

摘要

本文探讨了老舍这位伟大的中国作家所体现的中西文学及文化的交融，旨在以一位典型的作家的文学创作反映在经济、文化日趋全球化的当今社会，这种艺术上的融合的普遍性及其给作家所带来的影响，并阐明在接受外来影响的同时，保持独特的民族的文化风格乃是文学艺术取得成功的关键因素之一。

论文涵盖了老舍所接受到的西方文学及文化影响的几个方面，包括了西方文学在作品内容、人物刻画、写作手法、创作思想上的渗透；基督教思想及《圣经》在其作品中的体现；英语语言对其写作语言上的影响。同时，本文还论述了老舍作品对中国文学及文化的传承，包括满族文化、北京地区的民俗文化、中国古典文学及俗文学在老舍作品中的渗透及老舍作品对北京方言的运用。

总的来说，笔者在论文中运用了比较文学和跨文化研究等研究方法。在这一基础上，老舍被放置于中国传统文化及西方文化的交叉点上进行剖析。笔者不但借鉴总结了中外学者们在相关领域的研究成果，且提出了某些不同于前人的观点。

Abstract

This thesis attempts to explore the influence of Western and Chinese culture and literature upon Lao She's works. It illuminates that with economic and cultural globalization, the mixture of different kinds of culture has been showing its tremendous impact on literature. And those writers who can use the inspiration as a tool of presenting to the world what's unique about their identities will not only promote their own works, but also make contribution to the literature of the world as a whole.

This thesis covers several aspects in which Western literature and culture affect Lao She's works, including the influences in terms of the plots, characters, writing techniques and writing ideology. Besides, the thesis explores the shadows Christianity and the Bible leaves in Lao She's works, and the influences of the English language on Lao She's works.

The thesis also studies Lao She's inheritance of Chinese culture and literature including Manchu culture, the customs of Beijing city, Chinese classic literature and popular literature as well as Beijing Dialect.

Generally speaking, I employ in this thesis the methods of comparative literature, intercultural study and so on. Lao She is studied in the background of the intersection of Chinese culture and the Western culture. Thus, I have not only drawn lessons from relevant academic achievements, but also put forward some points of view different from those of previous critics.

中文文摘

兼收并蓄，东西交融

——论老舍作品中的西方文学影响和中国文化底蕴

在二十世纪初的中国现代文坛中，由于客观需求及时代创造的条件，一批文学大师都受到了西方思想文化及文学的影响，老舍先生在这点上并不是特例，然而其作品却又是独特的，这正是在于其作品中保留的浓烈的民族风味。本文试对老舍作品中的西方文化及文学的渗透及中国文学文化的传承进行分析，以探索老舍先生在中国现代文学史上独特的成就。正文共分为五个章节和一个结语。

第一章 西方文学对老舍的影响

1.1 初期的纯粹摹仿

老舍先生受到英法等众家的启迪。他自己曾说过：“设若我始终在国内，我不会成了一个小说家。”¹其作品始终体现了其对西方文学的吸收，这种汲取是由最初简单的摹仿发展为较深层面的艺术表现手段的渗透，甚至创作思想的影响。

在英国，老舍奠定并开始了他的文学创作，并找到了他的第一位文学老师——狄更斯。然而老舍对其最初的汲取仅限于刻意的模仿。《老张的哲学》就在情节构思、人物类型塑造上体现出极深的模仿痕迹。

狄更斯在人物塑造上大多选择的是下等社会的人物，而老舍的作品中也浓笔重墨地描写了北平下层社会民众的生活状况，如人力车夫、穷教师、小商人、妓女等。拿《尼古拉斯·尼克尔贝》与《老张的哲学》作个比较，两篇都涉及了商人、传教士、高利贷者、校长、孤儿……在情节构思上两篇也惊人地相似，各自通过校长史奎尔、斯及老张的描写揭露了旧教育的黑暗。

