, and the rapid succession of events which all required to be commented on, forced him to keep his essays short and to the point. The early essays, on the other hand, were written exclusively for the young Chinese academics in Tokyo, who shared his eagerness for change and his anti-establishment attitude. With this largely idealistic and sympathetic audience, Lu Hsün could expound his ideas freely without having to hurl abuse and ridicule. Moreover,

although he was poverty-stricken, he had a fairly leisurely and undisturbed life in his student days in Japan,<sup>3</sup> hence the tone and pace of the essays were scholarly and unhurried. We shall now discuss the chief stylistic features of these essays.

The first obvious difference is that these essays are written in the classical style, which Lu Hsün later reserved mainly for scholastic research and poetry. He was a very competent Chinese scholar, with a strong background in the classics. His grandfather was a learned man, though he was never fortunate in the government examinations. The young Lu Hsün underwent a thorough and very severe training in the classics. Besides, he was a diligent young man endowed with an inquisitive mind, so he read widely and voraciously.<sup>4</sup> His Chinese scholarship manifests itself in these essays, in which he quoted profusely from Ch'u Tz'u 楚辭 and Chuang-tz'u 莊子 and imitated the diction of the old masters.<sup>5</sup>

Chü Yuan 屈原, the patriotic poet of the Warring States period, stood out very clearly as Lu Hsün's favourite writer. Many of the poet's celebrated phrases like 高丘無女 (my loved one is absent on the tall mountain), 修能 (talent), and 遠古 (ancient)<sup>6</sup> were assimilated effortlessly into the essays. They also adorned his poetry,<sup>7</sup> served as introduction to his anthology of short-stories,<sup>8</sup> and found their way even into his home as scrolls on his walls.<sup>9</sup> He admired the poet's literary

excellence, but he was perhaps more attracted still by the personality of the man. He loved him for his scepticism towards accepted notions, his integrity and his patriotism. He regarded Ch'ü Yüan's "T'ien Wen" 天問 as a collection of myths and legends reflecting the queries of a sceptical mind, and "Li Sao" 離騷 as the autobiography of a soul aching to be emancipated.<sup>10</sup>

Chuang-Tzū stood lower in Lu Hsün's esteem because he regarded the philosophy of the former as unrealistic and passive. In An Outline History of Han Literature 漢文學史綱要, he wrote: "In the philosophy of the Warring States period, there was Chuang Chou who held orthodox literature and ethics in contempt, worshipped abstraction, and outshone his contemporaries in literary achievement. In poetry, Ch'ü Yüan arose in Ch'u, whose "Li Sao," composed in exile, is the greatest and most magnificent work in the world."<sup>11</sup> Chuang Tzū was clearly rated below Ch'ü Yüan; his rebellious anarchy, his dislike of standardization and conformity, nevertheless, won him a place in Lu Hsün's heart. He was, of course, celebrated for his prose which is rich in symbolism and imagination. Here are a few examples of his unusual phrases which Lu Hsün adopted in his essays: 尸祝 (to worship),<sup>12</sup> 吊詭 (strange)<sup>13</sup> and 拘于虛 (narrow-minded).<sup>14</sup>

This successful and clever assimilation of the diction of the old masters, gives the essays much dignity and grace. As

if this was not enough, Lu Hsün proceeded to enrich his works in vision and sound. Take the following two sentences:

進化之說，始灼于希臘智者德黎

(the theory of evolution, sparked off by the Greek sage Thales ...)<sup>15</sup>

and 群疑冰泮 (to melt away the doubts of the people).<sup>16</sup> The metaphors 始灼 (to burn) and 冰泮 (ice

melting) are very apt and much more poetical than, for example,

初創 and 大解, which could have done just as well.

Another very clever name given to civilizations in decline is

影國 (shadow country),<sup>17</sup> which conveys a sense of the unreal

and the ethereal. The influence of science on China is compared

to a flowing river: 繼復流衍，來濺遠東，浸及震旦。<sup>18</sup>

- the three characters underlined meaning 'flow', 'splash' and

'immerse' respectively. Foreign culture is compared to a tree

with deep roots: 夫歐人之來，最眩人者固莫前

舉二事若，然此亦非本根而特葩葉耳。本根

is the true source of science, while the superficial effects of

science, like military reorganisation, economic stability are the

葩葉 (flowers and leaves). Another ingenious name given to

the volcano, something unfamiliar to the Chinese, is 地窗

(window of the earth).<sup>20</sup> The following passage has a wealth of

imagery: 是故今所謂識時之彥，為按其實，則多數常為盲子，實赤菽以為玄珠，少數乃為巨奸，垂微鉞以薰鯨鯢。

(In fact, of the so-called modern sages, the majority are blind men who confuse red beans with black pearls, while the minority are villains who hope to hook big fish with tiny baits),<sup>21</sup> The reformers who adopt the superficial culture of the West are compared to fools who mistake trash for treasure, while the profiteers are compared to fishermen who want to make a huge catch with very little bait. Such imaginative metaphors give a picturesque and colourful quality to these essays and make them extremely difficult to translate into English.

In the last example given in the above paragraph, we also find the writer's fondness for using the classical parallelism. Consider the two sentences:

多數常為盲子，寶赤菽以為玄珠，  
少數乃為巨奸，垂微餌以冀鯨鯢。

They are identical in length and syntax. The subject 多數 in the first sentence is matched by the subject 少數 in the second. There is a similar parallelism in these terms and phrases: 盲子 - 巨奸 (noun-noun): 寶赤菽 - 垂微餌 (verb+adjective+noun-verb+adjective+noun). The uniformity not only gives much dignified poise to the essays, but is also reinforced by a careful choice of sounds to create a rising and falling cadence resembling the music of a short, neat poem. A further example of the balance structure is this criticism

of Russia:

俄如孺子，而非暗人  
俄如伏流，而非古井

(Russia is like a little child, and not an unenlightened man; Russia is like a subterranean stream, and not an old well.)<sup>22</sup>

And in the following examples, we see how Lu Hsün varies the pace to avoid monotony, repeats certain words for emphasis, and still retains the balance:

時時上征，時時反顧，  
時時進光明之前途，時時念輝煌之舊有，  
故其新者日新，而其古亦不死。

(Yet this reference requires clear thinking so that history is regarded as a bright mirror for constant advancement and constant reflection. They must look forward constantly to the bright road of the future, as well as look backward constantly on a glorious trail and only then can the new be daily new, and the past live on.)<sup>23</sup> The lengths of the three pairs of sentences differ to give variety, but unity is maintained within each pair by identity in syntax and number of characters.

Lu Hsün was, of course, only conforming to the classical model when he used natural imagery and parallelism. The Chinese classical tradition has a marked penchant for natural imagery and parallelism which helps the writer to group together words intelligibly in the absence of punctuation. Some of the imagery Lu Hsün used, too, was by no means original. Take for example that

passage on 'roots' and 'leaves', the imagery is extremely common in classical writings and can be found in this passionate statement by another Ch'ing reformer T'an Ssu-t'ung 譚嗣同 :

"In China, during the last few decades, where have we had genuine understanding of foreign culture? What you mean by foreign matters are things you have seen, such as steamships, telegraph lines, trains, guns, cannons, torpedoes and machines for weaving and metallurgy ... all that you speak of are the branches and foliage of foreign matters, not the root."<sup>24</sup> Here the similarity is not only in style but also in thought.

The classical language has many virtues, but it is perhaps not a suitable medium for teaching a modern subject like science because of its limited vocabulary. We have seen how Lu Hsün had to resort to his own originality when he came across something that was alien to a Chinese mind like 'volcano'. The imagery 地窗 (window of the world) is ingenious, but it is rather naive and does not succeed in getting across the idea of an erupting mountain. A term like 欽驗之術<sup>25</sup> is utterly incomprehensible. 驗 (to examine) and 術 (art) are simple enough, but the key character 欽, now obsolete, which is defined as a kind of wooden or iron tool of dubious shape and use, does not throw any light on the

meaning at all. It is only from a footnote supplied by the editor that I know that it actually refers to 'anatomy'. The difficulty of these essays is further increased by the writer's tendency to use quaint and archaic words. In a previous example, we have the word 按 (according to)<sup>26</sup>, but its older form 按<sup>27</sup> is also used. Another example is the character 由<sup>28</sup> in 自由 (freedom), which is used with its rare form 繇<sup>29</sup> in the same essay. The ancient characters like 侷 (entrust)<sup>30</sup> and 學 (study)<sup>31</sup> are used instead of the current forms 托 and 研, then there is also the modern name for 'anatomy': 解剖<sup>32</sup>.

We are not sure if these terms which appear to us now as archaic and incomprehensible sometimes were equally so to Lu Hsün and his contemporaries, they might still be very much in use in those days. But the fact that they appear side by side with their more modern equivalents shows that Lu Hsün was allowed a choice.

The tendency to use the more classical words and phrases was perhaps partly due to youthful vanity and love for euphemism, and partly a desire to instill a certain classical grace to the essays, but it is possible that Lu Hsün might have been influenced by the nationalistic attitude of his teacher, Chang T'ai-yen, who advocated the practice of using the 'original' Chinese <sup>th</sup> orthography.

Lu Hsün later admitted: "I was fond of constructing strange sentences and using obsolete words. This was because I was then

under the influence of Min-pao". Again, Lu Hsün was attracted to this man by his nationalism,<sup>33</sup> but the man's views on etymology, nevertheless, exerted some effect on his literary style, as he himself admitted. In one of his many essays about his teacher, Lu Hsün outlined the main tenets of Chang's thesis: "According to him you may consider the classical language difficult, but the modern language is much more difficult. For many of our modern colloquialisms come from ancient sources, and unless you have studied philology you will not know how modern words were pronounced and written in the old days; hence you will make mistakes."<sup>34</sup>

Chang T'ai-yen therefore encouraged his students to analyse modern words to trace their historical equivalents and encouraged them to use the old forms. Lu Hsün, however, soon broke away from the spell of his teacher and regretted that he ever put Chang's views into practice. He later criticized his teacher thus: "Mr. Chang T'ai-yen is absolutely right. Our present vernacular did not descend overnight from the sky: naturally there are many old expressions in it, most of which have appeared in ancient books. If every pai-hua writer has to trace the origin of every word in the Han dynasty lexicon, Shuo Wen 說文, that is certainly many times more difficult than just writing in the classical language without tracing its origin. But not one of the advocates of pai-hua, ever since pai-hua was advocated, has regarded its

purpose as being to trace the etymology of characters. We simply use the forms sanctioned by popular usage ... I am afraid Mr. Chang made too extensive an application of his specialised subject."<sup>35</sup>

Lu Hsün not only renounced his former liking for archaic words, but also spoke out against the classical language and literature altogether on account of its deadness and irrelevance to the modern world. He realized that the literary language he first wrote in was partly responsible for the backwardness and silence of the Chinese people.<sup>36</sup> The common people could not master the difficult 'square' and unphonetic characters: "Silently they grew, withered, and decayed for the past four thousand years like grass under big rocks."<sup>37</sup> Language, <sup>he said,</sup> became a monopoly of the rich and the aristocrat, who conspired together to leave the poor in a state of ignorance and submission. Lu Hsün became an active promoter of pai-hua,<sup>38</sup> and wrote, in that medium, the first successful Chinese story wholly western in conception and execution.<sup>39</sup> In order to make the Chinese language easier for all to learn, Lu Hsün joined the campaign for the romanisation of the script.<sup>40</sup>

But the chief weakness of the essays does not arise from the use of the classical language, it is due more to Lu Hsün's youthful eagerness to instruct his people and express his views. In these essays, he was propounding his newly acquired knowledge to his fellow-students, so he was anxious to make his views very clear.

In the following passage, we can see how patiently he tried to explain the meaning of 'century': "The first century is reckoned from the birth of Jesus Christ. A period of a hundred years is called a century, and the occurrence of any major event during that period is considered an event pertaining to that century."<sup>41</sup> His attempt at thoroughness in his instruction is best illustrated by the scheme of "Culture", which can be outlined as follows: (1) An historical explanation of the backwardness of China (2) A criticism of the current westernization programme in China leading up to the theme of the essay: "to repudiate matter and exalt the mind, to rely on the individual and reject the masses." (3) A historical survey of Western civilisation and the introduction of neo-idealism (4) A discussion of individualism and democracy (5) A discussion on anti-materialism and subjectivism (6) Individualism and neo-idealism as remedies for China. The plan is meticulously arranged but the central theme is marred by repetitious argument; as a result, the impact is considerably diminished. The following three passages are illustrations of this:

而此迂陋偏至之物，已陳舊于殊方者，馨香頂禮，吾又何為若是其芒芒哉！是何也？曰物莫也，衆數也，其道偏至。根史實而見于西方者不得已橫取而施之中國則非也。

perverted

(Now that this transformed and biased thing, recently an anarchism on foreign soil, is treated with the greatest reverence, why do we still feel so lost and dejected? What is it? It is materialism and democracy; its course is perverted. It was an inevitable phase in the history of the West, but to adopt it dogmatically for China is a grave error.)<sup>42</sup>

文明無不根舊迹而演來，亦以矯往事而生偏至，緣智  
校量，其頗灼然，猶子與璧焉耳。特其見于歐洲也，為不得已，  
且亦不可去，去子與璧，斯失子與璧之德，而留者為空無。  
不安受贊重之者奈何？顧橫被不相系之中國而  
膜拜之，又寧見其有當也？

(Civilisation, which must evolve out of the past, has overcompensated for the past and become perverted. When examined, from a moderate point of view, the slant was as obvious as the loss of an arm or the disablement of a leg. However, its emergence in Europe was inevitable and indispensable; to remove the mutilation is to lose the power that derives from being mutilated, and what remains is a void. There was no alternative but to accept it. If China, an alien and unrelated country, chose to worship them, how could this be regarded as proper either?)<sup>43</sup>

顧新者雖作，舊亦未僵，方遍滿歐洲，冥通其地人民之呼吸，  
余力流行，乃擾遠東，使中國之人，由舊夢而入新夢，沖決囂叫，狀  
猶狂醒。夫方賤古尊新，而所得既非新，又至偏而至偽。

(Nevertheless, the force of the old is not dead despite the birth of the new, it still pervades the whole of Europe and has become

ingrained in the <sup>its</sup> people. Its remaining force flows on to stir up even the Far East and causes the people of China to pass from an old dream into a new dream, to burst forward and scream as if they were intoxicated. We are now contemptuous of the old and full of reverence for the new, but what we have acquired is not new but perverted and false.)<sup>44</sup> The objection to a blind adoption of the perverted culture of the west is repeated in all three passages, but the repetition is not justified by any new insight or additional supporting evidence to the arguments already made. Phrases like: 偏至 (perverted) and 不得已 (inevitable) recur monotonously.

The essays are not only full of unnecessary repetition of ideas, they also suffer from sheer verbosity. In "Science", the passage on selection reads:

此以人力傳宜種者也。然比特人擇動植而已，天然之力，亦擇生物，與人擇動植無大殊，所異者人擇出人意，而天擇則以生物爭存之故，行于不知不覺間耳。

(This is an example of the use of artificial means to perpetuate the ideal species. This is only, however, man's selection of animals and plants. The forces of nature, too, select living things in a way not much different from that of man in his selection of animals and plants, the only distinction being that man selects according to his own purposes, while nature selects through an imperceptible

process of the struggle for existence among living things.)<sup>45</sup>

The sentences underlined are wholly repetitious and can be deleted without changing the sense at all.

Another very apparent weakness in these essays is the author's fondness for digression. Many of the ideas do not follow each other in a logical sequence. This is particularly so in "Science" and the beginning chapters of "Mara". On page 168 of "Science", Lu Hsün moves from a discussion of Greek science to the general principles of criticism, and from there, onto another different topic - the self-deception of the ancient civilised countries; on page 169, from the limitation of Arabian science, he suddenly moves on to an argument about theoretical and applied science; and on page 176, from criticism of society's obsession with materialism, he suddenly brings in the interdependence of industry and science. In "Mara", the first three chapters are meant to be an introduction of the individualism of the "Mara poets", but they turn out to be a rather rambling discussion on subjects ranging from the 'noble savage' to utopia, evolution, Taoism, and Chinese government. Though these subjects are related in a way to individualism, the generous space allotted to them has c The digressions in "Science" can perhaps be explained.

The digressions in "Science" can perhaps be explained. As I have pointed out in the beginning of this study, Lu Hsün derived the

majority of his ideas from Huxley's essay "The Progress of Science, 1837-1887" and John Tyndall's book The Advancement of Science, but he had the tendency of adopting their ideas without taking into consideration the arguments leading up to them. Consequently, many of the ideas in LU Hsün's essays stand in a vacuum and do not show any logical connection with those going before and after them. In the case of the opening chapters of "Mara", the young author was anxious to discuss all the ideas which interested him, regardless of whether they bear any relation to the topic under discussion or not.

In conclusion, while it is obvious that these essays, delivered by a hand as yet inexperienced and unprofessional, have very little claim to artistic distinction, they are, nevertheless, poignant with feelings and ardour and shine with sincerity and seriousness which make them a foretaste of what to expect from the later works of this great patriotic writer of China.

NOTES:

- 1 "Crisis Facing Essays" 小品文的危機, op.cit., p.443.
- 2 He was one of the fifty people on the government blacklist in 1927. See the appendix to No Option 而已集, IHCC (1956), vol.III. pp.431-37.
- 3 Hometown of Lu Hsün op.cit., pp.177-211.
- 4 A critical Biography of Lu Hsün op. cit., pp.22-28.
- 5 Lu Hsün and Chinese Literature op. cit., p.26-27; Impressions of my Deceased Friend Lu Hsün, op. cit., p.5-8. They both give detailed accounts of Lu Hsün's influence by CH'ü Yüan.
- 6 "Mara" p.200.
- 7 Impressions of my Deceased Friend Lu Hsün op.cit., p.6-7.
- 8 Hesitation op. cit. p.7-8.
- 9 Impressions of My Deceased Friend Lu Hsün op. cit., p.7-8.
- 10 Ibid. p.5.
- 11 An outline History of Han Literature IHCC (1956) vol.VIII, p.274.
- 12 "Mara" p.169.
- 13 Ibid., p.186.
- 14 Ibid., p.187.
- 15 "Man" p.156.
- 16 Ibid., p.157.
- 17 "Mara" p.194.
- 18 "Science" p.167.
- 19 Ibid., p.176.
- 20 "Mara" p.198.
- 21 "Culture", p.182.
- 22 "Mara" p.196.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Teng and Fairbank, op. cit. p.88.
- 25 "Man", p.157.
- 26 "Culture" p.182.
- 27 "Mara" p.214.
- 28 Ibid.

- 29 Ibid. p.200.
- 30 Ibid. p.205.
- 31 "Man", p.163.
- 32 "Man", p.158.
- 33 Impression of My Deceased Friend Lu Hsin, op. cit. pp.13-4.
- 34 "Famous Men and Famous Sayings" 名人與名言 LHCC (1956)  
vol.VI, p.286.
- 35 Ibid. pp.286-87.
- 36 "About the New Language" 關於新文字 ,LHCC (1956) vol.VI, p.126.
- 37 "Preface to the Russian Translation of The True Story of Ah Q",  
op. cit., p.78.
- 38 "Silent China" op. cit., pp.9-14.
- 39 "Diary of A Madman", op.cit.
- 40 "A Reply to Mr. Ts'ao Chü-jen's letter" 答曹聚仁先生信 ,  
LHCC (1956) vol.VI, pp.58-60.
- 41 "Culture", p.182.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Ibid. p.184.
- 44 Ibid. p.185.
- 45 "Man" p.162.

P A R T    II

## CHAPTER VI

THE HISTORY OF MAN

(An Interpretation of the Monistic Approach to the Study of Phylogeny by Ernst Haeckel of Germany.)

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The theory of evolution was sparked off by the Greek sage Thales<sup>1</sup> and fully set out by Charles Darwin.<sup>2</sup> The German, Ernst Haeckel,<sup>3</sup> like Thomas Huxley,<sup>4</sup> is also a champion of Darwinism in modern times. He does not, however, follow the orthodox view but produces many modifications and fresh ideas. He constructs a diagram of the genealogical tree of living organisms, in which he traces the evolutionary process of animals and plants to show the origin of their development, filling in various gaps by supplementary references to fossils. His classification and exposition are executed in a superb style and his study, which ranges from single cells to human beings, is a homogeneous whole abounding in convincing examples. Although scholars of a later generation may go further than him without exhausting the subject, the study of evolution in the late nineteenth century, nevertheless, has culminated in the efforts of this man. In China in recent times, the topic of evolution has become almost commonplace: the innovators quote the term to ornament their conversation, while the

reactionaries, who abhor the association of man with the apes, always refute it with all their might. Even the German philosopher Paulsen has said, "It is a blot on our Germany that so many of us read the works of Haeckel." Germany is the centre of learning, and if Paulsen,<sup>5</sup> himself a philosopher, could make such a remark, then it is not surprising that the Chinese defenders of a disintegrating tradition should shun this new voice. The theory of human evolution, in fact, has not stained the honour of man as the primate of all creatures. Man's rise from baseness to supremacy and his unceasing daily progress shows all the more man's superiority over all animals; what is there to be ashamed about in knowing how the system came into being? Haeckel, in his many works, repeatedly expounds this principle. He also establishes the science of phylogeny and puts it on the same footing as ontogeny. He has researched into the origin of the human race and examined the accounts of its development. His findings have done much to satisfy the doubts of the people and lift the veil off the great mystery, and have crowned the peak of modern biology. I should like to explain his views here, beginning by relating the history of the theory of evolution up to the present day and concluding my essay with a discourse on Haeckel's elaborations.

Phylogeny is the study of the origin of the human race and its genealogy, its data being the origin of all animal species. It is a subject introduced only in the last forty years and therefore ranks as the newest branch of biology. All the old scholars and clerics regarded man as the primate of all living things. Hence, even if they were curious about the origin of organisms, they were lost in the byroads of myths. Thus all their interpretations were mysterious and inexpressible. The Chinese legend, for example, claims that P'an Ku created the universe and that Nü Wa died and bequeathed her corpse to form heaven and earth.<sup>6</sup> If the human race had appeared before heaven and earth were shaped, how did they manage amidst the chaos caused by the non-existence of day and night? Ch'ü Yüan said in one of his poems, "The Great Turtle claps his hands as he carries the mountain on his back, how does he keep it steady?"<sup>7</sup> Scepticism was already apparent in his words. The talk of creation in the West began with Moses. The first chapter of Genesis says that God created all things in heaven and earth within seven days, kneaded clay to form man and took one of his ribs to form woman. Since, in the thirteenth century, religious influence dominated Europe, science was overshadowed and superstition prevailed. The Popes in Rome, moreover, did their best to muffle the scholars and the world was thus left in ignorance. Haeckel rightly denounced them as

the greatest deceivers in the history of the world. With the coming of the Reformation, the superstition of Christianity fell apart. Copernicus<sup>8</sup> was the first person to affirm that the earth in fact revolved round the sun and was constantly in motion. Because of this, a few anthropologists appeared, like Vesalius<sup>9</sup> and Eustachio,<sup>10</sup> who, with their study of anatomy ushered in a bright new epoch for learning. Zoological classification received a great impetus from the emergence of Linné.<sup>11</sup>

Linné, a distinguished Swedish scholar, was dissatisfied with the practice, common among contemporary naturalists in different countries, of naming the natural species in their mother tongue, thus causing a great deal of complication and confusion. He therefore wrote The Natural System, in which he gave animals and plants names in Greek and Latin, and introduced the binominal system of genus and species. For example, cat, tiger and lion, which are all alike, are grouped into the genus 'Felis'; but these three also differ from one another, so cat is designated 'Felis domestica', tiger 'Felis tigris' and lion 'Felis leo'. He then collected all other similar animals and grouped them into the family 'Felidae'. The 'family' was then graded into order, class, schematic classification and kingdom. Kingdom is to distinguish between animals and plants. In his work, Linné<sup>11</sup> recorded the peculiarities of the genera so that they could be understood at

one glance. Nevertheless, since there were so many things in nature, it was impossible to account for all of them at once. Hence, new names had to be coined when new species were discovered. Many people in the world who wanted to acquire fame by discovering new species competed with one another in hunting for them and were rewarded with many new finds. The nomenclature of Linné rose to fame, and the question of the definition of species, too, with its related problems of scope and method of classification attracted the attention of many scholars. But Linné still followed Moses' theory of creation in his classification. It is claimed in Genesis that all the living things of today were created at the beginning of the world, so The Natural System also states that the existing species are the survivors of the Deluge in Noah's time and that there has never been any addition, reduction or mutation in the species of animals and plants which makes them different from the original creations of God. Linné knew only of the living creatures of the present age but was not aware of living creatures which inhabited the surface of the earth countless years before him but which <sup>had</sup> since become extinct. Hence the study of the origin of life could not emerge. The naturalists in his day also adhered faithfully to the orthodox view and expressed no differences in opinion. And even when there were occasionally some who realized the truth and argued that living

species could not have undergone the passage of time without any transformation, their arguments were rejected by their outraged contemporaries and consequently could not be made known. In the early part of the nineteenth century, the man who first understood the facts of organic evolution and formulated theories to interpret them was Lamarck.<sup>12</sup> He was, however, preceded by Georges Cuvier.<sup>13</sup>

Cuvier, an extremely conscientious and learned Frenchman, had contributed a great deal to scholarship. He devoted his energies particularly to comparative anatomy and fossilogy and wrote Research on the Fossil Bones of Quadrupeds which formed the basis of modern paleontology. Fossils are the remains of prehistoric organisms embedded in rocks for immeasurable periods of time, whose shapes are still clearly recognisable. From them men can learn the form and state of animals and plants in previous ages and differentiate between the living species of the past and of the present. Through these fossils, the history of creation manifests itself to mankind. The ancient Greek sages seemed to have been vaguely conscious of this - but later on forced conjectures and arbitrary assumptions prevailed. Some said that the formation of fossils was merely a sport of creation, others said that the vital spark which produces pregnancy in humans, when misdirected into rocks became things like crustacea and stone mussels. It was not until Lamarck examined the

fossils of shells and Cuvier studied the fossils of fish and animals, that it was realized fossils were really the outlined shells of ancient living things which had become extinct, and that Linné's theory of constancy in numbers of species and immutability in form since creation was proved false. Cuvier himself still held on to his belief in the fixity of living species. When the previously held theory was near disintegration, he formulated the 'Revolution Doctrine',<sup>14</sup> to explain the facts. In this he states: "The surviving animal species of today were all created by the hand of God when the world began. Yet plants and animals did not undergo one creation only. Each creation was heralded by catastrophes. Water convulsed to form land, and the seas erupted to form mountains. Thereupon old species perished and new species emerged. Therefore, the fossils we have now were all created by God, their differences in shape are only due to being created at different periods of time, there being no continuity between them. On the pinnacles of mountains, relics of shells have been found - this proves that the region concerned was once a sea. The shapes of fossils, too, have been subjected to harsh treatment and one can tell from them that the catastrophes were violent indeed. From creation down to the present time, the surface of the globe must have undergone at least fifteen to sixteen major upheavals. With every change perished the old species which turned up as fossils in a later age." His doctrine

was largely founded on a hypothesis unsubstantiated by any real proof, but was nevertheless very influential at that time and gathered a large following among scholars. Etienne Geoffrey St. Hilaire<sup>15</sup> confronted him in a debate at the Académie Française in Paris, but Cuvier had more scholarship and a formidable array of evidence. St. Hilaire's theory of organic evolution, furthermore, was not yet fully formulated. Therefore the debate on July 30, 1830, ended in a defeat for St. Hilaire, and Cuvier's 'Revolution Doctrine' became more popular than ever.

But the theory of immutability failed to satisfy for long the minds of the scholars. Towards the close of the eighteenth century, many of them wished to resolve their doubts by resorting to nature. Goethe<sup>16</sup> came forward and produced the 'Metamorphosis Theory'. Goethe, a great German poet, was also an excellent philosopher. So, though his argument was generally founded more on imagination than on facts, being well-informed and powerful in intellect, he was able to discern shrewdly the inter-relationship between living things and their descent from one common origin. In 1790, he published Morphology of Plants in which he said that all plants evolved from one prototype and that all their parts were a modification of one proto-organ, the proto-organ being the leaf. He next made a comparison of different kinds of bones. In this, his achievement was quite significant: he learnt that the bones of animals were a modification of one original model, in

other words, the bones of man were not in fact different from those of other animals, and that deviations in external appearances were due to metamorphosis. Metamorphosis was caused by these two powerful constructive processes: inwardly, there was the centripetal force, outwardly, the centrifugal force; the centripetal force tends to likeness, the centrifugal, to variation. Likeness is equivalent to the present-day term 'heredity', while variation, to 'selection'. The research of Goethe consists of penetrating to the origins of the structure and development of organisms through natural philosophy. It would not be wrong to call him the forerunner of Lamarck and Darwin. What is regrettable is that his evolutionary concept is similar to that of philosophers like Kant<sup>17</sup> and Oken<sup>18</sup> and he was therefore unable to escape their influence and shake the foundation of the doctrine of the immutability of species. The man who succeeded in doing this was Monet de Lamarck.

Lamarck was a great French scientist, who in his Research on the Origin of Living Bodies, published in 1802, noted the inconsistency found in species and the transformations in their form. But the greater part of his energy was given to his Zoological Philosophy in which he maintained that the differentiations noted in living species were founded on an entirely artificial basis. He said: "On earth there is no distinction between the animate and the inanimate. All that exists between heaven and earth can be classified under one heading. Hence the law governing the

inorganic and the method we use to describe the inorganic is also used to describe the organic. What the world designates as life is a purely physical phenomenon. All plants and animals, like man, can be interpreted according to the laws of nature. The species are similarly subject to the laws of nature, not, as the Bible says, created by God. Has not the theory of Cuvier undergone more than ten revisions? Hence it still needs to be confirmed and proved. I say that all living things have evolved continuously since prehistoric time. Having no organs at first and with very simple structures, in the wake of the changes the earth went through, they developed gradually into the higher orders of today". As for the laws governing the trend of the most elementary forms of life towards higher forms, according to Lamarck, there are two. First law: in every animal which is still young, a more frequent and continuous use of any organ gradually strengthens it and its function increases in importance; its new capacity is proportionate to the length of time it has been so used. To illustrate this simply: the arms of a blacksmith or the legs of a coolie in the beginning are not unlike those of an average man, but when they are used daily, their strength increases. Vice-versa, the permanent disuse of any organ over a period of time weakens it and nullifies its capacity. For example, the appendix, which birds use to digest food but for

which man has no use, has become deformed. Likewise, the ear muscles with which beasts move their ears, have lost their function in man and so have atrophied to the point where only traces remain. This is called 'selection'. Second law: all the acquisitions or losses wrought by environment on animals in their life-time will be transferred by the process of reproduction to their offspring. The same applies to the size and strength of the organs; except that in this instance, the characteristics of the parents must be the same. This is called 'heredity'.<sup>19</sup> The theory of selection is still esteemed as the golden rule by modern scholars; that of heredity, on the other hand, is now hotly and inconclusively debated; but what he Lamarck propounds is the main principle of evolution, a mechanistic process in which animals evolve into a higher order. Open the book Zoological Philosophy and you find that Lamarck employed solely the monistic theories to shed light on the system of nature, and that the basis of this view was evolution. Hence the formulation of the evolutionary theory began with the abolition of the belief that God was the creator. Lamarck, like St. Hilaire, argued vigorously against Cuvier, but remained little-known to the world. At that time, the study of biology was coming into its own, comparative anatomy and physiology, were also popular and the establishment of the cell-theory brought ontogeny a step closer. So the attention of the people was diverted

and nobody took any notice of the origin of species. Furthermore, people in general stuck fast to the orthodox view and remained immune to new theories. Hence the theories of Lamarck emerged with little response. Even Cuvier's Year Book of Zoology did not record them, so we can tell how isolated his theories were. 1858 saw the publication of the work by Darwin and Wallace<sup>20</sup> entitled The Theory of Natural Selection. The next year Darwin completed On the Origin of Species which astounded the whole world. It was indeed the glory of the world of biology and a comprehensive theory that put an end to many doubts.

Darwin's method of studying biology differed from Lamarck in that he advocated induction and the collation of all aspects of knowledge. At the age of twenty-two, he sailed on the steamship H.M.S. 'Beagle' round the world. From his careful observation of all life he came to understand the origin of species. He then accumulated his data, assimilated and organised it until he established the cause of organic evolution. He also found in the process that metamorphosis was rooted in selection, and that the principle behind selection was the struggle for existence. He was, therefore, able to formulate this theory of selection, also called Darwinism, which is unprecedented in history. I shall now quote only its main tenets. The first of these is artificial

selection. If a man were to set a definite goal and select animals of suitable characteristics for breeding purposes, and when the offspring appear, select again only those which have suitable characteristics, after many years, the ideal animals can be obtained. Herdsmen and gardeners of the past all understood this art. According to Thomas Huxley, in America some shepherds who feared that their sheep might leap over the fence and escape, retained only the short-legged animals and gradually got rid of the rest. Then they treated the newly-born ones in the same way, so that eventually only the short-legged sheep remained, while the long-legged ones became extinct. This is an example of the use of artificial means to perpetuate the ideal species. This is only, however, man's selection of animals and plants. The forces of nature, too, also select living things in a way not much different from that of man in his selection of animals and plants, the only distinction being that man selects according to his own purposes, while nature selects through an imperceptible process of struggle for existence among living things. The propagation of living organisms, in all cases, operates on a geometrical progression. For example, if a pair of animals after propagation can bring forth four offspring in their lifespan, these four offspring will together bring forth eight offspring. Thus, in five generations, a total of sixty-four offspring will be produced and in ten, a total of one thousand and twenty-eight, and so on; thus

the rate of multiplication is quick indeed. But occasionally there are some stronger species which destroy the weaker ones or obstruct their growth, hence the stronger species thrive while the weaker disappear. After a long period of time, the fittest will survive, and the working of natural selection will bring living things to perfection. The theory of Darwin was based on voluminous and substantial evidence. Therefore the history of the theory of evolution began with Thales, and was later arrested by the belief in divine creation. It was only with Lamarck that a big stride was taken and, finally, it was fully developed by Darwin. When Haeckel came onto the scene, he gathered the findings of his predecessors and founded the science of organic phylogeny. In this way, the facts of the evolution of man became so clear that it was impossible to cast the slightest doubt upon them.

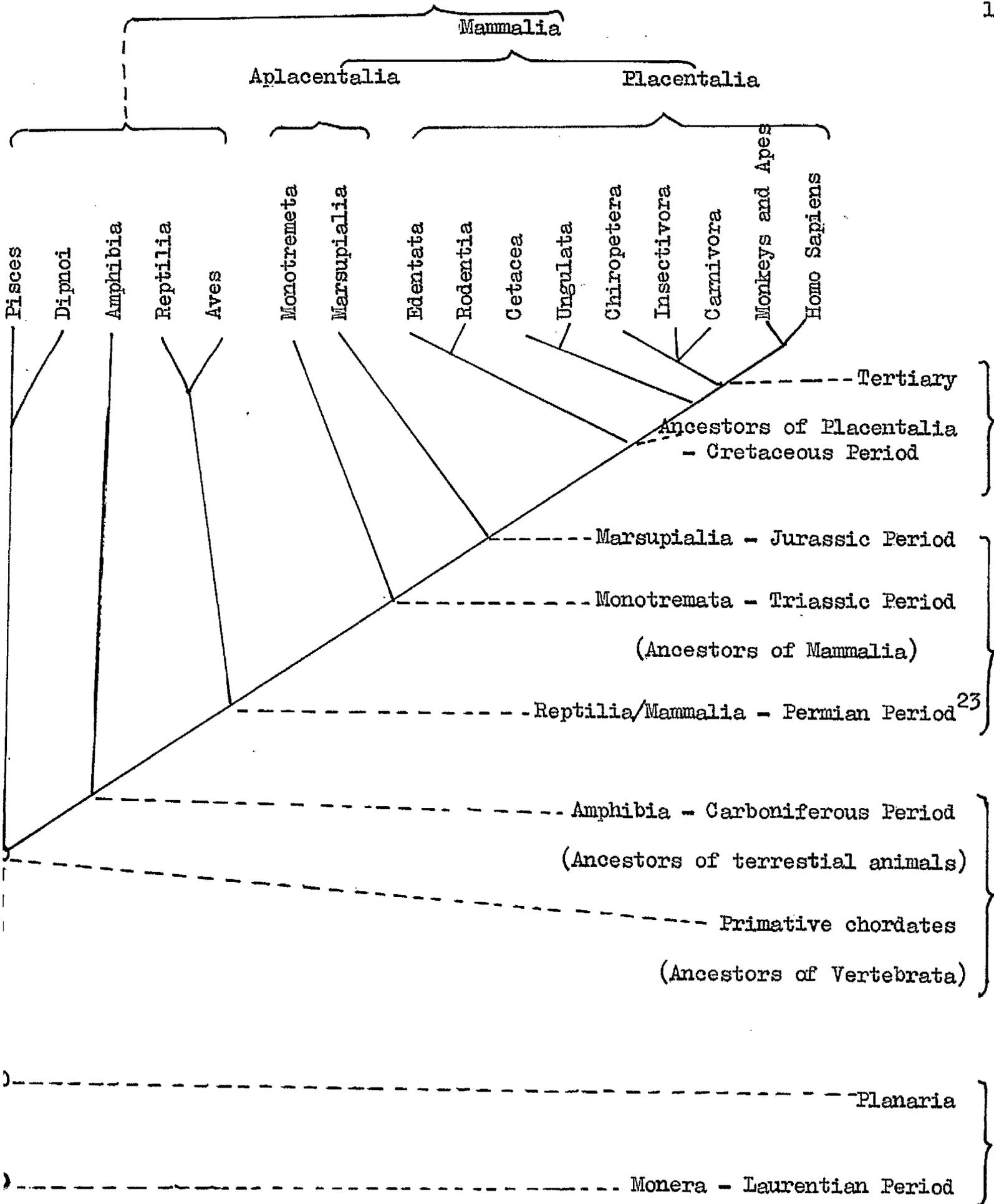
Before Haeckel, the discussion of origin was confined to the single species. Haeckel, however, founded the science of phylogeny to complement ontogeny. In his chapter "The Fundamental Law of Organic Evolution",<sup>21</sup> he stated that there was an exceedingly close relationship between the two sciences. The evolution of the species also obeyed the laws of heredity and selection. Moreover, he laid considerable emphasis upon morphology. His fundamental law is: "Ontogeny is actually the repetitive process of phylogeny; but its duration is much shorter and its completion much quicker.

As for the determining factors, they are the physiological functions of heredity and selection." Using this approach to tackle ontogeny, Haeckel was able to learn that beasts, fishes and insects, though too numerous to be calculated, could when their origins were examined, be shown to descend from one common ancestor. He applied this approach to phylogeny and learnt that all living things originated from an extremely simple organism and evolved to become more and more complex, until finally they culminated in man. The ovum of the human female and the ovum of the other vertebrates are very simple cells - likewise for the thread-like male spermatozoon. When the two sexes copulate, the ovum is fertilised to become a morula, and only when this morula is formed can man claim to have begun his existence. An example of this in the animal kingdom can be found in the genus of amoeba. They are structurally very elementary, being able only to move and nourish themselves, but they split and multiply in a geometrical progression to become a cluster of cells, like pandorina, in the shape of a mulberry, and this mulberry, which is hollow in the centre, subsides to become the progaster. The animal hydra which we find in fresh water ditches today has a similar development. In a more advanced stage of the foetus, four pairs of arteries grow out of the heart and curve to the left and the right like the gills of a fish. The foetus is now in a stage similar to that of the fish in the animal world,

and its consequent development is not any different from the other animals in the higher orders outside man, for it also has brains, ears, eyes and hind limbs and therefore cannot be distinguished from the foetus of the other vertebrates. All these studies are perceivable by the eyes; the transformations can be comprehended by daily observation of the growth of the fertilised ovum. But it is not the same with phylogeny. The events pursued took place millions of years ago, the development cannot be witnessed by the eyes, so that direct observation is confined to extremely limited zones. What can be depended upon are merely the two means of indirect reasoning and critical introspection, plus the materials for comparative study supplied from the experience of different sciences. Therefore Haeckel has said, "It is exceedingly difficult to excel in the study of phylogeny, much more so than in ontogeny."

This issue has been raised previously in Darwin's Descent of Man and Huxley's Man's place in Nature. Haeckel in his Anthropogeny, by using paleontology, ontogeny and morphology to establish the human genealogical tree, shows that the evolution of animals can be compared to the development of the human embryo. The ancestors of all vertebrates are the fish which appeared in the Jurassic Period of the Paleozoic Era, then they became the frog-fish of the Devonian Period, the amphibia in the Carboniferous Period, the reptiles in the Permian Period, and the mammals in the Mesozoic Era.

In the Tertiary Period of the Cenozoic Era, we have the lemurs, which gave rise to the monkeys proper. Among the monkeys proper, there were the race of narrow-nosed apes, from which came the dog-apes and then the anthropoid apes, which in turn begot the dumb pithecanthropus. Finally they gained the ability to speak and became man. All this can be proved by comparative anatomy, ontogeny, and observations of the vertebrates. Since ontogeny follows a definite pattern, so phylogeny can be said to be a repetition of ontogeny. This is, however, restricted to vertebrates. If we want to investigate further into the invertebrates to discover their genealogy, the task is even more formidable, for these animals have left no bones behind and are not to be found as fossils. But since, from the laws of biology, we know that the ancestors of man were unicellular organisms which resemble the fertilised ovum in pregnancy, these organisms must surely be succeeded by many similar organisms. Thus Haeckel traced the course of evolution to distinguish them and supplemented the gaps by fossils and hypothetical living organisms. In this way, the genealogical tree from unicellular organisms to man was completed. The diagram covers the history of evolution from monera to man, which in biology is termed phylogeny. The diagram is on the following page.<sup>22</sup> (on the left).<sup>12</sup>



In the last thirty years, the discoveries made in paleontology have provided powerful evidence for this theory, the most celebrated one being the skull of the fossil ape-man of Java.<sup>24</sup> With the unearthing of this fossil, human genealogy was complete. Before that, there was a missing link between the narrow-nosed ape and man. The subsequent acquisition of this fossil and its undoubted genuineness have achieved results by no means inferior to comparative anatomy and ontogeny. Man can be said to have originated from a very low being called the unicellular organism, which descended from monera, which in turn evolved from probion, the most primitive form of life. If we want to find out more about the history of the most primitive form of life, Naegeli's<sup>25</sup> principle is quite reasonable. It says: "The evolution of the organic from the inorganic is a fact deducted from the law of constancy of matter and force. If all things in the material world are causally related and if all phenomena proceed according to this principle, organisms, which are formed of inorganic matter and decay into inorganic matter, must have been derived originally from inorganic compounds."<sup>26</sup> Recently a French scientist used the transformation of matter and force to change inorganic matter into plants, another killed it with poisonous and mineral chemicals altering its electrical and heat-conducting qualities. Hence the gap between the animate and inanimate will come daily closer until the two merge into an inseparable unit and the

transformation of the inanimate into the animate will become an irrefutable fact.<sup>27</sup> Thus the world of learning at the close of the nineteenth century was really awe-inspiring. Should we wish to discover the origin of inorganic matter, we must look to cosmogeny to provide the answers.

Written in 1907.

NOTES:

- 1 Thales (624-547 B.C.). One of the Seven Wise Men of Ancient Greek philosophy. He was supposed to have anticipated the evolutionary theory by suggesting a single material substratum for the universe, namely, water.
- 2 Charles Darwin (1809-1882). English naturalist and one of the first to soundly establish the theory of organic evolution. In 1858, a joint communication by him and A.R. Wallace entitled On the Tendency of the Species to form Varieties; and On the Perpetuation of Varieties and Species by Natural Means of Selection was presented to the Linnean Society. In 1859, he published his great work On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life.
- 3 Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919). German zoologist, well-known for his early adoption of the doctrine of evolution and for his confident construction of genealogical trees of living organisms. Among his works are: History of Creation (1867), Anthropogeny (1874), A Mechanical-physiological Theory of Evolution (1884), System of Phylogeny (1894) and The Riddle of the Universe (1899).
- 4 Thomas Huxley (1825-1895). English biologist whose speculations on philosophy and religion led him to a powerful advocacy of the principle of agnosticism. His Romanes Lectures entitled "Evolution and Ethics" (published in 1893) caused quite a stir in China when they were translated into Chinese by Yen Fu. Lu Hsiin drew much of his material for his "Man" and "Science" from Huxley's essay "The Progress of Science, 1837-1887".
- 5 Friedrich Paulsen (1846-1908). German philosopher. He paid considerable attention to Kantian philosophy, on which he wrote several studies. He is best remembered for the part he played in the reorganisation of higher education in Germany.
- 6 P'an Ku, a mythological figure. He is said to be the first being brought into existence by cosmogenic evolution. According to the ancient Chinese, the Great Monad separated into the Male and Female Principles (The Yang 陽 and the Yin 陰). By a similar process these were each subdivided into Greater and Lesser, and then from the interaction of these four agencies P'an Ku was produced. He seems to have come into life endowed with perfect knowledge, and his function was to set the economy of the universe in order. He is often depicted as wielding a huge adze, and engaged in constructing the world. Nü Wa, another mythological figure. According to one account, she was the sister and successor of the legendary Emperor P'ang Hsi 伏羲. She

had a human head with the body of a serpent, and assisted in settling the ordinance of marriage and the relations of the sexes. When Kung Kung 共工, the minister of the Emperor, rebelled, and the pillars of heaven were broken and the corners of the earth gave way, she melted down stones and repaired the damage. Nü Wa later figured in one of Lu Hsün's stories entitled "Mending Heavens" 補天. Lu Hsün made a mistake of crediting creation to her. According to the legend, it was P'an Ku who created the world and its inhabitants. With his death, the details of creation began. His breath became the wind; his voice, the thunder; his left eye, the sun; his right eye, the moon; his blood flowed in rivers; his hair grew into trees and plants; his flesh became the soil; his sweat descended as rain; while the parasites which infested his body were the first members of the human race.

- 7 Ch'ü Yüan (B.C.332-295) a much loved and respected patriot and poet. He was a trusted minister of Prince Hual of the Ch'ü State, and enjoyed the full confidence of his sovereign until impeached through the intrigues of rivals. He advised his prince not to make war upon the Ch'in State, but the latter disregarded his warning, and finally fell into an ambush and was captured by his opponents. Ch'ü Yüan sank still deeper in disfavour when the new prince came to the throne; until at length, caring no longer to live, he went out to the bank of the Mi-lo river and drowned himself. Lu Hsün referred to this incident in "Mara". Ch'ü Yüan composed the well-known poem entitled "Li Sao" 離騷, which is an allegorical description of the writer's search after a prince who will listen to good counsels in government, and another called "T'ien Wên" 天問 from which the quotation was taken. D. Hawkes in his Chü Tzu (Oxford, 1959, p.51) has a slightly different rendering of the passage quoted. He translated it as "When the Great Turtle walks along with an island on his back, how does he keep it steady?"
- 8 N. Copernicus (1473-1543). Polish astronomer who propounded the heliocentric theory which revolutionized planetary astronomy and laid the foundation stone for modern developments in astronomy.
- 9 A. Vesalius (1514-1564). Belgian anatomist. He was the founder of modern anatomy. His masterpiece is De humanis corporis fabrica (1543).
- 10 Eustachio (1510-1514). Italian anatomist.
- 11 C. Linné (1707-1778). Swedish botanist. He was the first to enunciate the principles for defining genera and species and to adhere to a uniform use of the binominal system for naming plants and animals. His reputation was established by the appearance in 1735 of his Systema Naturae and of the Genera Plantarum two years later, while the Species Plantarum did not appear till 1738.

- 12 J. Lamarck (1744-1829). French naturalist whose greatest zoological work is Natural History of the Invertebrate Animals (1815). His other works include Research on the Origin of Living Bodies (1802) and Zoological Philosophy (1809). He was the first to distinguish vertebrate from invertebrate animals by the presence of a vertebral column.
- 13 G. Cuvier (1769-1832). One of the great French naturalists of the early nineteenth century and founder of the studies of comparative anatomy and paleontology. Among his more celebrated works are: Research on Fossil Bones of Quadrupeds (1812) and A discourse on the Revolutions of the Surface of the Earth and the Changes thereby produced in the Animal Kingdom (1812).
- 14 Lu Hsŭn is referring to the doctrine Cuvier propounded in his book A Discourse on the Revolutions of the Surface of the Earth. The quotation that follows is a paraphrase of Cuvier's ideas in the opening chapter of that book.
- 15 Etienne St. Hilaire (1772-1844). French zoologist. He put forward the hypothesis that the existing species were descended from a few original species which underwent transformations because of environment. In 1830, he had a debate with Cuvier in the Académie Française in Paris and was defeated.
- 16 J. Goethe (1749-1832). Generally recognised as one of the greatest literary figures that Germany has ever produced. Also a philosopher in his own right. In 1790, he put forward his theory of morphology to explain how the existing theories came about in his Versuch die Metamorphose den Pflanzen zu erklären / = An attempt to interpret the metamorphosis of plants / (This work is mentioned in the essay as Morphology of Plants).
- 17 I. Kant (1724-1809) German philosopher. Exponent of 'critical' 'transcendental' or 'formal' idealism. He was interested in natural philosophy in his early years. Among his greatest works are Critique of Pure Reason (1781) and Critique of Practical Reason (1788).
- 18 L. Oken (1779-1851) German naturalist and philosopher. His writings display a philosophical kinship with Kant and Schelling and bare his reliance on deductive knowledge. He theorised that the head was a repetition of the trunk, so that a priori postulations of this kind prevented his making any real contribution to the science of comparative anatomy.
- 19 Cf. Lamarck: Zoological Philosophy, trans. H. Elliot (London, 1914), pp.112-3, which states: "First Law: In every animal which has not passed the limit of its development, a more frequent and continuous use of any organ gradually strengthens, develops and enlarges that organ, and gives it a power proportional to the length

of time it has been so used; while the permanent disuse of any organ imperceptibly weakens and deteriorates it, and progressively diminishes its functional capacity, until it finally disappears. Second Law: All the acquisitions or losses wrought by nature on individuals, through the influence of the environment in which their race has long been placed, and hence through the influence of the predominant use or permanent disuse of any organ; all these are preserved by reproduction to the new individuals which produce the young."

- 20 A.R. Wallace (1823-1913) British naturalist, evolutionist and author. In 1858, he sent an essay to Darwin which turned out to be a complete abstract of Darwin's own theories which he was formulating then. This essay and another prepared by Darwin were presented as a joint communication to the Linnean Society in the same year.
- 21 This chapter is in Haeckel's Anthropogeny, so is the quotation that follows.
- 22 The reader is reminded that in Chinese books, the pages are numbered from right to left.
- 23 This should be in the Paleozoic Era. See Haeckel's Anthropogeny and Sir Wilfred Le Gros Clarke's: History of the Primates (London, 1949).
- 24 Java Man. In 1891, a Dutch anthropologist named Dubois discovered in Central Java, portions of a skeleton which aroused acute discussion among students of human evolution. They consisted of a skull cap, a tiny fragment of the lower jaw and some worn molar teeth. The creature to whom these skeletal fragments belonged was called Pithecanthropus or the 'ape-man'. Some anatomists believed it to be really a giant gibbon, others that it was real man and yet others saw in it the 'missing link' - half way between ape and man.
- 25 K.W. Von Naegeli (1817-1891) Swiss botanist. He is remembered mainly for his investigations on the origin of cells.
- 26 This is quoted from Haeckel's The Origin of Life, trans. J. McCabe (London, 1904), p.358, in which Haeckel says: "My hypothesis was very strongly confirmed twenty years ago by the adhesion of the able botanist Carl Naegeli. In his instructive work, A Mechanical-physiological Theory of Evolution (1884), he supported all the principal ideas as to the natural origin of life which I had advanced in 1866. He formulates the chief part of them in this admirable principle:  
 "The origin of the organic and the inorganic is in the first place, not a question of experience and experiment, but a fact deduced from the law of constancy of matter and force. If all things in the material world are causally related, if all phenomena proceed on natural principles, organisms, which are formed of and decay into the same matter, must have been derived originally from inorganic compounds!"
- 27 Lu Hsin shifts here from Haeckel's monistic view of the world to Huxley's dual monarchy of animate and inanimate matter.

## CHAPTER VII

THE LESSON OF THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

How many can look at our world of today without wonder? The forces of nature are already at the disposal of humanity. They are released, directed, and put to good use by being harnessed, like horses, to machines. Communications and commerce have made so much progress compared with former times that even tall mountains and great rivers are obstacles no longer. The calamity of famine has been curbed and the aims of education have been accomplished. In the society of a hundred years ago, there were never changes as drastic as these.<sup>1</sup> What caused all these to happen? What encouraged them to take place? It is not easy to understand without penetrating the surface, but they were in fact made feasible through advancements in science. For scientists used their knowledge to investigate the profound as well as the subtle phenomena of nature and succeeded at last in bringing about reforms to benefit society. These formed a gigantic tide which flowed on to break upon the Far East and inundate China. Its flood is still mighty and unchecked. From the force it has generated, one can gauge quite accurately the immensity of its volume and become aware that the greatness of science was not achieved in one day. Its real source can be traced far back into Greek history, but it was held back for a thousand years and only broke loose again in the middle of the seventeenth century as a great river, looking

more magnificent than ever and flowing on unceasingly till this very day. With it came material benefits which have done much to further human happiness. I shall now describe in sequence the landmarks in the development of science, so that the signs of diligence and tenacity implicit in them may serve as a lesson to us all.

The magnificence of science in ancient Greece and Rome was in no way inferior to that of the arts. The important achievements of that time include Pythagoras' physiological and musical discoveries,<sup>2</sup> Aristotle's anatomy and climatology,<sup>3</sup> Plato's Timaeus and The Republic,<sup>4</sup> Democritus' atomic theory.<sup>5</sup> The study of hydrostatics was begun by Archimedes,<sup>6</sup> geometry was established by Euclid<sup>7</sup> and mechanical engineering was founded by Hero.<sup>8</sup> There were many more scholars besides these and it is quite impossible to list them all. Alexandria, famous as the home of learning, stored over a hundred thousand books -- a far from modest figure even in this day. The high quality of the ideas produced, too, illumines the present. This is because the sages of that age not only pioneered the branches of study mentioned above, but also put their minds to work upon the most subtle details in the hope of comprehending the elemental matter of the universe -- which Thales imputed to water, Anaximenes,<sup>9</sup> to air, and Heraclitus<sup>10</sup> to fire. The fallacies of these beliefs need no comment. Whewell<sup>11</sup>

has explained the fallacies thus: "The exploration of nature is inevitably dependent on metaphysics but the Greek scholars either lacked this or possessed very little of it. Definition of these concepts cannot be arrived at without the aid of logic ... People of that age hoped to use ordinary language, which we use so indiscriminately, to explain the strange mechanics of the universe and remove the mystery from it." But their intellects fearlessly tackled problems which their forefathers had failed to solve and, in their study of nature, they refused to be satisfied with the mere superficialities. Thus when we compare them with scholars of today, they are neither superior nor inferior. Those who criticise the history of an age differ in their standards of assessment. They often place the achievement of another age in a modern setting and vent their disapproval when it falls short of the modern standard. If they could put themselves in the place of a man of that period, stop thinking in terms of the modern world and try to be objective in their judgment, their evaluation can then be said to be reasonable. Any reasonable man would act in this way. If we make our criticism on this basis, then the flourishing golden age of Greek learning merits only praise and will be free from all adverse criticism. This attitude holds good in the criticism of other matters too. Those of our contemporaries who scorn legends as superstition and condemn ancient

religion as shallow and debased are all self-deceivers deserving our pity and advice. In reviewing the culture of another age and comparing its relative merits, we must place it next to a similar age of another people and measure their degrees of achievement. The judgment pronounced after such deliberation will be closer to the truth. But the view that modern theories are all based upon the ancients, and new thoughts are all a continuation of ancient ideas is as dogmatic as the above deliberate deprecation of the ancients. In the realm of ideas, although there have been examples of the past surpassing the present, learning consists of forming hypotheses and testing data, and must progress with the advance of time. The ancients cannot justifiably be criticised by their descendants for what they did not know, but neither should their knowledge be taboo. Formerly, the English tried to introduce canals in India, but the people of India objected violently to the proposal. They claimed that canals were first devised by the Indian sages, that the technique had only perished with time and that the idea was eventually stolen by the white men who modified it, and made it popular. The older countries which idolize their past have no inhibitions about such self-deception. In China, the fanatical patrons of national heritage who speak in the same vein are many in number. They regard all modern learning and art as part of our civilisation of several

thousand years ago. I do not know what their intention is. Are they going to be like the Indian theoreticians, using stratagems to introduce the new learning? Or do they so sincerely idolise the past that they regard it as omnipotent and insurpassable? But a society that ignores the distinction between right and wrong must be considered guilty.

After Greece had declined and Rome had fallen, the Arabs arose and learnt from the Christians and the Jews. Translation and annotation became very popular. As the Arabs were dazzled by the new and esoteric, deluded beliefs sprang up. The concept of science thus was neglected and progress was halted. Whereas the science of Greece and Rome had been directed towards exploring the unknown, the science of Arabia was imitation of what already existed. Hence experimentation was replaced by annotation, and understanding by criticism. The practice of wide reading spread but very little was discovered. Once again, the phenomena of the universe seemed mysterious and unfathomable. When attachment to the past became paramount, men erred in their learning: science waned and magic thrived; astronomy declined and astrology took its place. This is how magical arts like alchemy and clairvoyance came about.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, we must not censure the scholars of those days as indolent and passive and regard the slackening of their spirit as the outcome of resignation. It was

merely because they had chosen the wrong method that they became ineffectual. In the fields where they applied themselves, their accomplishments were certainly amazing. For instance, after Mohammedanism was established and politics and learning began to prosper through their mutual dependence, the Caliphs of Córdoba<sup>13</sup> and Baghdad<sup>14</sup> who confronted each other in the East and the West, competed in spreading the learning of Greece and Rome to their own countrymen. Moreover, they themselves showed great enthusiasm for the works of Aristotle and Plato. Schools sprang up in great numbers to teach rhetoric, mathematics, philosophy, chemistry and medicine. In chemistry, there was the invention of alcohol and nitric acid and, in mathematics, progress was made in algebra and trigonometry. The Arabs also invented stadia to measure the earth and calculated time with pendulum movements. Charts of the heavens were introduced at about the same time. Arabian learning enjoyed such prosperity that it could claim to be the centre of the world. The young Christians, on the other hand, mostly pursued their studies in the school in Spain<sup>15</sup> where they adopted the science of Arabia and transmitted it to their own people. In this way, scholarship in the Christian countries achieved fresh impetus and it was not till the eleventh century that it started to decline. Huxley, in Record of Scientific Progress at the End of the Nineteenth Century,<sup>16</sup> had this to say about them: "All schools of the Middle Ages considered astronomy, geometry,

arithmetic and music as the four branches of advanced education. A scholar who had no knowledge of one of these subjects could not claim to have received a proper education. We do not meet this requirement nowadays and should therefore be ashamed of ourselves."<sup>17</sup> His stand corresponds to the Chinese reformists' appeal to promote education. But note the subjects mentioned in his remark, of which three are theoretical sciences. Those in favour of the more concrete applied sciences and their methods cannot therefore quote this remark to lend support to their arguments.