1.2 艺术手法的移植——幽默

老舍之后的作品《赵子曰》中的主人公赵子虽仍与匹克威克有着相似的性格特征与相近的结局，在大量阅读了英法现实主义小说之后，老舍在单纯汲取的基础上取得了一定的发展，奠定了其小说的一个突出的表现手法——幽默。

老舍最初的幽默形式是滑稽的幽默，我们不能不说这种幽默在很大程度上也源

¹ 老舍：《我的创作经验》

自于狄更斯。其一体现在人物名字选取上的反讽意味。狄更斯作品中的骗子金格尔(Jingle)名字意为优美的叮当声;而老舍笔下道德败坏的老张则被取名为张名德;其二体现在其人物面貌的刻画上:他们都常常利用夸张渲染的人物面貌制造滑稽的效果。如眼如“小猪”,眉如“倒挂的鸣蝉”的老张;挂着“八戒嘴”的赵子曰。

从《二马》开始,老舍逐渐由滑稽式的幽默转变为讽刺式的幽默,更多的悲剧、警醒被注入其中。这时的幽默不再只是引发读者对个人癖性举止的取笑,而是引导人们对引发这种病态性格的社会及历史进行长久的思考。至此,老舍不仅在中国现代文学史上第一个把幽默引入长篇小说,更最终形成了其自身,也同时属于整个民族的温婉睿智的警醒的幽默。¹

1.3 创作思想的渗透——温和的人道主义者

然而,若仅从简单摹仿及艺术形式上追寻外国文学在老舍作品中的投影,必然会过于肤浅。外国文学不仅在艺术技巧,更在思想甚至与创作倾向上对老舍产生了潜移默化。狄更斯、康狄拉等作为资产阶级改良主义的代表人物,是典型的人道主义者。他们一方面勇敢地揭露了资产阶级社会的黑暗面,表达了对被剥削阶级的同情,另一方面却又不能摆脱自身阶级的局限性,不能看到革命才是解决这些社会矛盾的唯一途径。于是他们的作品里社会基本矛盾常常被削弱成人性善恶的斗争。而在我国当时的阶级斗争环境中,老舍一面以幽默的手法揭示了旧制度的腐朽,另一方面却又温和地嘲讽地提出自己的解决办法。其在作品中常把历史性社会性矛盾的解决依赖于个人的善心或意外:如《牛天赐传》中牛天赐落难时忽然出现了报恩的王定斋,《柳屯的》里的那只母老虎也是突然被县里的官太太给收拾了。这些矛盾不是通过强烈的反抗手段而是悄无声息地栽在了“恶有恶报”上。正是狄更斯等人的人道主义思想在一定程度上孕育出了老舍“温和”的创作意识。

第二章 基督教的皈依与《圣经》在老舍作品中的体现

老舍先生 1922 年洗礼加入了基督教,1923 年担任“儿童主日学”主任,讲解《圣经》故事。由此可见,老舍对《圣经》是极为熟悉的。在其作品中,基督教的思考方式与《圣经》的故事背景在无形中融入他的创作思想与内容中。

第一,在老舍的作品中运用《圣经》典故的非常之多。

¹ 宋永毅:《老舍与中国文化观念》

第二，由于老舍对教会生活十分熟悉，在他的小说中，他描写了诸多基督徒的生活，刻画了形形色色的基督徒的形象。

第三，老舍在创作中，在针砭洋牧师的虚伪卑劣，抨击教众的邪恶无耻时，还刻意塑造一些具有理想色彩的人物形象，突出人物的崇高人格，在他们身上常可见到基督的宽恕、牺牲、博爱等精神特质。

第三章 中国文化的传承

从单一的摹仿到深刻的渗透，从艺术手法的潜移默化到创作思想的影响，老舍在中外文学关系上搭建了一座宏伟的桥梁。更让人惊叹的是，西方文学对老舍创作的影响是与其深厚的中国文化底蕴交相辉映的。我们称老舍先生为伟大的人民艺术家正在于其身上体现出的强烈的中国文化色彩。