Such was the state of affairs in Arabia. As for the Christian countries, they did very little to develop science. Not only did they not encourage it, they even went as far as to attack and obstruct it, saying that the most treasured qualities in man were his moral duty and religious aspirations, and that to pay too much attention to science would therefore be to misuse one's ability. Lactantius,<sup>18</sup> the most talented of the Christians, said, "To investigate the causes of all things, to question the motion and station of the great globe, to talk about the promontories and troughs on the moon's surface, to look into the suspension of the stars, to examine the constituents of the heavens - anxious cogitation about these various problems is like tiresome description of an undiscovered capital. How stupid it all is!" If a wise man thought this way, then the common man's attitude is obvious. The splendour of science thus was dimmed. Such

was the general mood of the age, and it did not come about without a reason. According to Tyndall,<sup>19</sup> Christianity appeared and spread the gospel to the common people at a time when Rome and the capitals of other nations had declined into a state of moral decadence. Its discipline had to be ascetic in order to accomplish reforms. Though many early Christians were tortured, discipline triumphed. But their minds having been long subjected to constraint, the residue was not easily effaced. The scripture which ministered to their spiritual needs was also the authority by which science was judged. Thus curbed, how could progress be expected? The later strife between the church and many governments also did much to stifle research.<sup>20</sup> From this we can see how the different subjects of education in this world have failed to attain a state of equilibrium. When A prevails, B slackens; when B flourishes, A wanes - this has recurred endlessly throughout all ages. For example, Greek and Roman science was famed for its splendour, but the Arab scholars, when their time came, chose to remanipulate the notions of their predecessors, whereas the Christian countries set up a strict religion as the basis of moral education, and the survival of learning hung by a thread. All the same, the affairs of life are never constant. With the change of circumstances and the passage of time, learning finally underwent a remarkable revival and has prospered ever since. It has been said that the affairs

of the world do not proceed in a straight line, but twist like a spiral or rise and fall in a thousand shapes like big waves and tiny ripples which, after persistent lapping back and forth, finally reach the shore. How true this saying is! This is not only applicable to knowledge and morality, but also to the relation between science and art. In the Middle Ages in Europe, each painter acted according to his individual [artistic] criteria but, with the advance of science and for other reasons, art suffered a setback. Its restoration was only quite recent. Critics cannot generalise this alternate suffocation and growth as good or bad. The sudden rise of religion in the Middle Ages and its suppression of science might have been a subject of grave concern, but for the fact that the spirit of society was purged by it and that its influence bore true fruit. In the last two thousand years, its splendour has become even more evident than ever: there were Luther,<sup>21</sup> Cromwell,<sup>22</sup> Milton,<sup>23</sup> Washington<sup>24</sup> and Carlyle.<sup>25</sup> How could later generations, in reviewing their achievement, not admit their greatness? The harvest reaped more than made up the loss accrued by the impediment of science. Religion, learning, art and literature are the pillars of human achievement. As yet we cannot say which is most important. Hence, if men are dazzled only by the most apparent material benefits and imitate merely the most superficial technology, it is certain, from historical precedents, that they will be disappointed and poorly rewarded. Why do I say so? Because

an instance where such a people attained stability for any length of time is not to be found either in the history of civilisation or in political history.

The account I have presented so far ends with the Dark Ages. If we look for bright stars of that period, we find that one or two are worth mentioning. For example, in the twelfth century, there was Magnus<sup>26a</sup>, and in the thirteenth, Roger Bacon<sup>26b</sup> (born<sup>in</sup>/1214), different from the Francis Bacon<sup>27</sup> China is familiar with, who was born in the sixteenth century.) He published a work in which he discusses the causes of the loss of learning and outlines the remedies. This work contains many sayings worthy of quotation, yet Bacon only became known to the world in the last hundred years. In the beginning of his work, he gave the four causes for the loss to learning: menial imitation of the past, pseudo-knowledge, fetters of tradition and the deceptive concept of permanence. In more recent times, Whewell also discussed this. He ascribed the current phenomena to four causes which were quite different from Bacon's: feebleness of thought, triviality, intolerance of disposition and zealousness of temper,<sup>28</sup> and cited examples to support his argument. Tyndall who came later, disagreed on the fourth cause. He argued that zealousness of temper hindered learning only when the man's mind was weak. If the mind was strong and resolute, it could be an ally to science. It was to the lowering of this zealousness, rather than to a

diminution of intellect that the diminishing production of men of science in their old age was to be ascribed.<sup>29</sup> Hence the opinion of some people that intellectual achievement should be detached from moral force<sup>30</sup> is incorrect. Without the stimulus of this force, the sole reliance upon intellect achieves but poor results. It is one of the causes of scientific discoveries. If we go deeper into the causes of discoveries, we shall find one more important than this. Scientific discoveries are always subject to a supra-scientific force or, to put it more simply, a non-scientific imaginative inspiration. This has been the case with famous men both of the past and of the present. Ranke<sup>31</sup> has said, "What helps man to acquire true knowledge? It is something both tangible and incomprehensible. It is imagination." This can be taken as an infallible proof. Huxley of England claimed that discoveries were based on inspiration which was independent of man's ability.<sup>32</sup> Such inspiration should therefore be termed 'the discoverer of truth'. With inspiration, a man of mediocre ability could succeed in great enterprises; without inspiration, even a genius could accomplish nothing. This opinion is very shrewd and worth noting. Fresnel,<sup>33</sup> renowned for his studies on mathematics, once admonished his friend: "The desire for fame has long since departed from me. What I am now engaged in is not the soliciting of fame, but the satisfaction of my inclinations."<sup>34</sup>

This man was totally detached from worldly considerations. The fame discovery brings is tremendous, but Wallace humbled his achievement before Darwin's. Bunsen<sup>35</sup> shared the results of his efforts with Kirchoff,<sup>36</sup> such was his modesty. Therefore a scientist must be detached, self-effacing, imaginative and inspired. There has never been a man who lacked all these qualities yet bequeathed some achievement to the world. This must also apply to all the other walks of life. You may argue that these age-old sayings are empty and unrelated to reality. I have only this to say: "They are the mother of modern material benefits." I have spoken of the mother on account of her children, and hope thereby to give you encouragement.

During the Dark Ages, there were one or two great men who attempted to revive the past, but in the end they did not achieve their expected goal. The light of dawn, in fact, only appeared in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Even then, the long decline had made thoughts so barren that any attempt to follow in the footsteps of the forefathers met with little immediate success. It was not till the middle of the seventeenth century that people began to hear the first call of dawn. Looking back to that time, firstly there was Copernicus who explained the solar system, then Kepler<sup>37</sup> who succeeded him in investigating the paths of the heavenly bodies. Then came Galileo<sup>38</sup> who made

a lot of new discoveries in astronomy and mechanics and who was also particularly good at encouraging people to apply themselves to these sciences, after him there was Stevin<sup>39</sup> in mechanics, Gilbert<sup>40</sup> in magnetism, and Harvey<sup>41</sup> in physiology. In educational institutions in France and Italy, the study of anatomy was extremely popular, and scientific societies began to be established. The Accademia dei Lincei of Italy was a centre of scientific studies. The popularity of science was indeed amazing. This being the interest of the age, great men began to appear: in England, there was Francis Bacon and, in France, Descartes.<sup>42</sup>

Francis Bacon's book, which traces the progress of science since antiquity and the method of realising the ultimate goal, is called Novum Organum. Even though the final result did not fulfil the writer's expectations, when this work of his is judged objectively, we definitely cannot say that it is insignificant. The idea advocated in this book was based on the inductive method and no mention is made of experimentation - a fact that has often astonished later generations. The explanation for this is that the scholastic method in Bacon's time was very different: one or two trivial facts obtained were often taken as antecedents for general laws, hence Bacon, who wanted to regulate the abuses, was compelled to condemn the medieval habit of making hypotheses and exaggerated statements and to stress

induction. His scorn for deduction was, therefore, determined by circumstances. However, he never discussed this point specifically. When we examine it, we find that his opinion was not completely biased. He put forward two methods for understanding natural phenomena: to proceed from experience to theories, and from theories to new experience. Thus, to quote him, "Are things completed by the hand or the mind? They are completed by neither alone, but need machinery and the aid of other things before they can become perfected. Tasks are done by the mind as well as by the hand." From this we should expect that in the second part of Novum Organum, there would be further discussion of deduction, but the second part never appeared. Therefore, Bacon's method remains incomplete, since his teaching ends with his quest for an absolute inductive method. Absolute induction, however, is beyond the reach of man and its accomplishment can never hope to rise beyond actual experience. Philosophers have repudiated his method of attempting to use actual experience to get to new truths, and from new truths, to glimpses of the general law of the universe. Furthermore, Bacon disliked hypotheses. Yet has not the present success of science and its new horizon been brought about mostly by hypothesis? If his method is regarded, however, as a corrective for his time, there is no call for censure of its extremism.

Thirty years after the birth of this man, Descartes was born in France. A well-known mathematician, he founded modern philosophy. He alone stirred up the great wave of scepticism and, believing in the existence of truth, he concentrated on building his philosophy on consciousness and its method on mathematical reasoning. He said "Geometricians can use the briefest terms to explain many complex theorems. Because of this I have come to realise that all matters within the sphere of human intellect can also be explained in the same way. If we do not mistake untruths as truths but follow the correct path there will be no uncompleted tasks and inexplicable things." Thus his philosophy was based solely on deduction, which was extended in use to govern science. This is what he described in Principles of Philosophy as: "to proceed from causes to effects, and not to infer causes from effects." This is also the backbone of his methodology and the cornerstone of his philosophy. But critics<sup>have</sup> also maintained that his methodology was incomplete. Thus to worship it without question is as wrong as being too partial to Bacon's induction; it is only useful as a corrective for people who overstress experience. To strike the right balance, it is wrong both to be biased towards Bacon's induction and to imitate Descartes' deduction. It is only when both methods are applied that the truth will come to light. The present-day success of science is in fact indebted to the union of these two

methods. Galileo, Harvey, Boyle<sup>43</sup> and Newton,<sup>44</sup> for example, were not biased towards induction as Bacon was, nor did they follow deduction as dogmatically as Descartes did. They were very independent and maintained a balanced approach in their work. During his life-time, Bacon had strong faith in the future prosperity of his people and the fruits of the actual practice of his method but, after a hundred years had elapsed, his expectations remained unfulfilled despite the advancements made in science. Newton's discovery was brilliant and Descartes' mathematical reasoning was equally intelligent, yet when man had acquired was merely wealth of the mind, the pleasures and comforts of life remained inaccessible. Other examples of scientific advancements were: Boyle's method of experiment in matter and force, Pascal<sup>45</sup> and Torricelli's<sup>46</sup> weighing of the air, Malpighi's<sup>47</sup> and others' microscopic analysis of the structure of organisms. Despite all these, industry remained unaffected, communications were not improved, mineralogy was stagnant. The only achievement was in the field of mechanical engineering where a few crude watches were produced. With the emergence of English, French, German and Italian scientists in mid-eighteenth century, the progress made in chemistry, biology and geology is worth noting, but the question of how beneficial it was to society, apologists still find difficult to answer. The fermentation in science eventually produced practical

benefits. In the last part of the same century, the effects of science suddenly manifested themselves: machines and equipment for all industries, the growth and feeding of plants, the improvement of breeding in animals - all received the benefits of science. Moreover the 'so-called materialistic culture' of the nineteenth century was born at that time. Its impact was so overwhelming that man's spirit was invigorated and the people assumed a new attitude. The best scientists, however, remained unperturbed by materialism. As we said earlier, they regarded truth as their sole object, asserted the power of the mind and cleared away the debris of the academic world. They therefore devoted their minds and time to explore the universal law of nature. All the celebrated scientists of the time acted in this manner: Herschel<sup>48</sup> and Laplace<sup>49</sup> in astronomy, Young<sup>50</sup> and Fresnel in light, Oersted<sup>51</sup> in magnetism, Lamarck in biology, Candolle<sup>52</sup> in botany, Werner<sup>53</sup> in mineralogy, Hutton<sup>54</sup> in geology and Watt<sup>55</sup> in mechanical engineering are the eminent examples. If we study their aims, we shall find that their labours had not been directed to practical ends. Yet safety lamps were invented, the steam engine appeared, and mineralogy became established. And it was this aspect alone that held the attention of society, which sang the praises of the immediate results and ignored the scientists. There has never been such a reversal of effects and causes. To pursue

progress in this manner was like whipping a horse on the bridle - how could one hope to get the expected result? But to say that science gave rise to industry, that industry could make no contribution to science, and that man should only worship the glory of science is not correct either. When society became more complex and the need for division of work arose, men were compelled to specialise in some professions and mutual help resulted in mutual progress. Therefore industry benefitted from science in many ways. Science, too, was indebted to industry in no small way. If we were to live amidst barbarians, we would not even have alcohol and glass, let alone <sup>the</sup> microscope and <sup>the</sup> balance. What could a scientist do under such circumstances but muse and ponder? The sole employ of the intellect constituted one of the reasons for the decline of science in Athens and Alexandria.<sup>56</sup> How true it is, this talk of mixed blessings!

Overawed by the might of other nations and trembling with foreboding of danger to themselves, many Chinese talk fervently about economic development and military reorganisation, so that on the surface, they seem to have suddenly awakened from the sleep of ignorance, while in fact they have only been dazzled by what is before them without comprehending its true essence. The most dazzling things the Europeans have brought with them are the two things mentioned above, which are not the primary roots but merely flowers and leaves. Their source is deep and inexhaustible, so

how can mere imitation suffice? By this, this writer does not mean that man must consider science as his most urgent occupation, and must wait for it to bear fruit before embarking on economic development and military reorganisation. The writer merely believes that progress comes in stages and that expansion has its source. He is afraid that his country will seek the twigs and leaves and that nobody will look for the roots. Only those who grasp the source will survive, while those who go after the end-product will be ruined. Living in the present world is unlike living in the past. Man is free to worship utilitarianism or imitate the methodology. But those who refuse to be swayed by the great tide, who, like the ancient sages, can stand erect in treacherous currents and who are able to sow seeds in the present which will bear fruit in the future, and bring lasting blessing to their country, should make demands upon society and should also be demanded by society. Has not Tyndall said, "When we only attend to external things, or when our political opinion has led us to misjudge the truth of matters, we often proclaim that the security (or danger) of our country is dependent upon our political thought. But history, being most just, will soon prove the invalidity of such an assumption. What is the reason for the present supremacy of France? None other than its superiority in science over all other countries. The Revolution of 1792<sup>57</sup> threw the whole of Europe into a turmoil

and countries thronged to take up arms against France. While an allied army waited on her doorstep, she was plagued internally with civil strifes. Her armoury was empty and most of her warriors were dead. She could neither mobilise her tired soldiers to confront well-drilled enemy troops, nor did she have provisions to feed her besieged men. Soldiers fondled their swords and sighed to heaven, while politicians swallowed tears and lamented their impending defeat. Impotent yet full of hate, they resigned themselves to fate. Who then boosted the morale of the people? Who, again, shook and terrified her enemy? Scientists. At that time every scholar did his utmost to utilise his capacity to the full. When they witnessed the shortage of soldiers, they made up the lack with inventions. When they witnessed the shortage of arms, they did likewise. As there were scientists present in the defence, eventual triumph was certain." Of course, we can say that Tyndall, himself a scientist, may have spoken with prejudice but if we test his statement by the account given in Arago's<sup>58</sup> work, we shall see that Tyndall was correct. The book records: "The national Convention planned to enlist ninety thousand men to meet the encircling enemy, for, without such a large number, there would not be sufficient men for the purpose. But it could not get this figure and people were filled with dread. Furthermore, since the armoury had long been empty, strategy was inadequate. Thus the crisis

facing them could not be overcome by human strength. The prime need was for gun-powder, but saltpetre, the raw material from which it was manufactured, had always been imported from India - a source that had dried up. The next need was for guns, but France did not produce much copper and had been relying on supplies from Russia, England and India - again sources which had dried up. The third need was for steel and iron, which again they usually obtained from abroad and about whose method of manufacture they knew nothing. Hence they finally resorted to calling men reputed for their learning to a conference on gunpowder - the product that they most urgently required yet had the greatest difficulty in obtaining. Government officials, conscious of the futility of their efforts, sighed, 'where can we find saltpetre?' Before the words were out of their mouth, the scholar Monge,<sup>59</sup> got up and cried, 'There is saltpetre if you go to the right places like stables and barns - there, there is more saltpetre than you ever dreamed of.' This man who was talented, learned and zealously patriotic glanced around the room and announced, 'I can collect the earth to manufacture it!' In less than three days, the gun-powder was ready. He then instructed the country on the method of manufacture, which was so simple that even the old and infirm, the women and children could understand it. France was transformed overnight into a huge factory. Besides this, there were chemists who devised means to extract copper from bells for

making weapons. The new method of manufacturing iron, too, originated at that time, so that bayonets, swords and guns could all be made from local materials. The craft of tanning was implemented in no time and the supply of leather used for making army boots was thus able to hold out. Balloons and telegraphic communication so marvelled at in those days, were improved upon and adopted for extensive use in war. General Moreau<sup>60</sup> rode in a balloon to spy out enemy positions, thereby obtaining accurate intelligence and paving the way for an extraordinary victory." Tyndall therefore said, "France at that time gave birth to two things: science and patriotism." The men who made the greatest contribution were Monge and Carnot.<sup>61</sup> Then there were men like Fourcroy<sup>62</sup> and Morveau<sup>63</sup> and Berthollet.<sup>64</sup> Success in the undertaking depended solely on these men. Hence science is a sacred light that shines upon the world, capable of checking decline and stimulating noble feelings. In peace, it is the light of humanity. In crises, it inspires reformers like Carnot and creates heroes mightier than Napoleon's generals. Referring now to previous examples, we can realise very clearly the importance of the root-cause. A country might be able to shine for a little while, yet if the foundation it rests on is not firm, it can crumble in an instant. Only if it has initial potential can it last for any length of time. But there is another function which we must not overlook, and that is to restrain society from becoming biased and falling into extremism for, when the spirit

is slowly lost, destruction will follow. If the whole world limits its adulation to learning, life must end in desolation and, should such a situation persist, noble feelings will diminish, intelligent thinking will cease and what is called science will be reduced to non-existence. Therefore, what man should hope and ask for is not only a Newton, but also a poet like Shakespeare; not only a Boyle, but also a painter like Raphael. If there is a Kant, there must also be a musician like Beethoven; if there is a Darwin, there must also be a writer like Carlyle. These men were all instrumental in perfecting human nature and keeping it impartial. Hence they are the exemplars of our present civilisation.<sup>65</sup> Alas, this alone is the lesson revealed to us in the works and history of these men.

Written in 1907.

NOTES:

- 1 Cf., Thomas Huxley: "The Progress of Science, 1837-1887", op. cit., p.42: "The most obvious and the most distinctive feature of the History of Civilisation, during the last fifty years, is the wonderful increase of industrial production by the application of machinery, the improvement of old technical processes and the invention of new ones, accompanied by an even more remarkable development of old and new means of locomotion and intercommunication. By this rapid and vast multiplication of the commodities and conveniences of existence, the general standard of comfort has been raised; the ravages of pestilence and famine have been checked; and the natural obstacles, which time and space offer to mutual intercourse, have been reduced in a manner, and to an extent, unknown to former ages."
- 2 Pythagoras (c.591-c497 B.C.). Famous Greek philosopher and Mathematician. Lu Hsün seems to have made an error here by putting down 'physiological' instead of 'mathematical'.
- 3 Aristotle (c384-c322 B.C.). Greek philosopher, psychologist, logician, moralist, political thinker, biologist and founder of literary criticism. A disciple of Plato, he studied and worked at the latter's famous Academy of Athens from 367 to 347 (i.e. until Plato's death).
- 4 Plato (427-347 B.C.). Greek philosopher. He founded his famous Academy about or soon after 387 as an institute for the systematic pursuit of philosophical and scientific research.
- 5 Democritus (460-370 B.C.). Probably the greatest of the Greek physical philosophers. He is reputed to be one of the founders of the atomic theory.
- 6 Archimides (287-212 B.C.). Greek mathematician and inventor. He is noted for his studies in hydrostatics.
- 7 Euclid (330-275 B.C.). Greek geometrician who wrote Principles of Geometry. He taught and founded a school at Alexandria in the time of Ptolemy I, who reigned from 306 to 283 B.C.
- 8 Hero(n) (flourished: first century A.D.). Greek mathematician and physicist.
- 9 Anaximenes (588-524 B.C.). Greek materialist philosopher and naturalist.
- 10 Heraclitus (535-475 B.C.). Greek materialist philosopher. He is reputed to have propounded the 'fire' theory of world order.
- 11 W. Whewell (1794-1866). English philosopher and science historian. He wrote History of the Inductive Sciences (1837)

and Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences (1840). He is remembered for his work on the theory of induction and for his interest in the physical sciences.

- 12 Cf., John Tyndall: Advancement of Science (New York, 1874), p.30: "Whewell makes many wise and brave remarks regarding the spirit of the Middle Ages. It was a menial spirit. The seekers after natural knowledge had forsaken that fountain of living matters, the direct appeal to nature by observation and experiment, and had given themselves up to the manipulation of their predecessors. It was a time when thought had become abject and when the acceptance of mere authority led, as it always does in science, to intellectual death. Natural events, instead of being traced to physical, were referred to moral causes, while an exercise of the phantasy, almost as degrading as the spiritualism of the present day, took place instead of scientific speculation. Then came the mysticism of the Middle Ages, magic, alchemy, the Neo-Platonic philosophy, with its visionary though sublime attractions, which caused men to look with shame upon their own bodies as hindrances to the absorption of the creative in the blessedness of the Creator."
- 13 Córdoba. As a caliphate in southern Spain under the Moors in the eighth century A.D., it entered its greatest period of prosperity. It reached the summit of its splendour in the tenth century under Abd-al-Rahman III (929-961). His successor, Hakam II (961-976) gathered a library of 400,000 catalogued volumes, founded twenty-seven free schools in Córdoba and attracted scholars from the East to teach in the University.
- 14 Baghdad. The foremost city in Mesopotamia, it was the rival of the other illustrious caliphate of Córdoba in the Arab world during the eighth and ninth centuries. It reached the zenith of its prosperity under Harun-al-Rashid who accumulated in his capital the riches and the learning of the known world.
- 15 This refers to the University at Córdoba.
- 16 This is apparently a free translation of Huxley's original title: "The Progress of Science, 1837-1887".
- 17 Cf., Thomas Huxley: "The Progress of Science, 1837-1887", op. cit., p.45: "... The founders of the schools of the Middle Ages included astronomy, along with geometry, arithmetic and music, as one of the four branches of advanced education; and, in this respect, it is only just to them to observe that they were far in advance of those who sit in their seats. The schoolmen considered no one to be properly educated unless he were acquainted with, at any rate, one branch of physical science. We have not, even yet, reached that stage of enlightenment."

- 18 F. Lactantius (c250-330). Christian Latin rhetorician living in Roman North Africa during the third century. His most important surviving work is generally regarded to be Divinae institutiones (c305-313).
- 19 J. Tyndall (1820-1893). British natural philosopher and scientist. He is best remembered for his researches on radiant heat and is the author of the Advancement of Science (1874).
- 20 Cf., J. Tyndall: Advancement of Science, op. cit., pp.28-29: "Rome and the other cities of the Empire had fallen into moral putrefaction. Christianity had appeared offering the gospel to the poor, and, by moderation if not ascetism of life, practically protesting against the profligacy of the age. The sufferings of the early Christians, and the extraordinary exaltation of mind which enabled them to triumph over the diabolical tortures to which they were subjected, must have left traces not easily effaced. They scorn the earth, in view of that 'building of God, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens'. The scriptures which ministered to their spiritual needs were also the measures of their science. When, for example, the celebrated question of the antipodes came to be discussed, the Bible was with many the ultimate court of appeal. Augustine who flourished A.D. 400, would not deny the rotundity of the earth, but he could deny the possible existence of inhabitants on the other side, 'because no such race is recorded in the Scriptures among the descendants of Adam' ... Thus reined in, science was not likely to make much progress. Later on, the political and theological strife between the Church and civil governments, so powerfully depicted by Draper, must have done much to stifle investigation."
- 21 M. Luther (1483-1546). German religious reformer. He set in motion the great Reformation in the fifteenth century.
- 22 O. Cromwell (1599-1658). Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland from 1653 to 1658. He led a movement which successfully overthrew the monarchy in the person of Charles I. He was a great advocate of Protestantism.
- 23 John Milton (1608-1674). One of the greatest of English poets. He wrote "Paradise Lost", "Paradise Regained", "Comus", etc.
- 24 George Washington (1732-1799). General, statesman and first president of the United States of America.
- 25 Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881). Scottish essayist and historian. One of his most notable works is On Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History (1841).
- 26b Roger Bacon (1220-1292). English philosopher, naturalist and educational reformer. He was well-versed in the classics and trained in geometry, arithmetic, music and astronomy.
- 26a Albertus Magnus (1193-1280). German theologian, philosopher and natural scientist.

27 Francis Bacon (1561-1626). English essayist and thinker. He was a strong advocate of the inductive method of scientific research and wrote Novum Organum (1608-20) and The Advancement of Learning (1603-5).

28 The editor of LHCC (1956), in a footnote, puts down the four causes in English as follows: "(1) Indistinctness of Ideas, (2) The commentorial spirit, (3) The Mysticism, (4) Dogmatism." As I have not been able to find out if these were the actual terms used by Whewell and I do not feel that they correspond to what Lu Hsün himself has put down, I have adopted some of Tyndall's terms which appear to be much closer to what Lu Hsün wanted to say. Tyndall says in Advance of Science, op. cit., p.28: "Whewell ascribes this stationary period /of the progress of science/ to four causes - obscurity of thought, senility, intolerance of disposition, enthusiasm of temper; and he gives striking examples of each."

29 Cf., Tyndall: Advancement of Science, op. cit., p.83: "Science itself not infrequently derives motive power from an ultra-scientific source. Whewell speaks of enthusiasm of temper as a hindrance to science; but he means the enthusiasm of weak heads. There is a strong and resolute enthusiasm in which Science finds an ally; and it is to the lowering of this fire, rather than to a diminution of intellectual insight, that the lessening productivity of men of science in their mature years is to be ascribed."

30 Cf., Tyndall: Advancement of Science, op. cit., p.83: "Mr. Buckle sought to detach intellectual achievement from moral force. He gravely erred; for without moral force to whip it into action, the achievement would be poor indeed." Lu Hsün has translated 'moral force' literally as 道德力, i.e. a force of morality, which is, of course, incorrect as well as misleading.

31 L. von Ranke (1795-1886). Leading German historian of the nineteenth century.

32 Cf., Huxley's passage in "The Progress of Science, 1837-1887", op. cit., pp.46-47: "The great steps in its /i.e., physical science's/ progress have been made, are made, and will be made by men, by men who seek knowledge simply because they crave for it... Nothing great in science has ever been done by men, whatever their powers, in whom the divine afflatus if the truth-seeker was wanting. Men of moderate capacity have done great things because it animated them, and men of great natural gifts have failed, absolutely or relatively, because they lacked this one thing needful." To Huxley, the scientist's 'divine afflatus' is the same as his 'craving for knowledge', i.e. Tyndall's 'enthusiasm'. Lu Hsün seems to have taken Huxley too literally and treated 'inspiration' and 'enthusiasm' as two unrelated things.

- 33 A.T. Fresnel (1788-1827). French physicist, mathematician and pioneer in optic theory. He helped to establish the wave theory of light and collaborated with Arago in studying the laws of the interference of polarized rays.
- 34 Cf., Huxley: "The Progress of Science, 1837-1887", op. cit., p.56, fn., in which he quotes a passage of a letter written by Fresnel to Young in November 1824:  
 "For a long time that sensibility, or that vanity, which people call love of glory is much blunted in me. I labour much less to catch the suffrages of the public than to obtain an inward approval which has always been the mental reward of my efforts. Without doubt I have often wanted the spur of vanity to excite me to pursue my researches in moments of disgust and discouragement. But all the compliments which I have received from MM. Arago, De Laplace, or Biot, never gave me so much pleasure as the discovery of a theoretical truth or the confirmation of a calculation by experiment."
- 35 R.W. Bunsen (1811-1899). German chemist and pioneer in the field of spectral analysis together with Kirchoff in 1859.
- 36 G.R. Kirchoff (1824-1887). German physicist who established spectroscopy on a sound theoretical basis.
- 37 J. Kepler (1571-1630). German astronomer whose studies of the motions of the planets helped materially in laying the foundations of modern dynamical astronomy.
- 38 Galileo (1564-1642). Italian physicist, astronomer and pioneer in mechanics. He made great improvements on the design of the telescope. He produced convincing proofs for the heliocentric theory of Copernicus and thus evoked the displeasure of the Church for his advanced views.
- 39 S. Stevin(us) (1548-1620). Dutch scientist and military engineer. He invented a defence by a system of sluices to release water through the dykes to flood the land before the enemy.
- 40 W. Gilbert (1544-1603). The most distinguished man of science in Elizabethan England. He wrote a treatise on magnetism in which he correctly conceived that the earth was actually a huge magnet and thus helped to explain the principles of the magnetic compass.
- 41 W. Harvey (1578-1657). English physician. He is well-known for his discovery of the blood circulatory system in the human body.
- 42 R. Descartes (15-6-1650). Probably the greatest of the French philosophers. He was an advocate of the deductive method for scientific research.

- 43 R. Boyle (1627-1691). English natural philosopher and one of the founders of modern chemistry. In 1660 he formulated what has become known as Boyle's law for gases.
- 44 I. Newton (1642-1727). Famous English mathematician and physicist. He discovered the laws of gravitation and played a prominent part in the analysis of light.
- 45 B. Pascal (1623-1662). French physicist, mathematician and religious writer. He tested Galileo's and Torricelli's theories.
- 46<sup>m</sup> E. Torricelli (1608-1647). Italian physicist and mathematician. He discovered the principle of the (mercury) barometer. He was a contemporary of Galileo and acted as his assistant during the remaining three months of Galileo's life.
- 47 M. Malphigi (1628-1694). Italian physiologist and founder of microscopic anatomy. His name is associated with his discovery of the mucous character of the lower stratum of the epidermis.
- 48 J. Herschel (1792-1871). English astronomer and physicist. He invented the process of photography on sensitized paper in 1839.
- 49 P.S. de Laplace (1749-1827). French astronomer and mathematician. He is celebrated for his work on gravitation.
- 50 Thomas Young (1773-1829). English physicist and pioneer of optics. He established the undulatory theory of light.
- 51 H.C. Oerted (1777-1851). Danish physicist and chemist. In 1821, he established the relationship between electricity and magnetism.
- 52 A. de Candolle (1778-1841). Swiss botanist. Between 1806 and 1813, at the request of the French government, he made a botanical and agricultural survey of the whole of France.
- 53 A.G. Werner (1750-1817). Father of German geology. He put forward the theory that all rocks were formed by deposits in the sea.
- 54 J. Hutton (1726-1797). Scottish geologist. He formulated the basic theory that geological phenomena can be explained in terms of observable geological processes.
- 55 James Watt (1736-1819). Scottish engineer and inventor of the modern condensing steam engine.
- 56 This whole long passage is taken from Huxley's "The Progress of Science, 1837-1887", op. cit., pp.48-57.
- 57 This is very misleading as the French Revolution broke out in 1789. I think Lu Hstn must have been referring to the 1792 invasion of France by Prussia and Austria.

- 58 F. Arago (1786-1853). French astronomer and physicist. He discovered the principle of the development of magnetism by rotation.
- 59 G. Monge (1746-1818). French mathematician. Lu Hsün has probably mixed him up with Berthollet. See n.64.
60. J.V. Moreau (1763-1813). French general of the Revolutionary period who defeated the Austrians at the battle of Hohenlinden and finally became an opponent of Napoleon I.
- 61 L.N.M. Carnot (1753-1823). French military engineer and statesman whose services to the Revolutionary armies won him the name of "the organiser of victory".
- 62 F. Fourcroy (1755-1809). French chemist.
- 63 G. de Morveau (1737-1816). French chemist.
- 64 C.L. Berthollet (1748-1822). French chemist. At the beginning of the French Revolution, he was placed at the head of a commission entrusted with the development of the production of saltpetre, and also another commission entrusted with the improvement of the methods of iron manufacture.
- 65 Cf., Tyndall: Advancement of Science op. cit., p.87: "The World embraces not only a Newton, but a Shakespear; not only a Boyle, but a Raphael; not only a Kant, but a Beethoven; not only a Darwin, but a Carlyle. Not in each of these, but in all, is human nature whole."

## CHAPTER VIII

ON THE PERVERTED DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURE

Since China is renowned throughout the world for her self-esteem, some disparaging people may call her obstinate, yet it seems that she will cling to her dilapidated imperial city to the very end. Nowadays men who are but slightly acquainted with the new learning are ashamed of this, hence they perform a volte-face, wanting change. They do not talk of things unless they are in accord with the reasoning of the West, or undertake tasks unless they are consistent with the methods of the West. They attack the old establishment with all their might, vowing to sweep away all previous absurdities and to pursue wealth and power. Their case has been put in this light: In ancient times after the Emperor Hsien Yüan 軒轅 had defeated Ch'i Yu 蚩尤<sup>1</sup> and settled down on Chinese soil, law and culture gradually took shape and, with the multiplication of people in the domain, there was change and expansion and [the land] gained both in magnificence and magnitude. Her neighbours swarming on all sides, were petty and barbarian and their accomplishments were unworthy of China's emulation. Hence her civilisation and prosperity were acquired entirely through her own efforts. During the Chou and Ch'in Dynasties, in the West, Greece and Rome were on the ascendant and their arts and philosophy were at a peak, but the hardship of overland journeys

and the hazard of the seas made communication difficult, hence China was unable to adopt their merits as<sup>a</sup> model. In the Yüan and Ming Dynasties, although one or two Christian priests came and introduced the gospel to China as well as subjects like horology, mathematics and chemistry, their influence was negligible. Accordingly, until the restrictions against trade with the West were lifted and the white men arrived in flocks, China, took notice of only those who imitated her as a superior country. There were those who came in humble submission, and those who were ambitious and cunningly waited to expli<sup>o</sup>t her. But no culture appeared that was in any way comparable to that of China. She stood grand and imposing in the middle [of her neighbours] without match or equal, and her increasing egoism, self-esteem, and contempt for others were natural and logical. All the same, since she had no opportunity to compare herself with others, long periods of peace and tranquility [soon] sowed the seed of decline. Without the necessary incentive, progress, too came to a stand-still, and the people, indifferent and bored, eventually had no desire to emulate excellence. Then new nations sprang up in the West in vast numbers and faced China with their strange technology. A mere puff from them staggered her. Only then did men begin to sense the danger they were in. A few petty and unqualified people vied with each other in clamouring for military establishment.

Then came the students who had returned from abroad. They had no knowledge of the current state of affairs in China, neither could they grasp the real truths about Europe and America, but they displayed to the people the trivia they had gathered and claimed that talons and fangs were the basic needs of a country. They also quoted modern sayings to show themselves civilized and cited India and Poland as warning examples for the country. But what has competing by force for superiority got to do with civilisation and barbarism? A remote example to refute this assumption is Rome versus East and West Gaul; one nearer home is China versus the Mongols and the Nĕ-chĕn Tartars.<sup>2</sup> The disparity between the degree of civilisation of the opponents is so self-evident that it needs no wise men to determine, but what was the outcome of the struggles? If it is said that these exceptions were only possible in the past and that in this age, when technology comes first and strength does not count, what decides victory or defeat is the distinction between civilisation and barbarism, how is it that we have not attempted to enlighten people's minds and cultivate their characters in order to make them realise that accumulating weapons is only for resisting wolves and tigers, but instead chatter in praise of the carnivorous desires of the white men and regard them as the most civilised in the world?

Suppose we acted on these proposals, how could the masses, still frail, shoulder the heavy weight of the arms thrust upon them? They would still die. Alas! these men are used to regarding soldiering as a living and so do not bother to get down to its fundamentals, they merely put forward what they have learnt in order to get on in the world. Their faces may be concealed behind helmets and they may look terrifying and warlike, but their greed for high office is plain for all to see. Another proposal was the talk of manufacture, commerce<sup>3</sup>, constitution and parliament.<sup>4</sup> The first two have long been popular with Chinese youth. They may not vouch for them publicly, but I am pretty sure that many will be engaged in them in future. If the country can be preserved ultimately, a man can of course rely on the fact that he has contributed his efforts to promote her wealth and power to earn for himself the reputation of a man of determination; but if misfortune falls and his country is ruined, he will still have plenty of money to feed and clothe himself and, despite the fact that his parents may be lost and harassed like the stateless Jews, he will perhaps be spared from bodily harm if he knows how to withdraw and conceal himself; even if disaster is imminent, it is not improbable that some may be able to escape and, if he happens to be one of them, he can then still feed and clothe himself as before. The last

two ideas [of constitution and parliament] are best not discussed. The relatively better ones among their supporters, who are genuinely pained by the inability to hold out against frequent foreign aggression, are compelled because of their incompetences, to pick up ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~others~~ <sup>of the others</sup> abandoned ideas to rally the masses to resistance. Their nature, however, is volatile and prone to jealousy and strife. Hence, if a man from outside their ranks rises to power, they will invariably use their numbers to hound that man in the name of democracy and their harassment will be more zealous than that of a tyrannical despot. It is not, however, that their principles are perverted; in order to save the country, they do not hesitate to offer up themselves as sacrifice. But they have not applied their analytical faculties, their thoughts are rash and they cannot know what is right; they often have to depend on the will of the majority. They are not unlike the sick man who refuses proper medical care and seeks help instead from an unknown power, praying and bowing at the door of a witch-doctor. The larger number of depraved supporters use the same pretext to further their own ends. With utter disregard for the facts, they entrust authority and platform to scurrying power-seekers, rich fools or monopolizing profiteers, while they themselves, employing their ability to exploit a situation, expect to rank with them. Furthermore they conceal the abominable name of self-interest

behind a screen of public beneficence while keeping their eyes open for the easy gains which they will go to any lengths to attain. Alas in the past the government of the people was vested in only one man: now, with the prevalent mode of thought, he has suddenly been transformed into a thousand scoundrels! Even life has become impossible for the people, so how can the country be revived in this way? In the proclamation and elaboration of their views, these men have all without exception rallied round modern civilisation for support. Anyone that raises his voice in dissent will invariably be condemned as a barbarian and regarded as a blot in the country, an enemy of the people, whose guilt should be penalised by deportation. I do not know whether the civilisation they speak of is a careful adaptation based on established principles of that which is good, beautiful, and practicable in China, or simply upon Western civilisation without regard to our history and tradition. Materialism and democracy may have constituted one aspect of late nineteenth century civilisation, but they have been condemned by many critics. Since all present achievements reflect the influence of the past, civilisation must be in constant flux. Consequently when it comes to resist the great tide of past tradition, civilisation cannot be unbiased. Our present policy must be to evaluate the past, determine a path for the future, to repudiate matter and exalt the mind, to rely on

the individual and reject the masses. Once man has asserted and ennobled himself his country will also prosper. Why should we only gather the fallen twigs and leaves of others and grumble about things like finance, arms<sup>5</sup>, parliament and constitution? If we allow ourselves to be obsessed with the idea of power and profit, we shall not be able to distinguish between right and wrong, and would err constantly in whatever we do or say. How much more harm will be done by those who, with base intentions exploit the term 'new civilisation' to further their own selfish desires? In fact, of the so-called modern sages, the majority are blind men who confuse red beans with black pearls, while the minority are villains who hope to hook big fish with tiny baits. The exceptions whose hearts are free of blemishes, and who brave poverty to put their talents to good use, may eventually achieve their aim and acquire this new civilisation for China. Now that this transformed and ~~blessed~~<sup>perverted</sup> thing, recently an anarchonism on foreign soil, is treated with the greatest reverence, why do we still feel so lost, and dejected? What is it? It is materialism and democracy; its course is perverted. It was an inevitable phase in the history of the West, but to adopt it dogmatically for China is a grave error. Were my reader to ask: "Why is it so? Tell me all about it", I would reply:-

The first century<sup>is</sup> reckoned from the birth of Jesus Christ.

A period of a hundred years is called a century and the occurrence

of any major event [during that period] is considered ~~as~~ an event pertaining to that century. All past happenings have been chronicled in this way and can be easily understood. Since the links in the ~~chain~~ <sup>train</sup> of human affairs must have their causes, just as running waters must have a source, and flowers and plants must have roots, it is not possible for them to appear or vanish suddenly. Hence if we try to trace their pattern, source and end, we find that they are related to one another. When we say that the characteristics of the civilisation of a certain century are such and such, we are merely singling out the major happenings of that century. According to historical facts, it was only after the Roman unification of Europe that an integrated history of the continent emerged. The popes later exercised their authority to dominate the whole of Europe. All nations were encompassed into one single community subject to papal jurisdiction; as a result, the minds of men were so fettered that freedom of thought became almost extinct. Though many brilliant men had discovered new truths and held new views, they were bound by the laws of religion to hold their tongues. Nevertheless, people are like ocean waves which, faced with an obstacle, redouble their efforts. They therefore began to crave for liberation from the bonds of religion. Many voiced their grievances in England and Germany, claiming that the Vatican was a den of iniquity, and, since the Papacy was in Italy, they came to hate the Italians as well.

The common people sympathised with the complainants and supported any one who could subvert the religious order and resist the popes, regardless of whether he was in the right or not. At that time, a man called Luther appeared in Germany. He maintained that the basis of religion was faith, while regulations and canons were only its superstructure. He therefore battered at the orthodox religion and brought it down. He then created another which discarded ranks and titles like popes and cardinals, and replaced them with priests whose mission was to spread the commandments of God and who were to live in society like ordinary men. Ritual and prayers were also simplified. But his attention was chiefly devoted to reforming the status of the priest, which was reduced to that of the common men. Once the Reformation began, a convulsion spread across Europe. The changes it brought about were not confined to religion, but involved other human affairs; it was often the basis of enstrangement and alliance of nations, the underlying cause of wars and the source of subsequent revolutions. With the removal of these shackles, thought was liberated and societies took on a new look altogether. Hence there were many discoveries in ontology and new inventions in natural science. These in turn spawned other new projects, like exploration of new lands, improvement of machines, promotion of study and expansion of trade. All these would not have been possible if the yoke on men had not first been lifted, and they

had not been given their head. Now it is a principle that the affairs of the world always change and do not remain still. Thus with the completion of religious reform, men naturally proceeded to the reform of politics. The reason for this was that the overthrow of the pope was partly due to the help of the monarch. So after the Reformation, the monarch's powers expanded, and he could impose his will on his many subjects without suffering any restraints from below. Day and night he unflaggingly pursued the single purpose of the aggrandizement of his territories and drove his subjects into the perils of flood and fire without a pang of conscience. The country soon became impoverished and the resources of manual labour were exhausted. Since things must spring back when pushed too far, the people eventually rose up in rebellion. Revolutions were first seen in England,<sup>6</sup> then spread to America,<sup>7</sup> and finally erupted in France to sweep away ranks and class,<sup>8</sup> to equalise the noble and the common, and to give the power of government to the people. The concepts of equality and liberty and of social democracy enveloped the minds of the people. Their impact remains with us till this day: all social, political and economic privileges are now, in principle, to be shared by all men; and in conventions, habits, morality, religion, interests, tastes, language and other activities, they want to remove the barriers between high and low, good and debased in order to establish a norm. To regard conformity

as right and non-conformity as wrong, to let the majority rule the world and harass the non-conforming, this is one aspect of <sup>the</sup> great movement of the nineteenth century which has thrived till this day without showing any sign of decline. Another aspect was the advance of materialism. When orthodox religion was at its zenith, and its might was unchallengeable in the world, scholars who made discoveries generally kept silent, while these who dared to reveal them to the public were invariably penalised with imprisonment or death. But when the power of religion crumbled, thought was liberated and all branches of scholarship burst into life. The application of knowledge soon gave rise to material benefits. Hence, in the nineteenth century, the success of materialistic civilisation made the achievement of the last two thousand years look derisive. To exemplify the more celebrated accomplishments [of the time]: the production of cotton, iron, minerals and coal etc. doubled and, when the latter were applied to war, manufacture and communication, they achieved results far better than before; when gas and electricity were harnessed, the condition of the world was suddenly transformed and the enterprises of the people thrived. When people had benefitted [from materialism] for a time, their faith in it was strengthened and they came to revere it as a sacred cow, to regard it as the basis of all existence, and to extend its influence to all spiritual matters. Practical living was inextricably bound to it;

it only was respected, it alone was followed. This was another aspect of the great movement of the nineteenth century which has thrived till this day without showing any sign of decline. When religion became too powerful, the power was transferred to the monarch, and after power was centralized in one single person, he was overthrown and the power went to the masses. It appears that reason was on the side of the masses alone, but are the masses really qualified to judge the issues of right and wrong? Excessive idleness was disciplined by the popes, and when the popes abused their authority, they were overthrown by the forces of materialism. It appears that all things must end in materialism, but is materialism sufficient to get to the root of life? Calm reasoning will prove that it cannot be so. Such being the trend of the age, as said previously, civilisation, which must evolve out of the past, has overcompensated for the past and become perverted. When examined from a moderate point of view, the slant was as obvious as the loss of an arm <sup>or</sup> and the disablement of a leg. However its emergence in Europe was inevitable and indispensable; to remove the mutilation is to lose the power that derives from being mutilated, and what remains is a void. There was no alternative but to accept it. If China, an alien and unrelated country, chose to worship them, how could this be regarded as proper either? The shrewd observer could discern at a glance what the multitude cannot

see; great men and philosophers soon detected the abuses and gave vent to their indignation and sorrow. Hence thought began to change towards the end of the nineteenth century. The German philosopher, Nietzsche<sup>9</sup> spoke through the mouth of Zarathustra: "I travelled too far and was left alone when I lost my companion. I therefore returned and looking at the present day world, saw the civilised states, and the motley societies. But societies have no firm faith, and the people lack creativity in knowledge. When my country is like this, how can I stay? I have been driven from my fatherland and so now my only hope is with the future generation."<sup>10</sup> His profound insight enabled him to see the falsity and perversity of modern civilisation, but his disappointment with men of the present compelled him to seek solace in a future age.

Where did the cause of the transformation in late nineteenth century thought lie? What was it about? And what will its impact be in the future? We can say that the basic element was a product of the attempt to correct the imbalance of nineteenth century civilisation. In the last fifty years, the knowledge of man has advanced tremendously and, by reflecting on the past, men were gradually able to grasp its faults and realise its dismal nature. They then rose up and joined forces to form a great movement. They sustained their spirit with rebellion and destructiveness and regarded the acquisition of a new life as their goal. Therefore they turned against the established civilisation to batter and wreck it. Some people in Europe

were shocked into awareness, others became disorientated. The intensity of their influence had penetrated deep into the mind of man. Yet this new thought that had its origin far back in the school of idealism of the early nineteenth century, and was modified by realism in the second half of the century, emerged to resist that realism in a new form, now called New Idealism.<sup>11</sup> It is difficult to guess what its impact will be, since the future is so uncertain; but I am convinced that this school has not suddenly emerged to waste people's energies, nor will it suddenly vanish, for it has a strong foundation and a profound message. It might be premature to regard it as the cornerstone of twentieth century culture but, judging from the lessons of history, we can understand without being lectured to that it is the portent of future thought and a precursor of a new way of life. Nevertheless, the force of the old is not dead despite the birth of the new: it still pervades the whole of Europe and has become ingrained in its people. Its remaining force flows on to stir up even the Far-east and causes the people of China to pass from an old dream into a new dream, to burst forward and scream as if they were intoxicated. We are now contemptuous of the old and full of reverence for the new, but what we have acquired is not new but perverted and false; moreover it has now become so predominant that it can no longer be restrained. Great is the sorrow of our country. My present essay does not claim to exhaust the whole of

recent Western philosophy, nor does it attempt to establish some rules for the future of China; I am merely dismayed at the penetration of the perverted new culture and wish to criticise it in the spirit of New Idealism. My discussion is confined to these two issues: anti-materialism and pro-individualism.

The term "individualism" was imported into China less than three or four years ago. The so-called "modern sages"<sup>12</sup> all regard it as a smirch; a person given this name will be as infamous as an enemy of the people. Is it because people have not paused to consider the term that they mistake it to mean profiting oneself at the expense of others? An unprejudiced examination of its actual meaning will show that this is not so. Late nineteenth century emphasis on individualism, moreover, was most singular and unconventional and cannot be compared with past practices. A study of the personalities of that age shows that they differed from their predecessors: They had greater self-awareness, tended towards egoism, were strong-willed, self-opinioned, and undaunted by conventions. In poetry and novels, the proud spirits were usually the main characters.<sup>12</sup> This was not because the pen-pushers had recourse to their imagination to conjure up these characters. The climate of thought in society had previously first produced the manifestations, which were only later transplanted into literature. After the French Revolution, equality and liberty

became the most important concepts, and subsequently universal and state education based itself on these and disseminated them widely. Long immersion in culture brought about a realisation of the dignity of humanity; self-awareness brought about a sudden consciousness of the worth of individuality. Furthermore, when former customs disintegrated and orthodox belief wavered, the spirit of self-awareness was converted into extreme egoism. Meanwhile, the swing to social democracy was gathering momentum. The individual was regarded as one unit of society and his aspiration was to equate the high and the low. If all men in the world could become the same, then in society, there would be no differentiation between the humble and <sup>the</sup> exalted. This is a very beautiful ideal indeed, but it had overlooked the special characteristics of the individual, which were not only ignored, but were to be done away with. A more gloomy consequence would be the undesirable effects on pure culture, whose spirit would become so narrow and impoverished that after a while, there would be none left. This talk of equalitarian society means more to lower the high than to raise the low, so if a state of general uniformity (in degree) was actually attained it would be in fact beneath the former level of progress. What is more, there are very few truly wise ones among us and society abounds in fools. With the erosion brought about by the upheaval, the whole of humanity would sink into mediocrity. Who could keep

silent and say nothing, with the exception of those who had risen above the mundane things and cut themselves off from the world, and those who were stupid, ignorant, and followers of the crowd? When things go too far, a reaction always occurs. Hence men of insight and courage emerged. The German philosopher Stirner<sup>13</sup> was the first to advocate extreme egoism. He said that real progress was within one's own reach. Man should exert his individuality and tear himself away from the grip of the objective world. Individuality alone was the creation; only the individual self was basically free. Thus he said that it was wrong to look beyond oneself for the basic principle [of life]. Freedom was achieved through strength, strength was embodied in the individual; accordingly freedom was one's wealth and one's privilege. So if any external force encroached upon it, whether it was from a single person or from a crowd, it would be tyranny. If the state required me to share the same opinion as my countrymen, I would regard that as tyranny. When public will was incorporated into the law, I would have to be bound by it. Though the law might say that it was my slave, the truth was that we were one another's slaves. How were we to remove this [tyranny]? The answer was: do away with responsibility. With the abolition of responsibility the law would perish with it. What Stirner meant was that a man's thoughts and action were centred round the self and bounded by the self; in other words, the ego was regarded as absolutely free.

Then there was Schopenhauer.<sup>14</sup> He was celebrated for his pride and obstinacy, and the originality of his deeds and words was rarely to be found. When he perceived how the blind and despicable multitude crammed the earth, he put them on a par with the lowest of animals and became more convinced that the self must be exalted and genius should be respected. The Danish philosopher Kierkegaard<sup>15</sup> in his vehement utterances had announced that the assertion of the individual character was the highest morality, and that all other considerations were of no advantage. Still later came Henrik Ibsen,<sup>16</sup> well-known in literary circles, talented and learned, and famous as an interpreter of Kierkegaard. His works frequently went against the tide of social democracy. He devoted the remainder of his energy to attacking all those perverted by their narrow-mindedness whether it was conventions, beliefs, or morality. When he saw how men of the present age abused the name of equality and became increasingly repugnant, philistine and shallow, how the fools prospered, how the hypocrites thrived, while men whose bearing and quality far transcended the common herd were destitute and humiliated, how the dignity of the individual and the value of humanity were nearing the brink of complete extinction, he was outside himself with passion and indignation. For example, his play Enemy of the People describes how a man who safeguarded truth and who refused to flatter and toady to the world was ostracised by his fellow men, and how men of cunning and deceit rose to authority as leaders of the foolish crowd,

relied on strength of numbers to victimise the minority, and formed alliances to further their own selfish ends. The play ends just as the ensuing strife begins. The phenomena of society were faithfully mirrored therein. Nietzsche, the most distinguished exponent of individualism, put his faith in the aristocrat and the genius; the idea of taking the bumpkin as the denominator was to him as abhorrent as a poisonous snake. He believed that if government was entrusted to the majority, the mainspring of society would very quickly run down; he would rather sacrifice the foolish masses in the expectation of producing one or two geniuses, for with the appearance of geniuses, social activities would be reinvigorated. This was the doctrine of the superman which shook the philosophical world of Europe. From this we can see that those who sing the praises of the majority and revere it like a god have only seen its bright side and overlooked the rest, and that is why they praise it so. If they could also see the dark side, they would realise their mistake. One example is Socrates whom the Greeks poisoned; another is Jesus Christ whom the Jews crucified. Do not critics of later generations condemn the foolishness of both deeds, yet, at that time, they were executed in accordance with the will of the people. Suppose we write down the will of the people concerning contemporary issues for future philosophers to judge. Perhaps they will say that we have confused the right and the wrong in the way for which we have criticised our predecessors. Hence when people get together into a group, they wreaked havoc with the

course of moral duty and the issues of right and wrong, and can comprehend only familiar sayings while remaining ignorant of the more profound sentiments. Which is closer to truth, familiar slogans or profound sentiments? After killing Caesar, Brutus made a speech to the citizens [of Rome]. His speech, logical and well-reasoned fully explained his duties and obligations, but the impact on the mob was not as dynamic as the few words of Anthony who spoke while pointing to the blood-stained robe [of Caesar]. The man who had just been acclaimed a great patriot by the people was suddenly banished to a foreign land. It was the majority which had praised him, it was also the majority who had exiled him. The fact that so many reverses could happen in a split second showed not only a lack of principle [on the part of the people], it was also a forboding [of danger]. Hence right and wrong must not be determined by the people, for their pronouncement will not be true; affairs of government should not be determined by the people for, if they are, good government will never come. The world can achieve peace only with the emergence of a superman, or, failing this, of a superior mind. Alas, how extreme are the anarchists who try to overthrow everything and abolish class. Yet the men mentioned previously who had all formulated doctrines and showed creativity, all claimed to be teachers of men. One leads and the crowd follows - therein lies the difference between the wise and the foolish.

Rather than to suppress the brilliant to suit the ordinary, would it not be more logical to put aside the multitude and rest one's hopes on the genius? The talk of democracy is ridiculous and unsuitable; the dignity of the individual must be maintained and magnified - the importance of this is so obvious that it can be grasped without wordy elaboration or careful consideration. Nevertheless, it depends on a brave and fearless man who is independent, self-sufficient and who is capable of rising from the mire, disregarding public opinion and not submerging himself in the common fold.

Anti-materialism, like individualism, originated as a reaction against conventions. The materialistic tendency was based on reality and exercised an overwhelming and lasting influence on the minds of men. As a result, it emerged as a major trend in the nineteenth century with a very solid foundation and was considered as the only basis of future life. Even though materialistic culture might be the basis of actual life, men do not realize that if it is over-worshipped and allowed to prevail to the exclusion of all other views, it will ultimately pay for the abuse of extremism with the loss of the sacred purpose of civilisation, and weaken and perish; the spirit accumulated over the years will be exhausted in less than a century. Towards the close of the nineteenth century, its abuses became manifest: everything became

subordinate to matter, so that the spirit grew weaker daily and the general taste deteriorated into meanness and vulgarity. People pursued the objective materialistic world and entirely ignored the subjective inner spirit. Stressing only the external and neglecting the internal, adopting only the matter and ignoring the spirit, the mass of the people became blinded by the desire for material gain; society withered and progress halted, all sorts of deceit and wickedness were unleashed to flourish; the spiritual light grew dimmer each day - these were the common vices of one aspect of nineteenth century civilisation. At that time, disciples of the New Idealism appeared. They either worshipped subjectivism or asserted the power of the will. Their correction of the current malpractices was as fierce as thunder and lightning, and common men shook on hearing their sound. Even the critics, scholars and writers who, because they valued tranquility, were unwilling to interfere with <sup>the</sup>ways of the world pessimistically at the sight of spiritual life being throttled by this materialistic obsession. They realized that the rise of subjectivism and voluntarism could prove more useful than a boat in a flood. Subjectivism is interpreted in two ways: firstly the subjective method is used to govern all things; secondly, the spiritual world of subjectivism is rated above the materialistic world of objectivism. The former is an extreme form of the subjective tendency which was particularly

influential at the end of the nineteenth century but which, in its subsequent development, has veered away from egoism and self-determination; it merely refuses to adhere rigidly to objective conventions or to stress their importance, for it regards the individual subjective world as the paramount criterion. Because of this, all thought and action are independent of external things and their dominion is restricted to the territory of the heart. It is there that faith and satisfaction - the fruits of introspection - are to be found. Let us now examine the reason for the popularity of this idea. Externally it was due to the enlightened men's intolerance of and reaction against the general tendency of the age to impose on all people commonplace objective conventions, which manipulated man like a piece of machinery and prohibited individual initiative. Internally, it was the modern mind's increasing consciousness that the doctrine of the omnipotence of materialism had overridden personal feelings and stultified individual creative power; hence its determination to stimulate such consciousness in others by manifesting its own as a last effort to check the crisis. Men like Nietzsche and Ibsen who, adhering to their convictions, fought against the conventions of their times, represent the highest achievement of this subjective tendency. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, claimed that the standard of truth was within the subjective mind; the subjective mind was therefore truth, and all moral activities

should brush aside the question of objective effect and be judged only by the standard of subjective good or ill. At the outset, this doctrine received a great deal of enthusiastic response and transformed current thought, so that the extroverts gradually turned in on themselves and the practice of meditation spread; self-analysis and self-expression were reawakened to abolish realism, materialism and the restrictions that burdened nature. People realized that spiritual phenomena were the crowning point of human life - unless it was glorified, life would not be worthwhile. Hence development of one's character became the foremost duty in life. But the character demanded at that time differed from former concepts. The previous ideal had been the regulation of reason and sentiment. The rational school sought intelligence and wisdom which could transfer the big objective world into the subjective. This school of thought culminated in Hegel.<sup>17</sup> Regarding the romantic and classical schools,<sup>18</sup> Shaftesbury<sup>19</sup> succeeded Rousseau<sup>20</sup>, in that he acknowledged the influence of feeling, but he insisted that the ideal character consisted of a harmonious union of reason and sentiment. Schiller,<sup>21</sup> moreover defined the perfect man as a person in whom reason and feeling were perfectly combined in perfect harmony. But towards the close of the nineteenth century, the ideal underwent a change. Men of wisdom, after serious introspection, were able to learn that the ancient concept of the man of perfection and harmony was not attainable in the

present world; instead, what should be sought after was a man with outstanding will-power whose character was such that besides being capable of dealing with the actual world on the strength of his convictions, he was endowed with the capacity for courage and struggle and the tenacity to realise his ideal in the face of constant setbacks and disappointments. Hence Schopenhauer's proposal, which occurred to him in the process of self-examination, was to establish the will as the causality of the world. Nietzsche's ideal was a godlike superman endowed with extraordinary strength of will; and the characters of Ibsen were strong and combative men, dedicated to reform, who stood up against countless adversaries without turning a hair. The explanation why this had come to be the ideal of all these people is that if a man, who lives at a time of constant change and takes part in the real world, lacks strength of will, he will surrender his individuality to the crowd and be submerged in its receding waves, without knowing where he was heading; the quintessence of civilisation would thus be instantly destroyed. Only the strong and the resolute, who refuse to bow to circumstances, would become the pillars of society. Since, human dignity was composed of the power to surmount countless obstacles and of the inner urge to progress, men with exceptional strength of will are extremely important. This was, however, only one of the characteristics of the age, examination of the rest reveals

another ~~fit~~ de siècle weaknesses of the people. The past abuses of civilisation have so contaminated the minds of the people that they became increasingly feeble and dejected. They therefore examined themselves and, not being satisfied, sought eagerly for a man of will to be their future mainstay. Alas! they could be likened to a drowning man caught in a treacherous flood, who waited desperately for a good swimmer on the shore to come to his rescue.

From the above, we can see that the civilisation of the nineteenth century plainly far surpassed that of the past and of the Far East. But since it was born as a reaction and its basis was rebellion against the old order, it was bound to go to extremes. Its shortcomings became self-evident towards the end of its course. New Idealism thereupon arose in reaction against it. The zeal and courageous act of this school roused up a gigantic storm which had a purging effect on the previous abuses; at this moment, its impact is still increasing. It is hard to speculate about its future for it takes time to remedy old abuses and build bridges to a new life and the course is too long and gradual for the eyes to see. But, by studying its basic qualities and examining its spirit, we find many reliable signs. As it is generally held that culture deepens with time and that the human mind will never be satisfied with fixity, I am confident that the civilisation of

the twentieth century will be profound and imposing, offering a contrasting tendency to the civilisation of the nineteenth century. As soon as the new life emerges, ~~and the~~ will hypocrisy disappear and will the inner life be deepened and strengthened? Will the radiance of spiritual life grow and become magnified? Can the awakening from the dreamworld of objectivity bring about the growth of a life of subjectivism and self-awareness? I believe that with the strengthening of the inner life, the meaning of life will become more profound and the principle of personal dignity will become more lucid. The new spirit of the twentieth century will brave stormy seas and employ its strength of will in the struggle for a new way of life. Her secrets having been exposed, China is now persecuted on all sides by her neighbours; her condition demands changes. Resignation to weakness ~~and~~ docility, and adherence to the old tradition are no ways to fight for survival in this world. But since the measures to save her are unsuitable, what good will daily changes and incessant wailing do to relieve her troubles? The wise must thoroughly understand the situation of the world, weigh, compare, remove the extremes, and choose the ideas most suited to the country. In this way, she will not lag behind the world in thought, externally speaking; internally too, she will not lose her inherent constitution.<sup>22</sup> She can adopt the new and revive the old to establish a new school of thought, and give more depth to the

meaning of life. Her people will then have greater self-awareness and can assert their individual characters. In this way, our "country of sand"<sup>23</sup> can be transformed into a country of real people. After becoming a country of real people, China will be greater than ever and capable of holding her own in the world. She will no longer be associated with triviality and mediocrity. However, people have now been looking forward to drastic changes for a long time; in general, the tendency of the young is to attribute all evils to antiquity, to scorn our literature as primitive, to slander our philosophy as naive and to be carried away by their ardour to replace them all with the creations of the west, while remaining completely ignorant of the abovementioned trends of thought at the end of the nineteenth century. Their emphasis is mainly on <sup>the</sup> material. Now, it is perfectly legitimate to adopt <sup>the</sup> material, but the truth is that they are partial to the most superficial aspects of the material, for which there is no use. Even if they do not intend to plan for the future and are mainly concerned with fending off the present danger their methods and their intentions are extremely perverse. How much worse it is in the case of those responsible for making decisions and executing tasks, who exploit the term of reform to achieve their private aims? Let me ask the man of determination: do you regard wealth as culture? The stateless Jews

have a knack of accumulating wealth which is far superior to European merchants, yet what has happened to their people? Do you regard railroads and mines as civilisation? In the last fifty years, Africa and Australia have built many railways and found many mines, but what is the state of their native culture? Do you regard democracy as civilisation? Look at Spain and Portugal which established their constitutions long ago; what is the state of these countries now? If you say that materialism is the foundation stone of civilisation, will a display of arms and provisions be sufficient to make a nation master of the world? If you believe that force of numbers can determine right and wrong, you should imagine a man among monkeys; should he follow their examples to dwell in trees and feed on acorns? Even women and children can see otherwise. The power of Europe and America seems to have been manifested in all these things. In fact it has its roots in men. We have merely observed the last lap of its development; the root is deeply imbedded and difficult to see, while the blossoms are conspicuous and easily grasped. So if we want to survive in this world and compete with other countries, the first thing to do is to exalt man. Once man is exalted, all things are possible. Our technique is to respect individuality and to develop the spirit otherwise decay will come within our generation. In the past, China worshipped materialism and

abhorred genius, hence the wealth bequeathed by our ancient sovereigns has dwindled and she cannot sustain herself in the face of external pressure. A few petty and unqualified people came along with their elaborate schemes, destroyed the individual with materialism and incarcerated him by force of numbers. The individual character is reduced to nothingness. In ancient times we suffered from partial atrophy generated within, now we are contaminated with a new plague transmitted through contact with the West. Since these two sicknesses have combined to attack her, China has plunged ever more rapidly to her doom. One cannot but feel gloomy about her prospects for the future!

Written in 1907.

NOTES:

- 1 Emperor Hsien Yüan (or Huangti, the Yellow Emperor) was a legendary ruler of China who ascended the throne in 2697 B.C. He defeated Ch'ih Yu who tried to overthrow him in a battle at Cho-lu 涿鹿 in 2698 B.C.
- 2 The Mongols founded the Yüan dynasty (1280-1367 A.D.), and the Tartars founded the Chin dynasty (1115-1235 A.D.).
- 3 Manufacture and commerce were the programmes suggested by Fengkuei-Shifen 馮桂芬 and Wang T'ao 王韜, the two leading Chinese reformers in the 1860's. They wanted to adopt the Western methods in producing arms and machines and were for establishing mining and textile industries. After them, Hsieh Fu-ch'eng 薛福成 and Ma Chien-chung 馬建忠 also proposed the promotion of trade. Cheng Kuan-ying 鄭觀應 suggested that China should mechanize her traditional methods of producing goods to compete with foreign countries.
- 4 The proposals of adopting a constitution and instituting a parliament were by K'ang Yu-wei 康有為 and Liang Chi-ch'ao 梁啟超 who in 1898 persuaded the young Emperor Kuang Hsu 光緒 to launch a reform movement which was stopped by the Empress Dowager after a hundred days.
- 5 In January, 1907, a Chinese politician named Yang Tu 楊度, then in Tokyo, proposed that China <sup>should adopt</sup> the "Gold and Iron Policy" to strengthen herself. By that, he meant that China should try to carry out economic and military reforms.
- 6 I.e. the 1649 and 1688 Civil Wars in England.
- 7 I.e. the 1776 American War of Independence.
- 8 I.e. the 1789 French Revolution.
- 9 Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1906). German philosopher. He was one of the most influential thinkers of modern times and a stringent critic of his countrymen and of the religion and morality of his country. In <sup>the</sup> English-speaking world, his ideas have sometimes been discounted as a mere reaction against his childhood training, but in Germany and in France, the most serious philosophers and writers have unstintingly acknowledged their debt to him. He has written many works, the best-known to the Chinese is Thus Spake Zarathustra (written between 1883 and 1885).
- 10 Cf. Thus Spake Zarathustra, op. cit., pp.142-144:  
 "I flew too far into the future: a horror assailed me.  
 And when I looked around, behold! time was my only contemporary.  
 Then I flew back, homeward - and faster and faster I flew:  
 and so I came to you, you men of the present, and to the land of culture.

...

My eye had never seen anything so motley-spotted!

...

The men of the present, to whom my heart once drove me, are strange to me and a mockery; and I have been driven from fatherlands and motherlands.

So I now I love only my children's land, the undiscovered land in the furthest sea ..."

- 11 The correct name should be Neo-idealism. Neo-idealism came into being as a correction of the view that threatened to resolve the world of matter and mind alike into the changing manifestations of some single non-spiritual force or substance. The foundations of idealism in the modern sense were laid by thinkers who sought breathing room for mind and will in a deeper analysis of the relations of the subject to the world that it knows.
- 12 I.e. in Romantic literature.
- 13 Max Stirner (1806-1859). German anarchist philosopher.
- 14 Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860). Great German philosopher. He and his disciple Nietzsche were the two most influential Western philosophers in China in the early twentieth century among the leading intellectuals. His most famous work is The World as Will and Idea (1818).
- 15 S. Kierkegaard (1813-1855). Danish philosopher and founder of modern existentialism. The title of his best known work Either/Or (1843) indicates the central theme of his thoughts, viz., his insistence on the choice which each individual has to make between Christ and the world, in the absence of rational proof.
- 16 H. Ibsen (1828-1906). Norwegian dramatist and poet, the creator of modern realistic prose drama and one of the greatest dramatists of all time. His works were widely read and translated in China in the early part of this century and practically all the progressive and liberal intellectuals of China were ardent admirers of his. Hu Shih wrote an essay called "Ibsenism" 易卜生主義 which shows Ibsen's influence on the participants of the New Cultural Movement. His plays A Doll's House, Ghosts, and Enemy of the People attracted wide attention because of their criticism of the woman's role in society, the relationship between parents and children, and of democracy.
- 17 Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). Great German philosopher and author of Logic (1812-16), Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1817).
- 18 Lu Hsün seems to have regarded Classicism and Romanticism as being one school.

- 19 A. Shaftesbury (1671-1713). English politician and philosophical writer. He maintained that man is essentially social, that his mind is so imbued with the principles of unity and propagation that he can adequately balance the claims of self-affection (tending to a private good) with those of natural affection (tending to the public good). Lu Hsün has mistakenly put him as coming after Rousseau.
- 20 Jean J. Rousseau (1712-1778). French-Swiss Moralist. His writings are among the most influential of the eighteenth century in political and social theory and literature. His Emile which advocated feeling above all things else, launched Romanticism in Europe. Many of his works have been translated into Chinese, including Du Contrat Social.
- 21 Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805). Great German dramatist, poet and literary theorist.
- 22 The original term Lu Hsün used was 'own blood vessel'.
- 23 I.e., a disunited country.

## CHAPTER IX

ON THE POWER OF MARA POETRY

Those who have exhausted old origins will seek new springs of the future and new origins. O my brothers, it will not be long before new people shall arise and new springs rush down into the depths.<sup>1</sup>

- Nietzsche.

Section 1

Any one studying in chronological order the cultural history of ancient nations will invariably be very depressed towards the end. One feels as if one has left the warmth of spring for the starkness of autumn: the youthful shoots of life in those nations seem to wilt before our very eyes until nothing but putrefaction is left. I cannot find words to describe this feeling so I shall call it desolation. Now, the most powerful literary legacy left by man must be poetry, the songs of the heart. The imagination of primitive man was close to the mystery of nature and in accord with everything in it. Being in communion with it, he told what could be told - this became poetry. The music of poetry that bestrides the ages to reach the human heart does not die when the voice is stilled. Instead it multiplies and develops commensurately with the culture of the race. When the literature of a nation ebbs and disappears, the destiny of that race also comes to an end; all its sons are muffled and their brilliance eclipsed; once

this feeling of desolation has welled up inside the reader of such a history, [he will find that] the history of that civilisation is also drawing to a close. This is invariably the fate of many countries which ushered in the dawn of civilisation and were celebrated in early history but are now only a shadow of their former selves. The most familiar example to the Chinese is that of India. In ancient times, India had the four books of the Veda<sup>2</sup> which are extremely rich and exquisite and considered among the world's greatest literary masterpieces. The two epics, Mahabarata<sup>3</sup> and Ramayana,<sup>4</sup> are also very beautiful. After these, there was the poet Kalidasa,<sup>5</sup> whose world-renowned romances, which have an occasional lyrical strain to them, have been praised by the great German poet, Goethe, as the best songs in the world. When the [Indian] race declined in power, their literature also waned and the magnificent sound of poetry no longer sprang forth from the soul of the people but wandered abroad like a refugee. Then there were the Hebrews. Although mostly concerned with religion, their literature excels in vision and solemnity and later inspired many religious works of art which still sustain the human heart. Yet the music of Israel had ceased after Jeremiah.<sup>6</sup> The kings had gone astray and God was white with anger. Hence Jerusalem was destroyed and the tongues of the people became still. When the Jewish people

wandered over foreign soil, even though they did not immediately forget their nation, language and belief, but their music stopped with the "Lamentations of Jeremiah". Then came Iran and Egypt which also met decline in their prime and snapped like a rope in a well. The splendour that shone in the old days has now vanished. If China could escape such a dismal fate, it would indeed be the greatest happiness in life. Why must this be? The Englishman, Thomas Carlyle, once said, "The first pride of any nation is the acquisition of that magnificent sound that flows forth from the heart. Italy is now split but she is actually unified as she has her son, Dante,<sup>7</sup> and her language. The Czars of Russia have huge armouries and cannons, possess political power which enables them to carry out immense tasks, but they lack a great voice. There might be great things in Russia, but the greatness is not proclaimed ... The Czar's weapons and cannons will rust away, but the voice of Dante carries on. Dante's homeland is unified, but Russia, without the trace of a voice, will disintegrate."

Nietzsche did not despise the savages; according to him, there was new strength in them, His words were unassailable. Indeed, the seed of civilisation sprang forth in the wilderness. The barbarians might appear uncouth, but there was potential greatness in them. When civilisation resembles the blossoms, the savages are the buds, and when civilisation is like the fruit, then the savages

are the flowers; such is the path of progress, the basis of hope. But this is not so with the peoples of former times whose civilisations have ended. When development came to a halt, decline and destruction followed. Furthermore, having long depended on the glorious attainments of their ancestors which exalted them above their inferior neighbours, they were not conscious that their works had become filled with gloom - they had become self-satisfied, foolish, and as stagnant as a dead sea. Must this be the destiny of all nations, which have adorned the first pages of history, to fade away in the end? Russia is silent, but noises from beneath her are beginning to be heard. Russia is like a little child and not an unenlightened man; Russia is <sup>like</sup> a subterranean stream and not a dead well. Sure enough, in the early part of the nineteenth century, Gogol<sup>8</sup> appeared and, with his invisible tears and melancholy, revitalised his fellowmen. He has sometimes been compared to England's Shakespeare whom Thomas Carlyle praised and worshipped. Indeed, when one looks around these days, one will hear new voices rising up one after the other. They all use their individual heroic words to boost their own spirits and to commend their excellence to the rest of the world. The only mute people are those of India and the few older nations mentioned above. Alas, the ancient literatures of these nations as they have come down to us do not lack distinction, yet, as they share no common ground with the

present apart from ~~being~~ the fact that they are still recited by old scholars, what use have they to the younger generation? Indulgence in a golden past only reveals, by comparison, the poverty of the present. These old civilisations, in fact, rank inferior to the many newly-born nations which, even though their culture is not yet developed, have just reached the threshold of civilisation and have a bright future to look forward to. So the epithet of 'ancient civilisation' is in fact a forlorn and satirical one. When a descendant of a formerly great family, whose ancestral home is in ruins, never stops boasting to others that his forbears were cultured and brave, that they had a palatial home, possessed jade and pearls, kept numerous dogs and horses, and held a title far above that of an ordinary man, who can help laughing at such talk? The progress of a people, it is true, can be helped by constantly referring to their past history. Yet this reference requires clear thinking so that history is regarded as a bright mirror for constant advancement, encouragement and constant reflection. They must look forward constantly to the bright road of the future as well as look backward constantly on a glorious trail, and only then can the new be daily new, and the past live on. When people ignore this and brag merely to satisfy their vanity, long, dark nights will begin. Now if we were to step into the main streets of China,

we should see a soldier strolling and singing a martial song, denouncing the servitude of India and Poland. The same scorn is found in songs sung all over the nation.<sup>9</sup> For China, too, wants to brag about all her past glories but she cannot do it, so she says: one neighbour is a slave, another is dead; if I chose an extinct state to compare myself with I can hope to show myself up in an excellent light. We shall not discuss here whether India and Poland are in fact after all inferior to China, nevertheless, regarding what we said about laudatory verses being the voice of the people, it is only fair to point out that though the world has seen many minstrels, there have never been any [songs] written in this style before. The absence of poets in any nation might appear a very trivial phenomenon, yet a feeling of desolation often assails me. I believe that if one wants to display the true greatness of one's own nation, one must first examine one's own and then try to understand others. A thorough comparison will bring greater self-awareness and the self-awareness thus expressed will be in no ordinary voice but will strike right into the hearts of men, loudly and clearly. Otherwise, our tongue and lips will be so contorted that all words will be lost and we will become doubly silent. How can we speak when we are still lost in a dream? If we boast about ourselves when threatened by an enemy, however loud it is, it only brings more grief. So the cultivation of the national spirit is closely related to a wider knowledge about the world.

My present proposal not to discuss ancient matters and instead seek new sounds on foreign soil is motivated by a love of the past.<sup>10</sup> The differences in these various new sounds cannot be studied in detail, but the most moving and interesting of them all is that of the Mara School of poetry. The name Mara originates from India and means a demon, which the Europeans call Satan. The latter was once used as an epithet for Byron, but now it is applied to all poets whose message is one of rebellion, whose end is action and who incur the displeasure of the world. To trace the philosophy and activities of the school, and its branches and influence, we can begin with Byron and end with the writers of Magyar (Hungary). Firstly, all these men differed outwardly from one another and they all had different national characteristics which they displayed so well. But, in general, they share this quality: they never tried to please the world with pretty verses and, no sooner had they uttered a single cry, than all who were able to hear their voice rose to rebel against the heavens and turned against all mediocrity; moreover, their spirit continued to impress deeply the hearts of those that came after them. Before this music was born and after the liberation [of man by it], people may have said that it was not worth listening to. On the other hand, to anyone living between those two periods who came to hear it while he was still struggling to free himself from the grasp of nature,

it was the most heroic and beautiful sound of all. But to the people who are accustomed to discourses on peace, their words are terrifying.

Section 2.

Peace is not feasible in the human world. What men persistently call peace is but a time when some war is coming to an end or another is about to begin. The world appears calm on the surface, but the undercurrent is still there and, when the time comes, the upheaval will begin. Look at nature/ <sup>and</sup> you see the gentle breeze caressing the trees, and the sweet rain moistening the plants; nature seems to be bestowing all its blessing on humanity. Yet the fierce flame below appears from volcanoes which erupt suddenly and destroy all. The frequent outbreaks of storm are a sign of unrest momentarily revealed. The world cannot remain safe eternally, as Paradise was to Adam. So it is with the affairs of man. Fights for clothing and food, family feuds, and wars between nations are now so obvious that man cannot conceal them or avoid mentioning them any more. Even when two men sit in a room, they have to breathe, so there is a struggle for the available oxygen, and the one with the stronger lungs will win. Thus the instinct to kill comes with birth and the thing 'peace', therefore, is virtually non-existent. In the beginning, man used his bravery and strength to defend himself. Gradually he entered the stage of civilisation. With the establishment of culture and alteration in environment, he became an intimidated creature, and recognising the extreme dangers in advance, he

resolved to beat a retreat. In the face of battle, which he knew to be inevitable, he would use his imagination to fashion a utopia, or a place that had never been trespassed upon by men, or an age of the distant future. Since Plato's Republic, countless Western philosophers have yearned for just this. Even though from time immemorial there has never been any sign of such a peace, men have craned their necks in expectation of its imminent coming, and the soul has searched unceasingly for the ideal model. Is this longing one of the prerequisites of human progress? Our Chinese philosophers, in particular, are different from those in the west. Their thoughts go far backwards into the eras of T'ang Yao 唐 堯 and Yü Shün, 虞 舜, <sup>11</sup> or directly to primaeval times to an age when men walked the earth with beasts. They declare that it was an age without calamity, when men were content with their lot, unlike the present world which is full of vice and fraught with danger and where it is difficult to make a decent living. Their belief, judging from the historical facts of human evolution, is contrary to reality. The primitive men, as they multiplied and spread over the earth, had to struggle and toil, if not more than we do now, then certainly no less. It is only because, with the march of time and disappearance of records, the traces of sweat and blood have vanished completely, that we now look back to these early days and regard them as full of pleasures and plenty. If one could

have been there and shared their sorrow and anxiety, one would have been depressed and disheartened and would, naturally have looked back further to the time before P'an Ku, when the world was untouched by human tools. Whoever thinks this way shows a lack of hope, a lack of progress and a lack of endeavour, and his way of thinking, compared to that of the west, is as different as fire is to water. Unless he kills himself to be with the ancients, he is sure to go through life without anything to hope or plan for. As for realising the ambition he has planned for himself and for others, he will resign himself with a sigh to being destroyed in body and soul. In addition, from deeper examination of their works, I feel that our early philosophers definitely did not think of China as a land of bliss as present-day people grandly maintain, but must have realised that it was futile to be good and meek. They alone tried to shake the dust off their feet. Disillusioned with their country, they left their fellowmen to degenerate into worms and beasts<sup>12</sup> while they lived their lives in solitary retreat. Society revered these hermits and proclaimed them men of lofty ideals, and reserved for itself the epithets of worms and beasts. Then there were those who did not follow this solitary path but set up a school of thought with the aim of directing men back to the ancient ways of simplicity and frugality. Lao Tzu and his fellow philosophers are the best known examples of these. The theme of the book Lao Tzu, some five thousand

words long, is the importance of maintaining tranquility of mind. In order to maintain tranquility of mind, a man must first make his heart as parched as wood and establish the rule of inaction; when society has been changed by the action of inaction then peace will reign in the world. This approach sounds very good but since the planets were formed and human beings created, the killer instinct has recurred incessantly among all things, and it would not be possible to force all living species to break with the past, even if the process of evolution could be halted. If its course is obstructed, then there is bound to be deterioration and destruction. There are many concrete examples of this in our world: look at the extinct civilisations, they provide all the evidence. Let us assume, however, that this philosophy could spread, that the world's inhabitants reverted to being simple animals and plants, and that emotion gradually disappeared, then this wide world, devoid of its emotions, would be vacant and peaceful indeed. But unfortunately evolution is like an arrow in flight which will not stop until it falls or hits something. This is the cause of grief in the human world, yet it is valued as the greatest force by the Mara School. A man in possession of this force can evolve and multiply, improve and advance to reach the highest point of human achievement.

The ideal of Chinese Government is maintaining tranquility, but for reasons different from above. The emperor abhors those who

have the capacity to stir up others, the reason being that he wishes to safeguard his throne for his descendants for hundred thousand generations, [in other words,] for ever. If a genius should appear, every effort will be made to destroy him. The common people abhor those who stir them up or those who have the capacity to stir up others, because they want a life of ease - they would rather curl up and rot, for they hate anything that smacks of progress. Therefore, should a genius appear, every effort will be made to destroy him. Plato, who envisaged the ideal state, said that poets disrupt government and should be exiled from the state. China and Plato's Republic might be immensely different from each other aesthetically and their ideals might vary somewhat in quality, but their methods of government originate in the same motive. For poets indeed disrupt the tranquility of the human heart. All men have poetry in their hearts. Moreover a poem is not written to be the private possession of the poet; all those who, having read it, understand it in their hearts and possess it. If they do not possess it, how can they understand it? It is merely that they possess it but cannot put it into words. The poet puts into words what men feel, so that when he fingers the chord, the listener's heart leaps up in response. The music penetrates into the innermost soul of the listener who lifts up his head as if he has seen the morning sun and draws therefrom a new and noble vigour which enables him to dispel the stagnant, decadent peace.

Once the peace is broken, humanitarianism becomes sublimated. Accordingly, all men, from emperor to common labourer, are compelled to change their way of life and unite their efforts to resist it in order to preserve the status quo -- this is human nature. An extinct civilisation is one that has tried to preserve the status quo. Since it is impossible to do away with poetry altogether, men invent a cage for its imprisonment. For example, the Emperor Shun said that the Book of Odes was a reflection of the feelings of the writers,<sup>13</sup> but sages of later times claimed that all the three hundred poems in the Book of Odes were written to sustain proper feelings and that their theme could be summed up in the word 'purity'.<sup>14</sup> Now, if the poems are expressions of human feelings, how can they be used to harness men's feelings? To insist that they should be pure and innocent is to disprove that they are genuine human feelings. Is this not an example of how freedom could be subjected to chains and whips? Nevertheless, Chinese literature subsequently never ventured beyond this set boundary. It is not necessary to mention how it has deteriorated into compliments for one's superiors and flattery of the rich and powerful. Even poetry inspired by the heart's communion with the vast kingdom of nature is imprisoned in an invisible cage and cannot convey the true beauty of heaven and earth. If this were not so, dispensable works containing grief over the affairs of the world and recollections of ancient

sages would saturate the world. If, however, a writer in his faltering utterances touches on some intimate affection, Confucian scholars will condemn him in unison; if his expressions run contrary to conventions, there is no need to mention what treatment he will receive. An exception to the above, however, is Ch'ü Yüan who before his departure was disturbed in spirit. As he arrived at the Mi Lo, he looked back on the tall mountains and mourned the absence of his loved one.<sup>15</sup> He expressed his sorrow in the most wonderful of writings. Standing before the mighty waters, he cast restraint to the wind and grieved over the foolishness of the conventions of his age, praised his own genius, and expressed his scepticism on subjects ranging from primitive history to the details of all things, as no man had done before him. There is much beauty and pathos in his music, but rebellion and challenge were not to be found on every page, so its power to move later generations is considerably diminished. Liu Yen-ho's 劉彥和<sup>16</sup> comments on this man's poetry are as follows: "The brilliant admire its magnificent layout; the mediocre imitate its beautiful language; the poets feed on its mountains and waterfalls; the pure-hearted gather its flowers and herbs." All these are impressions of the external and do not penetrate the essence of the works. The lonely and great poet ended his own life but society was not in the least affected. His four verses<sup>17</sup> contain a note of profound grief.

From this we see that it is not only in the present time that great music has failed to arrest our attention. Society in general has found little delight in the songs of the poets. If we scan the time from the invention of writing to the present day, how many poets can we find who have succeeded in getting across their music and pass on their inspiration to refine our temperaments and ennoble our thoughts? There is almost none despite our careful search through the pages of history. Yet we cannot blame them alone. For on all men's hearts is written but one word: 'profit'. They toil only when they are in need and sleep when their needs are satisfied. They cannot be disturbed even by a penetrating noise. If a heart cannot be disturbed, it will either shrink or wither away. Furthermore, the thought of profit burns like fire within. Since their only motive is gain, they become unscrupulous in all their dealings and degenerate into cowards and misers and, lacking the simplicity and frugality of the primitive men, they take on the bad ways of a doomed race - the inevitability of all this the ancient sages were not able to foresee. If we say that we shall use poetry to transform a man's character, even in a land that is renowned for goodness, beauty and courage, we shall certainly be mocked at as being impractical and ineffectual. In addition, the effect of poetry is neither visible nor immediate. To give a piece of strong, negative evidence, we can best quote the fall of the ancient civilisations.

All such nations, after they are defeated by their enemies, are not only more easily tamed than beasts, but also lack profound great poetry to encourage their successors to make an attempt to restore their lost prestige. Even if occasionally some does exist, the hearers are unmoved by it, for as soon as the pain of defeat has eased, they busy themselves with their livelihood and physical well-being and spare no thoughts for their disgrace. Therefore, when the enemy comes again, defeat and destruction follow. So a people who will not fight will be afflicted with war more frequently than those who fight gladly; a cowardly people will have more casualties than a resolute people who have no fear of death.

In August 1806, Napoleon defeated the Prussian army, and in July of the following year, Prussia surrendered and was made a dependency [of France]. But the German people, despite defeat and humiliation, sustained their traditional militant spirit. There appeared a man named Arndt<sup>18</sup> who wrote Spirit of the Age, a magnificent work proclaiming independence and freedom. All his countrymen who heard his voice were stirred into seeking vengeance. Arndt was afterwards forced to escape to Switzerland when the enemy took notice and sought him out. In 1812, Napoleon was defeated by the extreme cold and fire of Moscow and retreated to Paris. Thrown into a turmoil, Europe rose up in arms. In the

following year, the Prussian Kaiser, Wilhelm the Third, summoned his people to fight and gave them these three slogans: liberty, honour and fatherland. Students, poets and artists in the prime of their youth flocked to answer his call, and Arndt returned to write What is the National Army and The Rhine was the River of Germany, not her Boundary to boost the morale of his young compatriots. Among the volunteers, there was one called Theodor Körner<sup>19)</sup> who resolutely put down his pen and resigned his position as the poet of the Vienna State Opera House and left his parents and lover to join the army. In a letter to his parents, he said, "The eagle of Prussia has plunged into my heart, and I see the hope for the German race. All my poetry is inspired by my homeland. I am ready to sacrifice my happy home and feelings of joy to die for her. I have been reawakened through the help of God. Can there be no greater sacrifice than to die for the freedom of my fellow countrymen and the good of humanity? My heart overflows with surging passion. I must be gone!" Harp and Sword which he wrote later, is in that same spirit which, converted into the most lofty sounds, and distends the veins of the reader as soon as he reads the first page. Such fervour and aspiration was not possessed by Körner alone at that time, but also by the whole German youth. Körner's voice was the voice of all the Germans; Körner's blood was the blood of all the Germans. One may go further and say that

Napoleon was not defeated by the state, the king or arms, but the people. The people were both the poetry and the poets, and by them Germany was saved. How could those who favour utilitarianism and reject poetry, those who pin their faith on the obsolete weapons of foreign lands for the defence of their homes, possibly comprehend this? I have quoted this to prove that poetry is as useful as rice and salt, to shock practical people into realising that gold and iron ore cannot revitalise a country. China cannot slice off the external forms of Germany and France: I have only shown their inherent qualities in the hope that we can learn from them. The purpose of this essay does not lie in the former.

### Section 3.

From the point of view of the literary purist, the basic quality of all the arts is their stimulation of interest and pleasure in their audience. It follows that literature, being a branch of the arts, should possess the same quality, and will therefore bear no relation to the preservation of the individual and the state, being divorced from the practical and rational. So functionally speaking, it is inferior to history for the intellect, to axioms as counsel, to industry and commerce as path to prosperity, and to a certificate of graduation for gaining success and recognition. All the same, literature is considered

by many as a means to completeness. The Englishman Dowden<sup>20</sup> has said, "There are many world-famous works of art and literature which, when viewed or read, appear to be of no value to mankind, yet we enjoy viewing and reciting them and feel as if we were swimming in the ocean; with limitless expanses before us, we float along on the crest of the billowing waves and, when the swim is over, we find ourselves transformed in body and soul. But the sea only foams and roars unemotionally and has never taught us a single lesson; nevertheless, the moral reserves and physical prowess of the swimmer is suddenly increased." So the usefulness of literature in life definitely cannot rank below that of food, clothing, housing, religion and morality. For man, who occupies the space between heaven and earth, must at times be aware of his position and work hard; yet at other times, he loses the sense of himself and becomes idle. He may endeavour to improve his livelihood or may at times neglect it to indulge in sensuous pleasures; one moment he may be very active in the realm of practical matters, the next his mind may wander into a land of his imagination. If he concentrates his effort on one extreme, his life is not considered complete. Severe winter will remain forever while the breath of spring will cease to come; though his body is alive his soul is dead - the man lives on, but there is no reason for his continued existence. Is this perhaps the function of the uselessness:

of literature? John Stuart Mill<sup>21</sup> has said, "Our modern civilisation uses science as its technique, treats reason as its god, and utilitarianism as its goal." If this is the general tendency, then the function of literature is even more miraculous. Why is this so? The answer is that literature can nourish our soul. Nourishing the human soul is the responsibility and function of literature.

The competence of literature is further extended by another special function. The great literatures of this world are all capable of revealing the mystery of life, directly pointing out its phenomena and laws, which cannot be expressed by science. This mystery is the truth of life, and truth is a very subtle and profound matter which cannot be expounded by students. Take for example a man from the tropics who has never seen ice; even if you tell him about it and try to explain it to him with biology and physics, he would still not know that water can freeze and why ice is cold. But if he is shown a cube of ice and asked to melt it, without mentioning the states of 'matter' and 'energy', the thing 'ice' will become apparent and clear to him, and he will understand it directly without any worry or difficulty. Literature is the same. Even though in its reasoning and exposition, it is not as analytical and compact as scholarship, yet the truth of life is embodied in its words and sentences so that whoever

listens to it will find his mind at once bright and clear and at one with life, just as the tropical man who had tried through study and cogitation and failed to comprehend ice, understands it immediately on being shown a piece of it. This is also what Matthew Arnold<sup>22</sup> meant when he called poetry a criticism of life. If we read the great literatures written after Homer, we shall find that they not only border on poetry, but are identical to life, are able to expose where its strength and weaknesses lie and to show how perfection can be attained through vigorous self-exertion. This power of theirs is instructive and, being so, is all the more profitable to life. But this instruction is no ordinary instruction; it actually teaches self-awareness, valour, growth and progress. All the declining civilisations began their downward path by not heeding this instruction.

Then there are some people who judge poetry on the basis of sociology and their opinion is quite unusual: their emphasis being the inter-relation between literature and morality. They declare that the most important element of poetry must be the genuineness of its ideas. What is this genuineness then? It is the conformity of the poet's thought and feelings with the general conceptions of mankind. And how can genuineness be acquired? Through assimilation of the widest experience. If the human experience he has assimilated is wide, his poetry will also be

profound. After all, morality is merely shaped to the general concepts of humanity, so the link between poetry and morality is destined by heaven. The unity of poetry and morality will produce genuineness of ideas, upon which rest its life and immortality. If it is not so, poetry will run contrary to the laws of nature; and being contrary to the laws of nature, will also be in opposition to the general conceptions of mankind; and being in opposition to the general conceptions of mankind will be devoid of genuineness of ideas. Without genuineness of ideas, poetry perishes. Therefore the perishing of poetry is always caused by its being at odds with morality. Then what about the poetry which offends morality and yet stands? The answer is that its survival is only temporary. The thesis of "purity!" applied to the Chinese Book of Odes is in accordance with this. I fear that if China should have a literary renaissance one day, many will use this criterion of morality to suppress all unorthodox works. Many critics in Europe, too, have adopted this to judge literary works. In the early nineteenth century, the world was rocked by the effects of the French Revolution; Germany, Spain, Italy, and Greece rose to new heights, and this dawn swept away all dreamy ideas of the past. Only England remained relatively unaffected. Still, there began to be occasional discord and dissatisfaction between the different classes in the nation, and into this age the poet Byron<sup>23</sup> was born. The writings of his

predecessors, Sir Walter Scott,<sup>24</sup> and his contemporaries were balanced, steady, and in complete harmony with traditional religion and morals. When Byron came on to the scene, however, he shook off the yoke of the old morality and was outspoken in his opinion. All his writings contained a note of strength, defiance, destruction and challenge. How could a man of peace not tremble at his sound? So he was referred to as a satanic poet. This term was coined by Robert Southey,<sup>25</sup> approved by everyone, and was later applied to Shelley and those who came after and is still in wide use nowadays. Southey, also a poet, won the crown of the Poet Laureate by speaking in accordance with general opinion. He attacked Byron most vehemently, and Byron retorted viciously calling him a 'poem-hawker'.<sup>26</sup> Of Southey's works, The Life of Lord Nelson is most popular today.

The Old Testament records that God, having made heaven and earth in seven days finally fashioned man from clay and called him Adam; then taking pity on the man's loneliness, he took one of Adam's ribs to create woman and called her Eve. These two lived in Eden, which God further filled with birds and beasts, flowers and trees, and irrigated with four rivers. Two trees stood in Eden, one of which was the Tree of Life, the other, the Tree of Knowledge, whose fruits God warned man not to eat. Satan came in the shape of a serpent to tempt Eve and made her taste the forbidden fruit to obtain life and knowledge. In great anger,

God drove Adam and Eve out of paradise and, with a curse, condemned the serpent to crawl on its belly and subsist on soil; thereafter man had to toil for a living and was doomed to die - penalties which were meted out to his progeny as well. The English poet Milton chose this legend for his "Paradise Lost", in which the combat between God and Satan was an allegory of the struggle between light and darkness. Satan was depicted as hideous and vile and, thenceforward, men detested him even more. If the Chinese, who have an entirely different religious upbringing, were to view the event, Adam's life in Eden would appear to them like that of an animal in a cage, who had no knowledge, and whose sole purpose was to please his god. If Satan had not tempted man, the human race could not have been born. So there is nobody in this world who has not inherited the blood of the devil, and the first benefactor of mankind is Satan. A Christian who is given this name will, as the Chinese say, be "a traitor of his religion", and be ostracised by his fellowmen, and have nowhere to go. It takes a man of fiery passion, fighting courage, noble spirit and clear ideas to withstand such persecution. After Adam and Eve had departed from paradise, they bore two sons, the elder was called Abel, the younger, Cain. Abel tended sheep and Cain tilled the ground. They once offered the produce of their toil to God as sacrifice, but God, who preferred meat, refused to look at Cain's offering.

Cain therefore came to quarrel with Abel and eventually killed him. God cursed Cain with the fate of being unable to benefit from the sustenance of, ~~land~~ and of being a fugitive from, the land. Byron took this tale as the theme of his romance in which God was frequently and violently criticised. Christians in his day were enraged and called "Cain" a blasphemous and dangerous poem which spread the doctrine of the destructibility of the soul. Byron was attacked vigorously, and still is today by some critics on this account. Only his contemporaries, like Thomas Moore<sup>27</sup> and Shelley<sup>28</sup>, recognised the beauty and grandeur of his work. Goethe, too, called "Cain" a work of matchless distinction, the best of English writing. It is believed that his subsequent advice to J.P. Eckermann<sup>29</sup> to study the English language was to enable Eckermann to read "Cain" in the original. The Old Testament goes on to record that, after the exile of Cain, Adam had another son, and how men, as their numbers gradually multiplied, indulged in evil thoughts and actions, and that God, regretting having created man, was determined to exterminate him. There was one person, Noah, however, who served God well. God commanded him to cut down some trees to build an ark and put into it his family and every kind of plant and animal. Then God inundated the earth with torrents of rain for forty days and nights. The resulting deluge destroyed all living things on earth, but Noah's race alone remained intact and, when the flood subsided they returned

to live on the land and continued to multiply. At this stage in our account, we cannot help marvelling at God's ability to show regret, but man's hatred for Satan is not surprising. Since men are the off-spring of Noah, they naturally resist Satan and serve the Lord with trembling reverence as their ancestor had once done, in the hope that if a second deluge should come, they would be favoured with a secret message and be preserved once more in an ark. Yet I have heard geneticians say that, in the physiology of reproduction, there are such things as throwbacks. Among living beings, there are often abnormal types which resemble much earlier ancestors. For example, we often find freaks amongst horses reared by men with pre-domestication characteristics, which resemble zebras. No doubt this also accounts for the emergence of the Mara Poets, and it should not be regarded as a curious phenomenon. Yet the wild horse will be kicked and ostracised by its fellow horses because it will not be broken in - this indeed is something that deserves our sympathy.

#### Section 4.

Byron, baptised George Gordon, was a descendant of the pirate Burun of Scandinavia. His clan migrated to Normandy, followed King William I into England and adopted the name of Byron in the reign of King Henry II. Byron was born in London on January 22, 1788.

He wrote his first poem at the age of twelve. When he was older, he studied at the University of Cambridge but without much success. He therefore decided to leave England to travel abroad. Starting from Portugal, he journeyed as far east as Greece, Turkey and Asia Minor. He made careful observations of these places, their natural beauties and exotic folklore, and recorded them in the first two cantos of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage". The world was held in awe by the fantasy and strangeness of this work. He next wrote "The Giaour" and "The Bride of Abydos", both based on Turkish sources. The former is about the giaour, meaning an erring Mohammedan, who seduced the wife of Hassan. Hassan threw his wife into the sea. The giaour escaped but returned to avenge the woman by killing Hassan, and went to a mosque to confess. His desperation and grief overflow on to the pages of this work and have moved many readers to tears. In the other poem, the girl Zuleika fell in love with Selim. When she was forced to marry another, she eloped with Selim but they were finally caught. Selim was killed resisting capture and the girl died too in the end. Their words are filled with rebellion. In January, 1814, Byron composed "The Corsair". Conrad, the hero of the poem, had no longer any love for the world; he had abandoned all morals. But because of his extraordinary willpower, he became the captain of a pirate band and established a vast empire on the sea. Wherever he guided

his lonely ship, wherever he pointed his sharp sword, he met no resistance. Apart from his beloved wife, he had no other possessions. He had a God once, but had since parted from Him, and God had left Conrad too. To him, right lay in the power of his sword; he scorned all state laws and social morality. His colossal strength was employed in the pursuit of the dictates of his will alone; he paid no attention either to the opinion of other men or the commandments of God. If asked where his fate would be, he would reply: "It is like a sword in a scabbard. One day it will gleam forth and the comets will pale in comparison."<sup>30</sup> Yet in the beginning, Conrad was basically not an evil man. He had nourished a noble and pure desire to serve humanity with his whole heart and might. But when he witnessed how truth was obstructed by petty men who with their speciousness obstructed good, how ignorant the scurrying multitude were and how suspicious and vindictive human nature was, his heart became cold, hardened and disgusted. In the end he came to hate himself and others so much that he determined to have his revenge on the lot of them. His versatile ship and sharp sword fought man and God alike. Revenge was the sole preoccupation of his spirit. He was captured in a battle with the Seyd one day, but was helped to escape by the Seyd's queen who admired his valour. While drifting along in a boat with the woman, he sighted the ship with his followers on board. He shouted; "It is my ship, it is my blood red flag. I am not destined to meet my end on the sea."<sup>31</sup> But, on returning

home, he found no light in his wife's room, and his beloved wife dead. After this, Conrad disappeared and, though his followers searched on land and sea, they found no trace of him. But his name, linked as it was with one virtue and countless crimes will live forever.<sup>32</sup> Byron's grandfather John, inspired by his pirate ancestor, had joined the navy and become an admiral. Byron, too, seems to have been spurred on by the same reason to compose this poem. He took secret pleasure in being called a pirate by others, so it is beyond doubt that he was Conrad. Three months after "The Corsair" Byron wrote "Lara". This man had killed as many people as the pirate. He headed a rebellion but was eventually defeated and killed, his chest pierced by an arrow. This story tells of the courage of a man of pride who fought against inevitable fate; the spectacle is incomparably tragic and heroic. Byron's other writings [of this period] were not outstanding. It was written in the style of Sir Walter Scott. The latter therefore concentrated on novels and stopped writing poetry, to avoid competing with Byron. When Byron was separated from his wife, though society did not know the whole truth, it vied to condemn him.<sup>33</sup> He was jeered and slandered at public meetings and barred from theatres. His friend Thomas Moore in his Biography of Byron, commented on this incident as follows: "The world to Byron is not unlike that of his mother, who loved and hated indiscriminately."<sup>34</sup> Persecution of genius is a common human

phenomenon that occurs frequently everywhere, not in England alone. Chinese writers of literary fame since the time of Han and Chin have been persistently persecuted. Liu Yen-ho justified the persecution in this manner: "There are five talents in men, which are developed differently and have different uses. If a man is not great, he cannot have them all. Because of their high rank, generals and ministers of state <sup>will have them,</sup> ~~exalted;~~ while writers whose position is inferior will be scorned. That is why rivers roar and rush, but streams only trickle along."<sup>35</sup> The corruption of the Orient is fully revealed in these few words. But Byron's adversity was not due to the reason just given. It was, in fact, caused by his reputation and the stubborn stupidity of society. When his enemies spotted his weakness, they turned upon him and the undiscerning mob joined in the harassment. If we paid compliments to the high officials of state and crushed the poor scholar, we would be committing a wrong worse than that of Byron's compatriots. All the same, Byron could not stay in England any longer. He said, "If the criticism of the world proves true, I am unfit for England; if it proves amiss, then England is unfit for me. Should I go? Yet even so, this is not the end. Criticism will still haunt me when I am away on foreign soil." He eventually left England. His arrival in Italy in October, 1816, marked the beginning of the period when Byron's masterpieces were written.

Among the works which he wrote abroad, there were the remaining cantos to "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage", the poem "Don Juan", and three great romances. They all protest against God and glorify Satan instead and expressed things that others were incapable of expressing. The first of these romances is "Manfred". Manfred, deprived of love and happiness, was in great distress but could not forget [the past]. The Devil appeared in human form and asked him what he desired. He replied that he longed for oblivion. When the Devil told him that death would bring oblivion, he replied, "Will death really make me forget?"<sup>36</sup> He was utterly unconvinced and, when the devil demanded his surrender, he was able to evoke his strength of mind to overcome his pain and refute the devil: "You could not tempt or destroy me .... I am my own destroyer, Be gone, baffled fiends, the hand of Death has got me, but not your hand."<sup>37</sup> He meant that whether he was good or bad, acquittal, penalty or reward was to be meted out by himself; neither the Heavenly King nor the Dragon of Evil could persecute him, let alone the others. Byron's will was as strong as Manfred's. It is said that critics have frequently compared this work with Goethe's Faust. The second [of the romances] is "Cain", the derivation of which has been mentioned previously. Cain was brought up to the abyss of space by Lucifer to discuss life and death, good and evil. He was finally convinced

and became a disciple of the Mara. This work on its publication had a stormy reception from the Christians. Byron took his revenge by writing "Heaven and Earth." Japhet, the hero, was compassionate but disenchanted; he, too, chastised God and attacked what he regarded as illogical in religion. Where did Satan acquire his splendour? According to the Christian religion, he was an archangel, but became ambitious and turned against God; he was defeated, fell into hell and became the devil. Hence the Devil was also created by God Himself. Thereafter, the Devil managed to steal into paradise, the good and beautiful Eden, and destroy the works of God with a few words. If he had not possessed extraordinary might, how could he have succeeded in doing this? Eden was under the protection of God, but even so, Satan could destroy it; how could God then claim to be omnipotent? Furthermore, God was solely responsible for creating the devil, yet he not only condemned him, but allowed men to be contaminated by him, then punished him. How could men call God benevolent? Thus Cain said: "God is the source of unhappiness. God must be unhappy; how can He be happy when he has to produce destruction? But my father said, 'God is omnipotent.' I asked him. 'If God is good, why does he allow evil?' He replied, 'This evil is the path to good.'"<sup>38</sup> Indeed, God's goodness consisted, as Byron said, in giving men food and clothing only after he had starved them, in delivering them only

after he had inflicted plague upon them. He created sinners then said, "I forgive you." Yet man said, "Praised be God! Praised be God! Who toiled and built the Temple."<sup>39</sup> Not so with Lucifer. He said: "I admit that in heaven and earth, I have a victor, but no one is superior to me. He triumphed over me, so he called me evil. Were I to triumph, God would be the evil one. Good and bad are interchangeable."<sup>40</sup>

This view of good and evil thus differs from that of Nietzsche. To Nietzsche, the strong overcomes the weak, who therefore judged their actions as evil, so evil was in fact another name for the strong; whereas in this case, evil was an unjust epithet for the weak. Nietzsche strove for self-exertion and sang about the strong; Byron approved of self-exertion but fought to resist the strong. He was very different from Nietzsche in his concept of good and evil yet similar in his aspiration to strength. Man said that God was strong, so he was supremely good. Yet the good one loved the meat of lamb and disliked fruits, and the pure and simple offerings of Cain, were scattered by a whirlwind. The human race was created by God, who, when displeased, caused a deluge to destroy it together with the innocent animals and plants. But man said, "Praised be to God who blotted out evil." Japhet said differently: "You children who are saved, do you think you have escaped drowning through the grace of Heaven? You have survived

and continue your way of life, but you watch the world perish without remorse. You had no courage to fight the waves and share the fate of your fellowmen but escaped with your parents into an ark and built a new city over the grave of the world. Have you no shame?"<sup>41</sup> But they were not ashamed and prostrated themselves to offer their eternal thanks to God, whose might was thus strengthened. If men were to leave Him and pay Him homage no more, how could He continue to exercise any power? Men gave God his might to persecute Satan; but these men were the fellow human beings of the race that God had formerly blotted out. Thus from Satan's point of view, men were unspeakably crass and degraded. He wished to instruct them but, before he could open his mouth, men had run away without taking note of the contents of his teaching. However, Satan was unwilling to acquiesce, so he reappeared in the world to exercise his might. God was might, Satan was also might. But Satan whose might derived from God, would not substitute his own for God's, were God's might to die; he would firstly use it to attack the heavens, then to control all men. Certainly there was no greater contradiction than this. Satan's coercion of men could be interpreted as resistance to God. But if men were to unite with him in his fight, what need would there be for coercion? Similarly, Byron always had to be in the vanguard of mankind, yet derided anyone who was content to remain in the background. His argument

was that if he did not put himself at the fore, then it would be impossible to persuade men not to stay behind. To take precedence himself by allowing men to keep in the background, was the treason of Satan. Therefore, since he was for the expansion of his authority, he sang praises of the strong. He said: "I love America, this land of freedom, this green meadow of God, this land unbowed." From this we see that Byron not only loved Napoleon's destruction of the world, but also Washington's struggle for liberty; he was carried away by the atrocities and cruelty of the pirates, but also assisted, single-handedly in the independence of Greece. In him alone, we have the co-existence of the oppressor and the resistance-fighter. Even so, the spirit of liberty and humanity is very much part of him.

#### Section 5.

A man who has great self-respect must invariably feel dissatisfied. His indignation against the world and its conventions erupts like an earthquake and he crosses swords with his opponents. Since such a man respects only himself, he will never make any concessions nor will he accept compromises, nor rest till he has achieved what he wants. Because of this, he will gradually come into conflict with society and become tired of the world. Byron was such a man. He said, "What can we reap in this barren stony land? ... All things are judged with a set of the most ridiculous

conventional rules, and what is called public opinion is almighty. But public opinion has immersed the world in darkness." What he said coincides with the opinion of the modern Norwegian writer Ibsen. Ibsen, born in our time, deplored the stupidity of society and mourned the obfuscation of truth. Enemy of The People was a platform for his ideas. His character Dr. Stockmann, the central figure of the play, stubbornly defended truth against the fools and was consequently accused of being an enemy of the people. Even though he was driven out by his landlord and his son was expelled from school, he refused to waver and continued his struggle. Towards the end, he exclaimed: "I have discovered truth - the strongest man is the man who stands alone."<sup>42</sup> Such was his philosophy of life. Byron, however, was not wholly like him. The characters he depicted all possessed different thoughts and acted in a different manner: they were perhaps dissatisfied and bored with the world, standing aloof from the masses to seek the companionship of heaven and earth, like Harold; or they were so disgusted with the world that they longed to be killed, like Manfred: or, like Conrad and Lucifer, they hoped to avenge with destruction the extreme wickedness and great wrongs done to them by God and man; or, like Don Juan, they would abandon virtue, revel in scorn and deb<sup>a</sup>uchery, mock at society and amuse themselves. It was towards the end of Byron's career that he presented to us

characters who behaved differently from those above. They respected justice and worshipped honour, were chivalrous to the weak, and upheld justice; they exposed the stupidity of the powerful and were not afraid of offending the public. In his earlier days, Byron had been through many experiences very similar to those of the characters mentioned above, but he never moaned, gave up hope or longed to escape from the world like Manfred. In his heart, there was a growing sense of discontent which evoked all the more his arrogance, recklessness and apathy towards men. He was iconoclastic and revengeful, but, hidden in his fiery vehemence, was his chivalry. He revered independence and loved freedom. If a slave were to stand before him, his heart would at once be overcome with pity and anger - pity because of the man's misfortune, but anger because of his passiveness. This was why he came to assist in the independence of Greece and ultimately met his end while serving in the army, for he had dedicated himself to the cause of liberty. He once said, "In the course of freedom, I do not restrict myself to fighting for my country only, but for others as well." At that time, Italy was in the grip of Austria and lost her freedom. Secret societies sprang up to plot for independence; Byron joined with them and took upon himself the mission of spreading the spirit of freedom. He calmly carried on his usual activities, -

swimming, walking and riding - even though he was surrounded by spies. Though, later, this hope of success vanished with the Austrian suppression of the secret societies, he never surrendered his conviction. His dedication served as encouragement in later times to Mazzini<sup>43</sup> and Cavour<sup>44</sup>, and Italy eventually gained her independence. Thus Mazzini said, "Italy owes a great deal to Byron. He was the one who really revitalised our country!" How true his words were. Byron had a great deal of affection for Greece which attracted him like the polestar a magnet. But Greece had then lost her freedom and was made part of Turkey. She dared not offer any resistance in her bondage. The poet's anguish was evident in his works. He invoked the past glories of Greece and mourned the decline of her race. He reprimanded and encouraged the people alternately in the hope that they would rise up against Turkey to restore Greece to her past splendour. His sorrow and earnest rebukes, his sincere hopes manifested themselves in the two poems "The Giaour" and "Don Juan". Then, in 1823, the Greek committee in London wrote a letter to Byron, asking for his help in their struggle for independence. Byron ordinarily would have been extremely disgusted with the Greeks: he had called them "hereditary bondsmen" and "traitors to a free race". Indeed, he did not consent immediately. Eventually, however, his righteous anger moved him to give his consent and he set out. The Greeks were, as he had predicted,

hopelessly degenerate, and it was extremely difficult to rally them to fight. Byron was thus held up on the Island of Cephalonia for five months before he could leave for Missolonghi. The besieged fleet and army of Greece were overjoyed to hear of his arrival and flocked to welcome him as if he had been a messiah. In January of the following year, the Independent Government appointed him a governor and entrusted him with full authority in military and civil matters. But Greece was financially very poor, the army had no rations, and the scales were beginning to turn against the country. The mercenaries of Souliote took advantage of Byron's generosity to make incessant demands and threatened <sup>to</sup> desert whenever their requests were not met. They were further encouraged in this by some demoralised Greeks who wished to vex Byron.

Byron was furious and denounced the baseness of the Greek national character; indeed the "hereditary bondsmen", as he had once called them, could not be rehabilitated all at once. Nevertheless, Byron refused to be disheartened and made himself the backbone of the revolution. He braved dangers from all sides, settled the internal squabble of the officers by setting himself up as an example of human generosity and raised loans to relieve their <sup>poverty</sup> property.

Moreover, he set up printing presses and strengthened fortifications in order to impress upon them the need of strategy. While Greece was fraught with civil strife among its leaders, the Turks, as

expected, attacked Missolonghi. Moreover, three hundred of the Souliote mercenaries seized this opportunity to occupy an area of strategic importance. Byron was ill but he received the news calmly. He concentrated his efforts in bringing about a reconciliation among the various parties to unite them against their enemy. Yet pressures from within and without exhausted his mind and body and, after a while, he became very ill. When he was dying, his valet fetched pen and paper to record his last words, but Byron said: "No, it is too late." He refused to say anymore, but muttered feebly a few names and finally said: "My words are ended." His valet replied: "I cannot understand you, my lord." Byron's face clouded over with pain and he said, "Oh! you don't understand? It is now too late!" After a while, he continued: "I have yielded to Greece my possessions, my health and now my life too; what have I got left?" He passed away on April 18, 1824 at six o'clock in the evening. With the advantage of ~~his~~ hindsight we can now see that Byron had come to the aid of Greece with great expectations and had offered her his genius to help her to recover her past honour. He had thought that his call to war would elicit a widespread response from the people, for, if a foreigner could champion the cause of Greece, her people, though fallen and degenerate for a long time should surely still retain some of their former lustre; if their hearts were still beating, how could they

not have any love for their own country? Yet up to that very day [of his death] what Byron wanted for Greece was still only a dream, and he realised that the "traitors of a free race" could not be all redeemed at once. The day after Byron's death, the Independent Government of Greece proclaimed a day of national mourning, all shops and markets were closed and cannons fired a thirty-seven gun salute - one for each year of his life.

I shall now examine his actions to uncover the mystery surrounding the personal life of the poet. He resisted whoever he met, agitated wherever he went; he admired force and the strong, respected himself, and relished combat. As I have briefly mentioned before, his struggle was not that of wild animals, but for independence, liberty and humanity. His life, then, was as wild as pounding waves and roaring winds; it purged the world of hypocrisy and corruption in a way unknown to man before or since. His spirit was so exuberant that it was irrepressible. He would fight to his death to keep it intact; he would not rest until he had overcome his foes. Moreover, he was honest, sincere and open. As he felt that the world's criteria for praise and blame, right and wrong, good and bad were based on conventions rather than on truth, he disregarded them totally. This was because the English society of his time was saturated with hypocrisy and regarded false gentility and petty etiquette as true virtues, and frequently condemned as villains

anyone who sought after real truth with a free spirit. Byron, with his rebellious and forthright temperament, could not be expected to be silent in such an environment. He therefore retorted through the mouth of Cain: "The devil proclaims the truth. He was, therefore, loathe to pick fights with men." For this reason, those who valued conventional virtues highly, flocked to denounce him. Eckermann once asked Goethe if there was any lesson in the writings of Byron. To this Goethe replied: "The lesson is embodied in Byron's forcefulness and heroism; if one can appreciate that, one has learnt the lesson. As to the issues of purity and morality, who are we to ask?" It takes the great to understand the great." Byron criticised Robert Burns<sup>45</sup> in a similar fashion: "The man had a contradictory temperament. He was at once gentle and firm, open and reserved, spiritual and materialistic, noble and modest - a union of the sacred and the unwholesome." It was the same with Byron: he was egoistic but he pitied the enslaved; he trampled men underfoot but also helped them to gain their independence; he had no fear of the wild seas but, was scared of riding a horse; fond of fighting and worshipper of force, he showed his enemies no mercy, yet he felt deep sympathy for the pain of the captured. Is this what we mean by a 'Mara'? Not only the Mara, all great men are like this. If all men are stripped of their masks, how many can we honestly believe, really

possess, as the world says, a good character and are without a trace of evil? From a general survey of humanity, we find next to none. Yet Byron, though he bore the name of Mara, was a man. Why should we be astonished by him? The fact that he could not be permitted to stay in England but eventually died in a foreign land after a footloose and hard life shows that he was a victim of the masks. These are what Byron had stood against and had strived to expose, but which, even now, continue to kill true men. Alas, the venom of hypocrisy is great indeed! Byron was extremely honest in executing his poetry. He once said, "The criticism of Englishmen does not concern me at all. If anybody regards my poetry as amusing, let him. How can I write to suit his taste? I do not write for women, children, and the common men. I compose poetry with my whole heart, my feeling, my aspirations, and with a great expense of energy. I do not compose for the sake of their gentle compliments." Thus, there is not a single word or phrase which is not the embodiment of the writer's breath and spirit. When they reach the human heart, the heartstrings respond at once. We cannot find another English writer whose influence extended to Europe: only the works of Scott could measure up to Byron's. Were you to ask what the effects were, I should repeat what happened to Greece and Italy, which I have ~~not~~ mentioned previously. Even countries like Germany and Spain were influenced by him. So, in their turn,

were the Slavs whose spirit he restored. In fact, it is simply impossible to describe the vast range of his influence. In England, there was another poet, Shelley. Keats<sup>46</sup>, too, is called a Marab but, because he was not of Byron's school, I shall omit him from my discussions.

### Section 6.

Shelley died at the age of thirty. The strange record of all these years is like a piece of blank verse. The age he lived in was difficult and perilous and his character, furthermore, was aloof and forthright. The world did not love him nor did he love the world; people did not tolerate him, nor did he tolerate others. He died suddenly in the prime of life while travelling in the south of Italy. To say that his whole life was a factual tragedy is not an exaggeration. Shelley was born in 1792 of an aristocratic family. His features were elegant and his bearing upright, and from childhood he was fond of musing. While at school, he was very unpopular with his schoolmates and teachers, at whose hands he suffered unbearable ill-treatment. Thus the shoots of rebellion sprang up in the heart of this young poet. Later, he wrote a story and used the proceeds to treat eight of his friends to a feast, and he left school with the nickname of 'Mad Shelley'. He then went to Oxford University to study philosophy and, while he was there, corresponded frequently

with distinguished persons, asking them advice and opinions. At that time, however, religion vested all its power in the hands of benighted and reactionary priests and this constituted a stumbling-block to the freedom of belief. Shelley was immediately spurred to write a pamphlet called "The Necessity of Atheism", the gist of which was that charity, love and equality were the three most important factors in transforming the world into a utopia - if religion did not contribute towards this, it could be done away with. On its completion this pamphlet was published and brought to the attention of the master of his college who was deeply shocked by it, and eventually expelled the author. His father, too, was violently upset and tried to make him apologise in order that he might be re-instated, but Shelley refused and was banished from home. But the world was big and he had lost his home, so he made his way to London. He was only eighteen, yet he was already alone in the world deprived of all joy and love, and having no choice but to engage in combat with society. Later on, he discovered William Godwin<sup>47</sup> and, after reading the man's works, his spirit of philanthropy was augmented. The following year he went to Ireland and tried to arouse the people. He wanted to effect political and religious reform, but he never succeeded. In 1815, his poem "Alastor" first appeared. This is an autobiographical account of a man of vision who, engaged in a vain attempt for

beauty, finally meets his end on an open plain. The following year, he met Byron in Switzerland. The latter praised him as a man for being as spirited and agile as a lion, but also acknowledged his excellence as a poet, in spite of the fact that the world ignored him. A year later, he completed "The Revolt of Islam". This contains Shelley's convictions and ideals. Its hero is Laon who used his enthusiasm and eloquence to alert his compatriots, champion freedom and attack oppression. However, justice was finally overthrown and oppression returned in triumph, so Laon died for the cause of justice. This poem embodies infinite hope, faith and inexhaustible love, the quest for which ends in death. Laon is the proto-consciousness of the poet and the personification of Shelley himself.

But his masterpieces are his lyrical dramas. The greatest of which are "Prometheus Unbound" and "The Cenci". The former is based on a Greek myth, its moral being similar to that of Byron's "Cain". Prometheus symbolises the spirit of humanity who, for the sake of love, justice and freedom, disregarded hardship in defiance of Jupiter, the lord of oppression, and stole fire to give to man. He was chained to the top of a mountain and fierce eagles came daily to tear at his flesh but he never surrendered. Jupiter was finally forced to give in, and the tale ends with Prometheus being united with Asia, the

girl he loved. Asia represented the ideal. "The Cenci", set in Italy, tells how the girl Cenci, whose father was cruel, unprincipled, and had a boundless capacity for evil, finally killed him and was executed publicly with her stepmother and brother. Critics may judge her guilty of patricide, but perverse acts of this kind will never cease to occur in the world. Even in the Chinese annals Spring and Autumn,<sup>48</sup> edited by a sage, many events of a similar nature are related. Moreover, they are reported plainly and without distortion; why should we join in the chorus of condemnation of Shelley's works? The poet was extremely painstaking in the composition of the above two works and said of them: "My poems have been written for the multitude. They will have many readers." He also said, "They could be presented on the stage." Yet when these poems were completed, their reception was not as he had expected. Society regarded them as objectionable and actors deemed them unrepresentable. Shelley's poetry was executed in protest against false conventions and corrupt practices, but his poetry was stifled by those very conventions and practices. This spiritual warrior of the early nineteenth century died embracing the justice which had so often guided his action. Yet time has passed and we shall do nothing to stop it. Today, the value of Shelley has been recognised and he has taken on new splendour. He is considered the major exponent of the reform

movement, which, first launched by Godwin's book and reinforced by the poet's voice, penetrated increasingly into the minds of men. His various ideas, like justice, liberty, truth, fraternity and hope, have all mellowed, matured and become personified to appear before us either as Laon, or as Prometheus, or as an Islam brave - all entirely straight forward in their opposition and destruction of tradition. What remained after the traditions had been smashed? Only the vigorous spirit of reform. In fact, the vigour of the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century owes much to this. Burns was the first to sing out and Shelley and Byron took up the call, lashing out at and protesting against the establishment. The people began to get worried and, during the consequent commotion, the pace of reform quickened considerably. Therefore, people who abhor destruction have only seen one side of it and have not understood it as a whole. If its true face is revealed, an expression of glory and hope will be visible in it. What harm does its eradication of evil do to the multitude? A few stupid priests may conceivably criticise destruction, but not the mass of the people. If the multitude would only heed to the call, the task of destruction would be much more noble. Shelley, furthermore, was a man of sublime vision who was forever in search of his goal and relentlessly marching forward. The observation of a shallow man could never hope to plumb the depth of his vision. If we really know the man, we shall find that the loftiness of his character rose above the clouds, that his enthusiasm was unquenchable, and that he had borne himself on the wings of his vision into a

land of his ideal, a land that possessed the very substance of beauty. St. Augustine<sup>49</sup> once said, "I have never loved but I want to love, so I live in hope of finding something worthy of love." It was the same with Shelley. Thus he eventually departed from this world to undertake a spiritual journey, hoping to reach the land he worshipped and believed in. Moreover he used mellifluous sounds to paint a vision of the unfathomed to uncover the major cause of the development of the human race to find where exactly the value of life lay. He propagated the spirit of sympathy, and invoked in men the longing for advancement to convert them to an ambition for progress which would be as endless as time. Yet the world called him Satan, so he stood alone. Their rejection and victimisation of him made it impossible for him to live long among them. Thus oppression triumphed, and Shelley died, in the same way as Alastor had perished, in the desert.

But nature remained as a consolation for the poet's heart. Life being unfathomable and society being fickle, towards the artless objects of nature Shelley bore infinite warmth and love. Do not all human hearts react in the same way? This influence simply varies according to the type of people and the different impressions they receive. Consequently, a man who is absorbed in utilitarianism will want to master nature to get gold and materials; a man whose intellect is directed to science will

want to control nature and know its laws; but the lowest of the low will not respond at all to the wonders and beauties of the world throughout the year and will cast his wisdom into the abyss. His life may span a hundred years, but till the very end he will have no idea at all what glory is, nor will he understand what it means to lie in the lap of nature or to smile like a babe. Shelley in his childhood was familiar with the manifestations of nature. He once said, "I have loved from my childhood the solitude of the mountains and rivers, and of the forests and lakes; danger, which sports on the brink of precipices, has been my playmate." A close study of his life will prove the truth of his own statement. While he was still a child, he had wandered among deep woods and silent vales, risen at dawn to see the rising sun and watched the stars at night. He had looked down on the vicissitudes of life in populous cities, and mused on the ravages of former oppression and resistance. Ruined cities and extinct villages, with the impoverished inhabitants sitting famished and cold upon their desolate thresholds, were vivid before his eyes. The purity of his thoughts was so extraordinary that when he looked widely at nature, he experienced a sense of mystery and everything before him seemed to exude emotion and pathos. Therefore the rhythm of his heart-strings was naturally in harmony with the sounds of nature, and

poured forth lyrical verses with a spiritual quality that defies description. No other works, unless they were by Shakespeare or Spenser<sup>50</sup>, could stand <sup>in</sup> comparison with his. In 1819, Shelley settled down in Rome, but moved to Pisa in the following year. Byron also came and many other friends gathered around him. This was the happiest period of his life. However, on the 8th of July 1822, he went sailing with his friends. Suddenly, a gale blew up and when, after a little while, the waves had subsided, the lonely boat had disappeared. Byron, on hearing the news, was grief-stricken and sent people to search everywhere for them. The poet's corpse was finally recovered on the shore and buried in Rome. Shelley, throughout his life, had wanted to provide the answer to the question of life and death. He once said, "Regarding the future, I am satisfied with the sayings of Plato and Bacon. My heart is calm, fearless and full of hope. While man lives in his mortal frame, his potential is concealed by a gloomy cloud. Only when death comes to free him from his body can the mystery be revealed." And again, "I do not know and I cannot provide proof; the most profound thoughts of the soul cannot be rendered into words. While I live, I shall never be able to understand these things. Alas! Life and death are the important issues, but their truth is mysterious and incomprehensible to the poet, and the only way to the solution of the mystery is through death alone." Thus

when, during a sailing trip, Shelley once fell into the sea, he shouted with joy, "I shall soon solve the secret." But he did not die. Another time while he was bathing in the sea, he sank to the bottom, and after his friends had rescued him and revived him, he came to and said, "I have always wanted to explore the deep well in which according to some, truth is hidden. When I finally discover the truth, you will see that I am dead." Now that Shelley is dead, the mystery of life is finally solved, but to all but Shelley, it remains a mystery.

#### Section 7.

The philosophy of the Slav race was entirely different from that of Western Europe, yet the poetry of Byron swept on without encountering any impediment or check. Russia had only a young literature in the early part of the nineteenth century, but it soon became independent and gathered new distinction and splendour each day. Now it manifests signs of keeping abreast with all the nations which had had an earlier start, and the people of the west are all astonished at its beauty and majesty. A study of its beginning shows that it owed its birth to three writers, namely, Pushkin,<sup>51</sup> Lermontov,<sup>52</sup> and Gogol. The first two are world-renowned for their poetry and were both influenced by Byron, but Gogol, who is famous for delineating the dark side

of society, had a different approach and is therefore excluded from this study.

Pushkin was born in Moscow in 1799. He started writing poetry when he was quite young and since he was the first to establish the Romantic school in Russian literature, his fame spread. At that time Russia was fraught with civil strife and the situation was critical. The copious satire in Pushkin's poetry was used as a pretext by some to incriminate him. He would have been exiled to Siberia had not some virtuous elders intervened on his behalf; he was saved and had to live in banishment in the south. During that time he started to read the poetry of Byron and was deeply moved. His thought and style were completely transformed, and his shorter poems were often written in imitation of Byron's, the most celebrated being "The Captive of Caucasus" which bears a striking resemblance to "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage". It tells of a disenchanting Russian youth who, a captive in a strange land, was set free by a young girl. The feeling and love in the youth was reawakened, but he eventually departed alone. It is the same with the other poem "Gypsies". Gypsies are a nomadic people in Europe who herd cattle for a living. Aleko, a misanthrope, fell in love with a beautiful gypsy girl and went to live with them. But he was an exceedingly jealous man, and when he detected a shifting of

the girl's affection he killed her. The father of the girl did not seek revenge but told him to leave and forbade him to live among his people any longer. The two poems might have had the colouring of Byron's poem, but they are actually quite different. The heroes of both poems were equally estranged from their fellow-man, yet they were still part of the popular trend of the Russian society at the time of Alexander - they were prone to sudden disillusionment and impetuous rapture, affected an air of misanthropic boredom and were very weak-willed. Pushkin had no sympathy with such people. He chided mercilessly all those who sought vengeance on others by no means their inferiors. In this way he exposed the hypocrisy of society and made the rough but unwholesome Life of the gypsies look excellent in comparison. The critics say that Pushkin's transference of affection from the Byronic hero to the simple people of his country actually dates from this period. His later masterpiece was "Eugene Onegin". The plot is very simple, but the language is extremely rich and refined. Contemporary Russian society is faithfully reflected in the poem. However, since it was composed over a period of eight years, it was subject to various influences. Consequently its character underwent a change and there are many inconsistencies. The first two cantos were still under the influence of Byron, and the hero Onegin, who fought society and was disillusioned

with men, had the makings of a Byronic hero; however, he was no longer obsessed with his own ideas and gradually came closer to reality, his character resembling that of a Russian of that period. Later on, as circumstances changed, the character of the poet also changed; he gradually drifted away from Byron and his works became more independent. The more excellent his style became, the more works he produced. About the reason for his separation from Byron, there is much speculation. Some say that Byron's hopeless struggle and lofty ideals were incompatible with the personality of Pushkin; the early admiration had sprung from a momentary, impulsive enthusiasm and, when the waves of enthusiasm had subsided, he had abandoned it to return where he belonged. Some maintain that the dissimilarity in their national character was the chief mechanism for the change; since Western ideas were at variance with those in Russia, the departure from Byron was due to personality, for if their personalities clashed it would be very difficult for the influence of Byron to be perpetuated in him. These two arguments are both plausible.<sup>53</sup> But when we look at the matter from the point of view of Pushkin as an individual, we find that it is more likely that he had imitated only the surface characteristics of Byron and that, when he had ended his riotous mode of living, he had to return promptly to his true self; he could not be like Lermontov

who steadfastly maintained his negative outlook. Thus, when he returned to Moscow, his writings were directed even more towards harmony and avoided mention of anything anti-social; instead he praised things liberally and applauded the military feats of the country. In 1831, Poland rose up to fight Russia, and the Western European countries supported Poland and condemned Russia. Pushkin therefore wrote "The Calumniators of Russia" and "The First Anniversary of Borodino"<sup>54</sup> to manifest his patriotism. The Danish critic Georg Brandes<sup>55</sup> criticizes this, saying: "The deprivation by force of another people's freedom, though acclaimed as an act of patriotism, is actually bestial love." This is applicable not only to Pushkin, but also to the good people of today who daily profess their patriotism but whose love is normally of the bestial rather than the human kind. Later in life Pushkin quarrelled with George d'Anthis, the son of the Dutch ambassador, was shot in the stomach in a duel and died two days later. This was in the year 1837. Since it was only after the appearance of Pushkin that Russia had an independent literature the historian A. Pipin<sup>55</sup> stated that Russian literature was in fact inaugurated by Pushkin. The Mara idea of Byron then passed from Pushkin to Lermontov.

Lermontov, a contemporary of Pushkin, was born in 1814. His ancestor, T. Learmont originated from Scotland. Therefore, whenever he had any grievances, he would announce that he would

soon leave this land of ice and snow, of police and officials to return to his native soil. But his temperament was all Russian - inventive, sensitive and permanently melancholic. He put together verses in German when he was merely a boy. After he was expelled from university, he spent two years at a military college and graduated as an ensign. He behaved just like an ordinary soldier and as he said, he only added a little of the flavour of poetry to his champagne. When he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in the Imperial Guard Hussars, he began to imitate Byron by writing about the Orient. He idolised Byron as a person. In his own record he wrote: "After reading Biography of Lord Byron, I know that his life resembled mine - this coincidence astounds me." He also said: "Byron resembled me in yet another way. When he was in Scotland, an old woman told his mother: "This child will grow up to become a great man and he will be married twice." In the Caucasus, an old woman told my mother exactly the same thing. I might not be as fortunate as Byron, but I want it to be as she said.<sup>11</sup> His personality was close to Shelley's. The latter's "Prometheus Unbound" had a great effect on him, and the various questions of life, good and evil, and combat were his major pre-occupations, but he did not imitate Shelley's poetry. At first he copied Byron and Pushkin, but, ultimately found his own idiom. His ideas also ~~also~~ resembled those of the German philosopher, Schopenhauer, for he recognised the need of reforming the established order of morality. He incorporated this view in the two poems:

"The Demon", and "Mtsyri".<sup>57</sup> The former expresses its ideas through a great spirit, the exile from heaven and hater of human virtue, who rose above mundane thoughts. With the bitter hatred that resulted from this he fought against the universe and, if he happened to see the people inspired by petty motives, he would always view them with contempt. The latter is about a youth's appeal for freedom. There was once a young man who grew up in a monastery in the mountains. The abbot believed that he had overcome all his passions and desires, but the child's dreams still centred upon his native land. One stormy night, he stole out of the monastery, while the monk was praying, to wander in the forest for three days, experiencing limitless freedom which he had never had before. He later said, "I felt then like a wild animal battling with the storm, lightning and ferocious tigers." But he lost his way in the forest and was unable to return. He was not brought back until several days had elapsed, and he died from wounds he had sustained in a fight with a leopard. To the abbot attending to his wounds he said: "I have no fear of the grave. They say that the suffering of life will be relieved by sleep, but I dread to bid farewell to my life ..... I am still young ..... Do you still recollect the dreams of your youth, or, have you forgotten your past hates and loves in this life? If you have forgotten, then the beauty of this world is lost to you. You are weak, old and devoid of hope." The youth went on to narrate what he saw in the forests, speaking

of his feeling of freedom and his fight with the leopard. He said:  
"Do you want to know what happened to me when I obtained my freedom?  
I was born again, old man, I was born. If I had not had those three  
days, my life would have been joyless and gloomy, worse than your  
old age." After Pushkin was killed in the duel, Lermontov wrote a  
poem to give vent to his sorrow. At the end of the poem, he said,  
"You members of the Royal Court are the butchers of genius and  
freedom. You have sought sanctuary in the name of law and you  
are thus beyond the power of the judges, but in heaven there is  
still the stern God, whom you cannot bribe with gold and money .....  
Your dark blood cannot wash away the bloodstains of our poet."<sup>58</sup>  
When this poem was published, it was acclaimed and read by the  
whole country. Subsequently Lermontov was brought to trial and  
exiled to Siberia. Later he got help and was deported to the  
Caucasus. After he had seen the magnificent scenery of this land,  
his poetry attained an even higher level of beauty. In his youth,  
when a general mood of extreme dissatisfaction prevailed he wrote:  
"The Demon" who, like Satan, took arms against the depraved ways  
of mortal life. Like the brave man who finds that all his  
opponents are cowards, he burst with anger; he possessed an  
inborn sense of the beautiful and found no companionship in the  
scurrying mortal multitude and, in the end, became sick and tired

of humanity. Towards the end of his life, Lermontov returned slowly to reality, he no longer vented all his dissatisfaction upon humanity but upon the age in which he lived and finally he changed completely. He died fighting in a duel, the cause of which was a quarrel over his book A Hero of our Time. At first, people suspected that the central character of the book was the self-portrait of the writer, but, in the second edition, Lermontov defended himself by declaring that the hero was not an individual, but a fusion of all our vices together. The book was, in fact, a projection of his contemporaries. Later a friend of his, Major Martynov, accused him of inserting his image into the book and challenged him to a duel. As Lermontov had no intention of killing his friend, he just fired into the air. Martynov, however, took aim and shot him. Thus Lermontov died at the age of twenty-seven.

These two men both drew their inspiration from Byron, but they also differed from him. Pushkin acquired the external show of misanthropy, while Lermontov adopted a negative pessimism. Hence Pushkin finally succumbed to the authority of the Czar and returned to the fold of peace, while Lermontov never wavered in his courageous fight. Bodenstedt<sup>59</sup> criticised him thus: "Lermontov could not triumph over the fate which pursued him, and yet when he was overtaken, he maintained his ferocity and pride." That is why all his poetry resounds with fierce rebellion and intransigence.

Lermontov was also very patriotic, but his patriotism differed from Pushkin's in that it did not flaunt the military strength of his country. He reserved his love for the villages, the wild steppes and the life of the rural folk. This love was extended to the natives of the Caucasus who had rebelled against Russia in the cause of freedom. Though Lermontov had joined the Russian army and fought against them in two campaigns, he felt a great deal of affection for them; his poem "Ismail-Bey",<sup>60</sup> in particular, records this event. Lermontov also differed from Byron in his opinion of Napoleon. Byron, from the outset repudiated Napoleon's ludicrous revolutionary thoughts, but, when Napoleon was defeated, he changed his attitude to admiration, because he was disgusted at the sight of the wolves tearing at the flesh of the dead lion. Lermontov, however, placed all the blame on the French and said that they had committed a great wrong against their hero. His self-confidence resembled Byron's. He once said, "I have only one good friend, and that is myself." He was ambitious too and wanted to leave some trace of himself behind in everything he did. Moreover, Byron's declarations that he did not hate humanity but merely kept away from it and that he did not love man less but nature more are not to be found in Lermontov, who often professed to be a misanthrope. So the beauty of nature, which so delighted the English poet, waned and darkened in the eyes of this Russian

hero, and thick clouds and swift thunder overtook the new sun. The difference between the two nations is discernible in these two poets.

### Section 8.

The Dane George Brandes named Mickiewicz,<sup>61</sup> Slowacki,<sup>62</sup> and Krasinski<sup>63</sup> as Poland's triad of Romantic poets. Mickiewicz, a contemporary of the Russian writer Pushkin, was born in 1798 in his family home in the village of Zaosie in Lithuania, which borders on Poland. He entered the University of Vilno at eighteen to read philology and fell in love with a girl who lived next door called Maryla Wereszezakowna. When Maryla subsequently left, he became very depressed. Later on he began to read Byron's poetry, and composed a poem entitled "Offering to the Dead" (Dziady)<sup>64</sup> In this poem he describes the ancient folklore of Lithuania. Every year on the second of November,<sup>65</sup> wine and fruit would be laid out on the graves for the dead and the villagers, the herdsmen and a priest would assemble to invoke the spirits. Among these there were some who (as mortals) had killed themselves because they had lost their loves and had been judged accordingly. On this particular day, they had to suffer their former torments. The poem ends after a few fragments and was never completed. He then went to live in Kovno as a teacher, returning to Vilno

after two or three years. In 1822, he was arrested by Russian officials and imprisoned for ten months in a room with shuttered windows where it was impossible to tell day from night. He was then deported to St. Petersburg and from there exiled to Odessa. The place had no need for teachers and he was sent to Crimea, the landscape and customs of which became a source of his poetic inspiration, culminating later in a collection of poems called "Crimean Sonnets". Soon after, he was allowed to return to Moscow, where he served in the office of the Governor-general. He wrote two poems during that time. "Grazyna", tells of Prince Litawor who, having fallen out with his father-in-law Witold, was going to ask a foreign army to help him in his revenge. His wife Grazyna learnt of it but could not dissuade him from betraying his country. She therefore asked the guards not to allow the German envoy into Nowogradek. The German army became angry and, instead of attacking Witold, marched on Litawor. Grazyna then put on armour to disguise herself as the prince and went out to fight the enemy. The prince returned but, though the victory was his, Grazyna was hit by a stray missile and soon died. At her funeral, the man who was guilty of discharging the missile was burnt at the stake and Litawor killed himself out of grief. The moral of this story is as follows: for the sake of her country, a woman disobeys her husband, sends away reinforcements and deceives their soldiers; as a result she

puts her country in danger and starts a war; yet she is not wrong, for, if her motive is good, then all her actions are permissible. The second poem is "Konrad Wallenrod" which is based on an ancient legend. After being defeated, the hero of the poem, went over to the enemy, eventually became their leader, and succeeded in one stroke in his plot for revenge. The poem in fact took the ideas of Machiavelli, the Italian writer, and attributed them to a Byronic hero. Since, at first glance, the poem read like a lyrical work in the tradition of the Romantic school, the censors were unable to detect its hidden meaning and allowed it to be published, an event which contributed considerably to Mickiewicz's rise to fame. Later, he had an opportunity to go to Germany to meet the writer Goethe. Another poem called "Pan Tadeusz"<sup>67</sup> was about the two houses of Soplica and Horeszko. The description of landscape in this poem won praise throughout the world. Although the central figure was Tadeusz, his father Jacek, who changed his name and joined a religious order, was the real hero. The poem begins with the two setting out to hunt a bear, and listening to the Wojski<sup>68</sup> blowing his horn. The sound began faintly, but it soon gathered strength and rang from elm to elm and from oak to oak until it reverberated as if it came from a thousand horns. This was like the poetry of Mickiewicz, which contained the voices of his past and present compatriots. The sounds of all this poetry was clear

and loud and expressed a world of ten thousand thoughts, so that the sky above Poland was filled with songs. Even now, they still sway the hearts of the Poles. This reminds one of one of the passages in the poem, which tells how, long after the Wojski had finished blowing his horn, the listener thought he was still at it.

Mickiewicz was born amidst the reverberating echo of those sounds and gave them perpetuity.

Mickiewicz idolized Napoleon, saying that he had actually created Byron, and that, since Byron's own life and its glory had awakened Pushkin in Russia, Napoleon had indirectly created Pushkin too. The mission of Napoleon was to liberate the people of his country and then the world, and his life was pure poetry. Mickiewicz also admired Byron a great deal, maintaining that the works of Byron were inspired by Napoleon, and that his English contemporaries, though influenced by his genius, could never rank with him, for, after the poet's death, English literature reverted to the previous century. As for Russian writers, he liked Pushkin. In Slav literature, both Mickiewicz and Pushkin were leading writers. They were also disciples of Byron. But, as the years went by, they both became more and more absorbed in the heritage of their countries. In this respect, the difference was that Pushkin, when young, had solicited the favour of the Czar but

failed at the first attempt and had had his wings clipped. Then, in appreciation of the Czar's recognition, he offered his allegiance and lost the convictions of his youth. Mickiewicz, on the other hand, preserved his integrity till his death. After they had met, Pushkin composed "The Bronze Horseman" and Mickiewicz "The Monument of Peter the Great" to commemorate the occasion.<sup>69</sup> The meeting was in 1829. The two poets took shelter from the rain beneath the statue and Mickiewicz, after the event, wrote an account of their conversation and attributed it to Pushkin in the poem. The last stanza reads, "The horse is rearing up but the Czar does not tug at the rein to turn it back. He lets it slacken and the horse looks as if it is going to fall and break. A hundred years have passed but still it has not fallen; it is like a cascade poised on the edge of a precipice, caught in the grip of winter. But soon the sun of liberty will shine and from the west a warm wind will awaken this cold land. Then what will happen to the cascade? What will happen to tyranny?"<sup>70</sup> These words, of course, were Mickiewicz's although they were put in Pushkin's mouth. After the Polish insurrection was suppressed, the two men never saw each other again. Pushkin wrote a poem in memory of Mickiewicz; likewise, when Pushkin received his fatal wound, Mickiewicz greatly lamented his loss. Thus the two, though they were good friends and shared a common starting point in Byron, still differed in one respect. Whereas

Pushkin, in his later works, frequently admitted that he had deserted his youthful dream of love for freedom and that he was unable to see his goal clearly in front of him, Mickiewicz's aim was never anything but distinct.

Slowacki, born in 1809 in Krzemieniec, was an orphan brought up by his stepfather and educated at the University of Vilno. His character and temperament were similar to Byron's. At the age of twenty-one he joined the Warsaw Treasury as a clerk but, two years later, left the country for some spurious reason and was never able to return. He first went to London and then to Paris, where he composed a volume of poems, copying Byron's form and style. At this time, Mickiewicz came to visit him, but soon a quarrel flared up between them. Slowacki's poetry was filled with a melancholy strain. He left Paris in 1835 for a trip to the East, passed through Greece, Egypt, Syria and returned to Italy in 1837, after having been detained in El Arish by an outbreak of a plague. He subsequently wrote a poem called "The Plague in the Desert". It is about an Arab who watched his four sons and three daughters following in the footsteps of his wife who had died from the plague. The pathos and the grief overflowed from his pen on to the pages. On reading it, one is reminded of Niobe of Greece. Imbued in this poem too is the sorrow of exile. Slowacki did not stop with this

tragic poem. There was an abundance of works on suffering and adversity at this time and Slowacki contributed a great deal to this trend. Interspersed in his poetry are numerous accounts of pain and torture which he had either personally experienced or had witnessed to. Among the most prominent were some drawn from history. The account in "Król Duch"<sup>71</sup> of the Russian Czar Ivan IV's maiming of the feet of an envoy to the ground with a sword was taken from an historical chronicle.

The Polish poets wrote a great deal about the torture received during imprisonment and banishment. For example, the third part of Mickiewicz's "Offering to the Dead" describes the personal experience of the poet. Few readers going through his "Cichowski" or Sobolewski's works<sup>72</sup> ~~he describes~~ <sup>describing</sup> the deportation of young men to Siberia in twenty sledges would not be worked up into a fury. And in reading through the poetry of the above two men, we can often hear the strains of vengeance. Let us again take as an example the third part of "Dziady", in which there are several lays sung by the prisoners. One of the prisoners, Janlowski, sang, "If you want me to believe in God, Jesus and Mary, you must first punish the Russian Czar who desecrated my country. As long as he is present, you cannot make me utter the name of Jesus."<sup>73</sup> The second prisoner, Kolakowski sang, "If I am to be exiled and to slave in chains to serve the Czar, what can be better than this

opportunity? In my imprisonment, I shall do my task to the utmost and tell myself: "I desire that this black iron will one day be made into an axe to execute the Czar." "If I am released from prison, I shall marry the daughter of a Tartar and say to her: 'Bear me a Palen (assassinator of Czar Paul I) for the Czar.' If I migrate to a settlement, I shall become its chief and utilise every acre of my land to sow flax and hemp for the Czar. The flax I shall make into a big black rope, intertwined with silver threads, for Orlov (assassinator of Czar Peter III) to wind round the Czar's neck."<sup>74</sup> The last to sing was Conrad, "My soul is already silent and my song lies still in the grave. But my soul smells blood and rises to wail like a thirsty vampire. Thirst for blood! Thirst for blood! Vengeance! Vengeance! Vengeance with God - or sans God if it need be so."<sup>75</sup> Poetry of vengeance attains its supreme grandeur in this vehemence - if God did not do it, man would seek vengeance by himself.

The acts of vengeance mentioned above were implicitly and spontaneously expressed. The theme of the poems is that all those who had suffered at the hands of fate or men should employ every means to rescue their fatherlands - this was a sacred licence. Sc|Grazyna betrayed her husband to repulse the enemy, but her action was not condemned. Wallenrod acted in the same faith. To resist a foreign enemy even by deceitful and treacherous

methods should not be censured as criminal. Wallenrod pretended to surrender to the enemy in order to destroy the German army, and when his country was liberated, he killed himself in contrition. The moral is that a man who has a firm objective must strive to achieve it even if it means to bow to the enemy, which should not be considered ignoble. In the poem "Alpujarras", this moral receives a further illustration. Almanzov the king of the Moors, his city burdened with the plague and having been forced into surrendering Galacia to Spain, stole out in the dark one night. The Spanish soldiers were in the middle of a banquet when it was announced that a man requested to see them. The visitor, an Arab, on entering cried, "People of Spain, I am willing to serve your God, venerate your sages, and be your slave and servant!" The assembly recognised him to be Almanzov. The leader of the Spaniards greeted him with an embrace, as did the other chieftains. But Almanzov suddenly dropped to the ground, clutched at his turban and cried exultantly, "I have got the plague!" Through that one shaming action the plague was spread among the Spanish soldiers. In his poetry too Slowacki sometimes denounced traitors who plotted against their country, but approved whole-heartedly the use of cunning tricks to trap the enemy. "Lambro" and "Kordyan" have this theme. "Lambro" is about a Greek who forsook

his religion and became a bandit so that he would be at liberty to take revenge on the Turks. This man had a character of such ruthlessness and cruelty as the world had never known, and his type can only be found [elsewhere] in the oriental poems of Byron. Kordyan was a Pole who plotted against the life of the Czar Nicolas I of Russia. The sole theme of both poems is revenge. These two men, in desperation, endorsed all acts that could bring about a defeat of their enemy. Examples of such acts are: the treachery of Grazyna, the false surrender of Wallenrod, the dissemination of plague by Almazov and the assassination plot of Kordyan. But Krasinski's view was the exact opposite of the people we have just mentioned; they preached vengeance with force, while he emphasised transformation through love. Nevertheless, his poetry was full of fond remembrance of the lost glory and anxiety about the destiny of his country. The people of Poland were very moved by his poetry; the 1830<sup>76</sup> insurrection occurred because of it and, if my memory serves me well, the 1860<sup>77</sup> revolution was inspired by it too. His spirit has not yet been forgotten, but neither are his country's troubles over.

Section 9.

When Hungary was huddled up and crouched in silence, Petöfi<sup>78</sup> rose to fame. The son of a butcher, he was born in 1823 in Kiskörös, a low-lying region in Hungary in the middle of the vast and solitary Puszta.<sup>79</sup> This, together with the little taverns and villages dotting the sides of the roads, and the variations in the landscape left a deep impression on him. For the Puszta in Hungary, like the steppes in Russia, has been a good breeding ground for poets. Although his father was a tradesman, he was very learned and could read Latin. At the age of ten, Petöfi studied at Kecskemét<sup>80</sup> and then went to Aszódon for three years to specialise in literary method.<sup>81</sup> He was exceptionally talented and passionately fond of freedom. His ambition was to be an actor, but he also had a natural gift for composing verses. He eventually reached Schemnitz and enrolled in a high school for three months. His father got to know of his friendship with some actors and ordered him to give up his study, but Petöfi went on foot all the way to Pest and became an odd-job-man at the National Theatre. He was then traced by his relatives and old friends who undertook to look after him. Meanwhile he had started writing verses which he dedicated to the girl next door; he was then only sixteen. His relatives decided he was a hopeless case, fit only for the theatre, and let him go. Petöfi suddenly joined the army and, though he detested discipline and

loved freedom, he remained for eighteen months until he had to leave because he had contracted malaria. He then joined the University of Pépa, continued to act from time to time and, as he was destitute, earned his living by translating English and French novels. In 1844, he visited M. Vörösmanty<sup>82</sup> who got his poetry printed. From that time on he concentrated his efforts on writing and gave up acting. This was the turning point of his life and his fame spread to such an extent that he was hailed by the public as the major poet in Hungary. In spring of the following year, the girl he loved died. He therefore travelled north in search of solace, only to return again in the autumn. In 1847, he visited János Arany<sup>83</sup> in Nagyszalonta when that poet had just completed his masterpiece "Joldi".<sup>84</sup> Petöfi, after reading it, was overwhelmed with admiration for him and they became close friends. In June 1848, Petöfi's poetry gradually began to turn towards politics, for like the bird which can sense the coming of an earthquake, he felt instinctively the imminence of an insurrection. In March of the same year, news of the Austrian uprising reached Pest, and this inspired Petöfi to write a poem called "Tolpra Magyar". The next day he recited this to some people and, while he was explaining the last couplet of the poem which went, "I swear that I will be a slave no more", everyone joined in. They then took the poem to the censor's office,

drove the official away and printed the poem themselves. They waited till the printing was done so that they could each take a copy with them. This marked the beginning of the relaxing of literary censorship. Petöfi said, "Not a note of my harp nor a stroke of my pen is governed by profit. Residing in my heart is a divinity which makes me sing and compose. This spirit is none other than freedom." But his writings were very often too audacious and were ill-received by society. He composed a poem called "To the Czars"<sup>85</sup> and many people denounced him. Petöfi admitted, "A few days after March 15th, I became the anathema of men: my laurels were snatched from me and I was left alone in a deep valley to pursue my work. Yet, I am glad that I never gave in." When the state of the country became more critical, the poet, sensing the imminence of war and destruction, longed for direct experience of them. He said, "Heaven did not beget me to live in solitude and it is now calling me to the battlefield. I hear the bugle-call of war and my soul rushes onward, too impatient to wait for the command." He therefore joined the Honvéd<sup>86</sup>, and in 1849 served under General Bem,<sup>87</sup> the Polish soldier who fought so gallantly against the Russians in 1830 and who was summoned by Kossuth<sup>88</sup> to be in charge of the campaign at Transylvania. He loved Petöfi like his own son and it appears that he was the reason for Petöfi's three short visits to Transylvania.

On July 31st of the same year, Petöfi was killed in action, at the battle of Segesvar. The man who was reported to have said "To sing for my love, to die fo my country," had now fulfilled his own words. Petöfi, when young, had read the poetry of Byron and Shelley and his writings, too, spoke freely of liberty. His temperament was, like theirs, wild and fervid. He said of himself: "My heart is like an echoing forest which receives one cry and returns a hundred." He could enter into a scene and reproduce his impressions in his poetry with rare skill. Indeed, he called himself the wild flower of boundless nature. Among his long poems, there was "János Vitéz"<sup>89</sup> which, drawn from history, was about the emotions and adventures of the man János. His novel The Noose of the Hangman (A hóhér Kötele) tells of how love gave rise to dissension and sowed the seeds of retribution, and Ternyeihez eventually got the son of Andorlaki incriminated and hanged. Andorlaki who had lost his love and happiness went to live by his son's grave. One day he got hold of Ternyeihez and was going to kill him when one of his followers stopped him and asked: "Who suffers more, the living or the dead?" He answered, "The living." So he set Ternyeihez free, but afterwards got Ternyeihez's grandson to hang himself with the same rope that had been wound round the neck of Andorlaki's son. From the quotation of Jehovah in the beginning, we can see that the moral is that the sins of the father can be

visited on the offspring as well. Whatever crime is meted out will be returned, even in added measure. Even the poet's life was strange: free, unpredictable, with hardly a moment of peace. Although he had a period of idleness in his youth, the idleness was not genuine, but was only the still spot in the middle of a whirlpool. A lone boat being tossed about in a cyclone suddenly stops rocking as the storm has subsided and the waves have receded, the water green and enticing: but, just as suddenly, it is swept away again in the whirlpool until it breaks and sinks. The temporary calm of the poet seems to have been of this nature.

Although the persons mentioned above, in their character, action, speech and philosophy, had different manifestations owing to differences in their nationalities and environments, they all belonged to one type - all of them were strong and indomitable, possessed integrity and guarded truth, refused to flatter the public and observe orthodoxy, and sang heroically to invigorate their fellow-countrymen and make their countries great in the eyes of the world. If we want to look for their like in the land of China, who can we find comparable to them? China was the forerunner of civilisation in Asia without any equal among her neighbours, she was proud and splendid. Today, even when her fortunes are in decline, she can still stand up against Western Europe - in this she is fortunate.

If in the past, she had not closed her gates but kept pace with world events and directed her thoughts towards the new, then we can be sure that she would now be able to stand in grandeur in the world without being inferior to other countries, and shine in dignified splendour without engaging in makeshift reforms. Thus, if we assess her status and examine her history, what China had gained or lost as a country could not be said to be small. She gained because her civilisation had withstood the influence of other foreign nations and preserved her own peculiar lustre. So, although she is now on the wane, she must still be considered special. She lost because she had allowed herself to be isolated and regarded herself as infallible, therefore depriving herself of the opportunity to measure up herself against others, and finally degrading herself in the pursuit of profit. This went on for a long time and her spirit was thus lost and, when confronted with a new and strong enemy, she was torn apart and melted away like ice, without being able to rise up and fight. Furthermore, being immersed in the old conventions for too long, she tended to judge everything with views long forged by habit. All her judgement was mostly misconceived, which was why even though she had tried to reform herself for twenty years, no new voice was heard in China. As things stand, a spiritual warrior would be of much value. In the

eighteenth century, English society practised hypocrisy, religion was stagnant, literature, too, was mere emulation of the old ways and attention to fripperies, and the true music of the heart was inaudible. Consequently, the philosopher, Locke, arose to sweep away the accumulated dross of politics and religion and sing of the freedom of thought and speech, and the seed of change was therefore sown by him. In literature, there was the farmer-poet, Robert Burns, born in Scotland, who used all his strength to oppose society and spread the gospel of universal equality without fear of the authorities and without prostrating himself before riches, and poured his hot blood into his various poems. However, a great man of the spiritual world is not thereby the darling of the people and he despaired and drifted about until he finally died. After him rose Byron and Shelley who fought and rebelled as set out above. The force was like a gigantic wave which pounded right against the pillar of the old society. The ripples flowed and spread to Russia and gave birth to the national poet Pushkin, to Poland where it was manifested in the poet of vengeance Mickiewicz, and to Hungary where the patriotic poet Petöfi was roused up - not to mention a host of other disciples. Yet Byron and Shelley who were labelled Mara were only human. There is no need to label their kind as the Mara School, for as long as we live in this world, there would be such people. There are

those who listen to the sound of ardour and suddenly become awakened; there are those who nourish this ardour in their hearts and so respond to the call. That is why they resemble one another in their lives so much: they all fight and bleed like swordfighters who sway back and forth before their spectators to frighten and delight them by letting them witness their desperate struggle. If no blood is shed before the people, then this people would be in danger. If there is and yet the multitude refuse to see it and perhaps proceed to kill them, then this people would be in grave danger and become unredeemable.

We now take a searching look at China and ask: "Where are the spiritual warriors? Are there any who can produce sounds of truth to bring us to goodness, beauty and strength? Are there any who can produce sounds of gentleness and warmth to deliver us out of desolation? Our home and country is in ruins, but we do not have a Jeremiah to sing the final elegy and tell the world and later generations about our plight. Not that there are none born among us, but as soon as they are born, they are suppressed by the people. For this reason alone, or for the above two reasons, China has become desolate. The people set their whole minds on labouring for their physical welfare and their spirit thus declined, and when a new tide appeared, she collapsed before it. What

people called reform was only the expression of self-confession of all their past sins, in other words, it was repentance. But since reform has been mooted, hope has sprung up and what we now await are scholars who will introduce to us the new culture. Over the past ten years, there has been unceasing introduction, but if we examine what those who have studied abroad have brought back, we will see that, except for methods of cooking and running a prison, there is nothing. Therefore, China from now on will continue to be desolate, and the second trumpet of reforms will be sounded again - this is certain in view of earlier precedents. The Russian writer, Korolenko,<sup>90</sup> wrote a book called The Last Ray, in which an old man in Siberia, trying to teach a boy to read, said "The book speaks of cherry blossoms and golden orioles. But Siberia is cold, so we do not have them." The old man tried to explain in this way: "This is a bird that perches on the cherry tree and sings joyously." This answer gives the boy a lot of food for thought. True, this young boy is in a barren land: although he cannot hear the joyous melody of the bird, he should be taught and enlightened by a visionary. But the voice of the visionary has not come to break the desolation of China, and we can only meditate ..... we can only meditate.

Written in 1907.

NOTES:

- 1 Cf. Nietzsche: Thus Spake Zarathustra, op.cit., p.25:  
"He who has grown wise concerning old origins, behold, he will at last seek new springs of the future and new origins. O my brothers, it will not be long before new peoples shall arise and new springs rush down into new depths."
- 2 Veda is the name of a body of religious doctrine which the Hindus believe to exist eternally, being made known to mankind by inspired seers. This body primarily consists of four collections - viz. the Rigveda, or Veda of praises or hymns; the Sāmaveda or Veda of chants or tunes; the Yajurveda or Veda of sacrificial formulae; and the Atharveda, or Veda of the Atharveda - to each of which are attached certain theological prose works, called Brāhmana, intended chiefly to elucidate the meaning and application of the sacred texts.
- 3 Mahabarata is one of the two great epic poems of India. It is a story about the descendants of the prince Bharata. Traditionally the sage Vyasa is the author, though it is more likely that he compiled existing material, which reached its present form by 400 A.D.
- 4 Ramayana is the shorter of the two great epics of India. It was written in Sanskrit in 300 B.C. by Valmiki and divided, with various later additions, into seven books, describing the adventures of Prince Rama.
- 5 Kalidasa (flourished c. 400 A.D.). Indian poet and dramatist and the most distinguished figure in classical Sanskrit literature. His works include the play Shakuntala, or Abhijñanashakuntala ("Shakuntala recognised by a ring token"), Vikramorvashiya ("Urvashi won by valour"), the epics Raghu-vamsha ("Lineage of Raghu") and the Kumara-sambhara ("Birth of Kumara, the war-god") and Ritu-sambara ("Cycle of the seasons"). A translation of Shakuntala by Sir William Jones appeared in 1789, followed two years later by a German version which made considerable impact, drawing high praise from Goethe.
- 6 Jeremiah, one of the Hebrew prophets. His "Lamentations" in the Old Testament were about the captivity of Israel and the destruction of Jerusalem.
- 7 Dante (1265-1321). The greatest poet<sup>of Italy</sup> and author of the great Christian poem The Divine Comedy. His Convivo was written in Italian and demonstrates his love for the Italian vernacular in the introduction, affirming in moving tones its aptness for the expression of the loftiest thought. The theme of De vulgari eloquentia, another work of his, is the way to raise the status of the Italian vernacular to that of a literary language like Latin.

- 8 N.V. Gogol (1809-1852). Russian humorist, short-story writer, novelist and dramatist. Lu Hsün's first short-story Diary of a the Mad Man was inspired by his work of the same title. Lu Hsün also translated his masterpiece Dead Souls into Chinese.
- 9 Lu Hsün was referring to the army songs and school songs composed by Chang Chih-Tung, which denounced the fall of India, Poland and Israel.
- 10 It seems that Lu Hsün was being paradoxical here.
- 11 Emperors Yao and Shün ascended to the throne of China in 2356 B.C. and 2255 B.C. respectively.
- 12 Here Lu Hsün obviously had Nietzsche in mind and was using his imagery from Thus Spake Zarathustra.
- 13 Cf. Book of History: "Canons of Shün" 尚書 舜典: "Poetry is to express feelings."
- 14 Confucius has said in Lun Yü 論語 that "the Odes, all three hundred of them, may be summed up in one phrase: 'Pure in Thought.'" A Han writer has also said, "Poetry is to harness nature, to prevent it from going to extremes." Liu Hsieh 劉勰, a noted critic of the Liang dynasty, combines the two views in his Critique on Literature 文心雕龍 as follows: "Poetry is to harness human nature; the theme of the three hundred odes is summed up in the word 'purity'".
- 15 i.e. An ideal sovereign.
- 16 i.e. Liu Hsieh, op.cit.
- 17 Lu Hsün was probably referring to those four verses from "Li Sao" which he admitted to Hsü Shou-shang to be his favourite (see Impressions of My Deceased Friend Lu Hsün, op.cit., p.8.):

朝吾將濟于白水兮，登閭風而縹馬。  
 忽反顧以流涕兮，哀高丘之無女。

- 18 E.M. Arndt (1769-1860). German poet whose patriotic writings awakened the nation's conscience and helped to lay the foundations of the German unification.
- 19 Theodor Körner (1791-1813). German poet and dramatist who participated in the German uprising against Napoleon in 1813 and was killed in action.

- 20 Edward Dowden (1843-1913), Irish critic, biographer and poet, outstanding for his works on Shakespeare.
- 21 John S. Mill (1806-1873). British philosopher and economist, prominent as a publicist in the reforming age of the nineteenth century and of lasting interest as a logician and as an ethical theorist. Yen Fu translated some of his works into Chinese.
- 22 Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), English poet and critic.
- 23 G.G. Byron (1788-1824), English poet and satirist, a colourful figure whose poetry and personality captured the imagination of Europe. His name became a symbol for the deepest romantic melancholy on the one hand and the aspirations of political liberalism on the other.
- 24 W. Scott (1771-1832). Scottish novelist, poet and man of letters, the founder of the historical novel and the first British novelist to become a great public figure. He turned to novel writing in the early part of the nineteenth century when the greater verve and dash of Byron's narrative poems threatened to outstrip Scott from his position as supreme purveyor of this kind of literary entertainment.
- 25 R. Southey (1774-1843), together with Coleridge and Wordsworth, were called the "Lake poets". He was made poet-laureate in 1813. In his preface to "A Vision of Judgement" (1821), he coined the term 'Satanic school' to describe Byron and his followers.
- 26 Byron called Southey the 'Multo-scribbling Southey' in his poem which is also called "The Vision of Judgement".
- 27 Thomas Moore (1779-1822), Irish poet and as close associate of Byron, who left him his memoirs. In 1830, he produced The Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, which included a life of Byron.
- 28 P.B. Shelley (1792-1822), English Romantic poet. Even as a child, he was remarkable for the subtle feeling and originality of ideas which, combined with his later mastery of language, were to give him his place in literature. His whole life was dedicated to the promotion of peace and love between individuals and among humanity at large.
- 29 J.P. Eckermann (1792-1854), German writer, chiefly remembered for his association with Goethe. He was Goethe's unpaid literary assistant.
- 30 This passage does not seem to be in "The Corsair".
- 31 Cf. "The Corsair", Canto III, lines 492-93.  
 "'Tis mine - my blood-red flag! again - again -  
 I am not at all deserted on the main."

- 32 Cf. "The Corsair", canto III, lines 695-6.  
 "He left a Corsair's name to other times,  
 Link'd with one virtue, and a thousand crimes."
- 33 Byron was suspected of incest with his half-sister Augusta.
- 34 Byron's mother was noted for her uneven temper.
- 35 Liu Hsieh : Critique on Literature, op.cit. "Ch'êng Ch'i P'ien"  
 程器篇.
- 36 Cf. "Manfred", act I, scene I, lines 143-8.  
 "Manfred: Oblivion, self-oblivion  
 Can ye not wring from out the hidden realms  
 Ye offer so profusely what I ask?  
 Spirit : It is not in our essence, in our skill;  
 But - then may'st die.  
 Manfred: Will death bestow it on me?"
- 37 Cf. "Manfred", act III, scene Iv, lines 137-41.  
 "Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;  
 I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey -  
 But was my own destroyer, and will be  
 My own hereafter - Back ye baffled fiends -  
 The hand of death is on me - but not yours"
- 38 Cf. "Cain", act II, scene II, lines 280-8.  
 "Even he who made us must be, as the maker  
 Of things unhappy! To produce destruction  
 Can surely never be the task of joy,  
 And yet my sire says he's omnipotent;  
 Then why is evil - he being good? I ask'd  
 This question of my father; and he said,  
 Because this evil only was the path  
 To good. Strange good, that must arise from out  
 Its deadly opposite."
- 39 Lu Hsün was probably referring to the temple at Jerusalem.
- 40 Cf. "Cain", act II, scene II, lines 429-446.  
 "I have a victor - true; but no superior.  
 ...  
 He as a conqueror will call the conquer'd  
 Evil; but what will be the good he gives?  
 Were I the victor, his works should be deem'd  
 The only evil ones."
- 41 Lu Hsün made a mistake here. It was the spirit, not Japhet,  
 who expressed his contempt for man. Cf. "Heaven and Earth", part I,  
 lines 135-143.

- 41(Cont.) "And art thou not ashamed  
 Thus to survive,  
 And eat, and drink, and wive?  
 With a base heart so far subdued and tamed,  
 As ever to hear this wide destruction named,  
 Without such grief and courage, as should rather  
 Bid thee await the world- dissolving wave,  
 Then seek a shelter with they favour'd father,  
 And build thy city o'er the drown'd earth's grave."
- 42 An Enemy of the People, op.cit. Act.V.
- 43 G. Mazzini (1805-1872) Italian patriot, the revolutionary prophet of the Risorgimento and of European nationalism.
- 44 B.C. Cavour (1810-1861). Piedmontese statesman, the conservative whose exploitation of international rivalries and of revolutionary movement brought about the unification of Italy under the house of Savor, with himself as the first prime minister of the new kingdom.
- 45 Robert Burns (1759-1796), the Great Scottish poet whose poems and songs have made him the national poet of Scotland.
- 46 John Keats (1795-1825), one of the three great poets with Shelley and Byron of the second generation of English Romantics.
- 47 William Godwin (1756-1836), English writer and philosopher whose rationalistic and anarchical views influenced the works of the Romantics. His wife Mary Wollestonecroft Godwin was a passionate advocate of woman's right to a place in society equal to that of man. His daughter Mary became Shelley's wife.
- 48 The authorship of Spring and Autumn Annals was generally ascribed to Confucius. They were meant to be a historical record of his state, showing how moral principles were revealed in historical happenings.
- 49 St. Augustine (354-430), bishop of Hippo in Roman Africa, generally regarded as the greatest thinker of Christian Antiquity. In him, the religion of the New Testament was most completely fused with the Platonic tradition of Greek philosophy. His famous Confessions tells the story of his own restless youth.
- 50 Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), English Poet, author of "Faerie Queene"
- 51 Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837), the greatest Russian poet, and the founder of modern Russian literature. Lu Hsün's criticism of his submission to the Czar refers to the royal patronage Czar Nicholas I conferred on Pushkin in 1826, when the Czar, impressed by his outright frankness, offered to be his sole censor. He was very friendly with the Polish poet Mickiewicz but they drifted apart after the 1830 Polish insurrection.

- 52 Mikhail Lermontov (1814-1841), the foremost Russian Romantic poet.
- 53 For a discussion of the difference between Pushkin and Byron, see Marc Slonim: Epic of Russian Literature (New York, 1964), Chap. IV.
- 54 "The Calumniators of Russia" was written in 1831 during the 1830-1832 Polish insurrection, when the action of Russia was under severe attack from the French press and the French Government. "The Anniversary of the Borodino Battle", which Lu Hsün mistranslated as "The First Anniversary of Borodino", was also written in 1831. The Russian Army occupied Warsaw on August 26, 1831; in 1812 on the same date it also defeated the French army at Borodino, so Pushkin used the name Borodino in the title of his poem.
- 55 Georg Brandes (1842-1927), Danish critic and scholar, who had an unrivalled influence on Scandinavian literature after 1870. Leading Chinese intellectuals like Lu Hsün and Hu Shih all seemed to have been very familiar with his literary criticism.
- 56 A. Pipin, minor Russian historian.
- 57 The <sup>usual</sup> English title of the poem is "The Novice"
- 58 Cf. Lermontov: "A Poet's Death", trans. M.G. Walker, Free Russia (London 1899):
- 59 "Ye sons of sires for evil deeds notorious,  
A Hungary throng who crowd the Royal Court,  
Downtrodden lie beneath your heels inglorious  
The wrecks of noble houses - Fortune's sport.  
Ye dare to strangle Freedom, Genius, Glory,  
And hide within the shelter of the Laws;  
Base lovers of Corruption! Mute before ye  
Stand Justice, Truth and every righteous Cause."
- 59 F.M. Bodenstedt (1819-1892) German writer and translator of the works of Pushkin and Lermontov.
- 60 "Bey" is a Turkish word meaning "Viceroy" or "Sir".
- 61 Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855), the greatest poet Poland <sup>has</sup> ever produced.
- 62 Juliusz Slowacki (1809-1849) ranks with Mickiewicz and Krasinski in Poland's triad of Romantic messianic poets. Supremely ego-centric, he has been called "the most romantic of all the Romantics"
- 63 Zygmunt Krasinski (1812-1859), great Polish poet.

- 64 The original title is "Dziady" which is usually translated as "Forefathers" or "Forefathers' Eve". Part I of this poem deals with the folklore of Lithuania, but part III is on Polish patriotism. Lu Hsün's Chinese title of the poem was perhaps influenced by the subject matter of Part I.
- 65 November the 2nd is called All Souls Day.
- 66 Machiavelli (1469-1527) Italian statesman, writer, patriot and thinker. The corruption of the times, the weakness of the States of Italy and the threat of foreign conquest made him long for that "hero prince" who might give reality to his great dream of the redemption of Italy. He believed that all things including religion must be subordinated to the state's necessity.
- 67 "Pan Tadeusz" is a novel, not a poem.
- 68 "Wojski" in Polish, means the overseer.
- 69 For an understanding of the friendship between Pushkin and Mickiewicz, see W. Lednicki: Pushkin's Bronze Horseman (London, 1914).
- 70 Cf. Mickiewicz: "The Monument of Peter the Great", Adam Mickiewicz 1796-1855: Selected Poetry and Prose. trans. G. Rapall Noyes and M.B. Peacock. ed. S. Helztyński (Warsaw, 1955).  
 "His charges reins Tsar Peter has released,  
 He has been flying down the road perchance,  
 And here the precipice checks his advance,  
 With hoofs aloft now stands the maddened beast  
 Champing its bit unchecked, with slackened rein;  
 You guess that it will fall and be destroyed.  
 Thus it has galloped long, with tossing mane,  
 Like a cascade, leaping into the void,  
 That, fettered by the frost, hangs dizzily,  
 But soon will shine the sun of liberty  
 And from the west a wind will warm this land -  
 Will the cascade of tyranny then stand?"
- 71 "Król Duch" in Polish means "king spirit".
- 72 "Cichowski" is a chapter in "Dziady". I have not been able to find the name "Sobolewski" in any history of Polish literature.
- 73 Cf. "Forefathers", trans. Count Potocki of Montalk (London, 1945) - this work has no page number:

73 (Cont.) "Sing-sing, if you wish, in chorus,  
 Jesus Mary!  
 But before I shall believe that they're for us,  
 Jesus Mary!  
 They ought to be toward villains contrary,  
 Jesus Mary!  
 The Tsar over there is a monster hairy,  
 Jesus Mary!  
 Novosshiltzoff right here is an adder,  
 Jesus Mary!  
 Until the Tsar breaks his neck from a ladder,  
 Jesus Mary!  
 While Novosshiltzoff's drunk and merry,  
 Jesus Mary!  
 Of your love to us I shall still be chary,  
 Jesus Mary!"

74 Ibid:

"I don't care what the verdicts are:  
 the mines or chains or such preferment -  
 I'll always work, a faithful servant,  
 a servant of the Russian Tsar.  
 And down the mines I'll think and stammer:  
 'Within this iron hidden far,  
 And in this gloom, there lies this hammer,  
 will make an axe to serve the Tsar'.  
 And if I'm put on colonisation,  
 I'll take the daughter of a Tartar,  
 And maybe in a generation  
 there'll be a Palen for the Tsar.  
 But if the settlement should claim me  
 I'll plough the field and dig the row there,  
 And every year, now who will blame me,  
 if flax and hemp is all I sow there.  
 The flax is spun for some rich donor -  
 and when the threads all silvered are,  
 Maybe my flax will have the honour  
 to be a scarf to serve the Tsar."

75 Ibid:

"My song was in the grave, already cold -  
 but blood it smells and from the ground it espies.  
 Hungary for blood, like a vampire, it grows bold -  
 And give me blood, blood, blood!" it cries  
 So vengeance, vengeance, vengeance on the foe  
 With God - or sans God if it needs be so."

- 76 i.e. the 1830 Polish insurrection.
- 77 i.e. the 1860 Polish insurrection.
- 78 S. Petöfi (1823-1849) one of the greatest Hungarian poets. His "Talpra Magyar" written on the eve of the 1848 Hungarian revolution became its anthem. His thoughts lack the depth of Vörösmanty or Arany, but the sincerity and force of his expression brings it home to the heart of the reader, hence his great influence during the revolution in 1848.
- 79 'Pusztá' means "plain" in Hungarian.
- 80 I have not been able to trace the name of this place 科勒多. It is probably a corrupted transliteration of Kecskemét, the place Petöfi first went to school.
- 81 I am not sure whether Lu Hsün meant 'grammar' or 'literary' method' by 文法.
- 82 M. Vörösmanty (1800-1855), great Hungarian writer, well-known for his general pessimism and his patriotic preoccupations.
- 83 János Arany (1817-1882), the greatest Hungarian epic poet and dramatist. Petöfi wrote a poem in praise of his poem "Toldi" and this was the beginning of a friendship to which Arany remained loyal even after Petöfi's death.
- 84 Lu Hsün has misspelt the title, which should be "Toldi".
- 85 I have not been able to confirm the title of this poem by Petöfi. Very little of the poet's works is available in English.
- 86 "Honvéd" is the national army of Hungary.
- 87 General Bem (1795-1850), Polish general.
- 88 L. Kossuth (1802-1894). Hungarian patriot and leader of the 1848 uprising.
- 89 "János Vitéz" means "Brave John".
- 90 V.G. Korolenko (1853-1921), Russian novelist, best-known for his short-stories about life in Siberia.

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