老舍被称为“京派作家”的代表人物之一，其身上包含着多种中国文化的交织，其中主要为：满族文化与中国民间民俗文化。

3.1 满族文化

老舍是一位满族人，在其作品中难掩满族文化的痕迹。首先其笔下不少人物是满人身份，如：《正红旗下》的福海二哥、《茶馆》里的松二爷、《四世同堂》的小文夫妇等。

第二，老舍也大量描写了满族人民的生活。

首先，满族内部贫富分化严重。《正红旗下》里描写的两场对比强烈的宴会就使得这一现象跃然纸上。

其次，旗人普遍看不起自食其力的劳动和手艺。在《正红旗下》里，福海二哥仅因为“学过油漆彩画”，便被人认为只能算“半个旗人”；《茶馆》中的松二爷，饿到骨瘦如柴，身上只剩下唯一的灰布大褂，都不肯自食其力。

其三，讲究“生活的艺术”。“他们都会唱二簧、单弦、大鼓与时调。他们会养鱼、养鸟、养狗、种花和斗蟋蟀。他们之中，甚至也有的写一笔顶好的字或画点山水，或作点诗词——至不济还会谄几套相当幽默的悦耳的鼓儿词。”¹

另外，八旗内部等级深严，礼节繁重。而这种繁文缛节又造成了人与人之间关系的虚伪。如《正红旗下》的“满月酒”一幕便是一幅绝妙的旗人礼仪风俗的讽刺画，这些描述揭露了这些盛行于清末的繁文缛节的虚伪性。而老舍对旗人文化的刻

¹ 《老舍文集》第四卷 P 260

意描写最终服务于其意图——引发出我们对中国民族性格的思考。

3.2 中国传统民间文化

老舍身上不仅融入了满族文化，而且还存在着浓厚的民间文化，从他的第一部小说《老张的哲学》到最后一部未完的长篇《正红旗下》，无不包含了大量的民俗描写。

老舍所描绘的不是异域的奇风异俗，而是日常生活中最常见的中国传统民俗，如饮食、礼仪、节庆等。而这些日常礼仪和风俗习惯的描写绝不仅仅是作为渲染生活的点缀，老舍主要是从两个意图出发的：一是为了衬托人物的性格，如《骆驼祥子》中虎妞办婚礼的风俗就表现了她待嫁迫不及待及讲究身价的心理；二是为了批判封建的传统观念，挖掘我们难以治愈的民族性格缺陷。《四世同堂》里描写北平的正月初五，亡了国的北平人竟蜂涌至北海，参加节庆的化装滑冰比赛：“有钱的，没钱的，都努力吃过了饺子，穿上了最好的衣裳。……去看升平的景象”¹。老舍在困难深重的背景反差中显现出这些节庆习俗的丑陋面目，揭露和鞭挞了我们民族性格中的苟且偷安及麻木不仁的一面。

第四章 俗文学和古典文学的交织

另外，老舍的作品中还保留着种种“俗文学”及古典文学的痕迹。“俗文学”包括了小说、戏曲、评书，甚至相声、快板、鼓词、琴书、数来宝、俗语俚谣等。老舍生在一个旗人家庭，民间文艺在清末非常盛行。这一文化背景及生活背景使得老舍广泛接触并最终在创作中应用了市民文学。

譬如他笔下的人物常常带着“侠义”式的性格，这显然乃“公案类”评书与“武侠类”市民小说的烙印。在老舍的作品中还常出现侠客独特的“行刺”行为，这更是受武侠小说情节的影响。

第二，老舍至小热爱中国古典文学，他的作品中也多处体现了对古典文学的传承。老舍作品中的讽刺幽默可追溯到晚清的讽刺小说。

此外，老舍笔下的女性形象也大有唐传奇的味道。唐传奇在女性人物类型上最典型的有两类：一类是风尘女子，第二类是悍妇。老舍笔下的人物属于第一类的有《微神》中的女主人公、《四世同堂》里的桐芳等。悍妇类有典型的《柳屯的》中的

¹ 《老舍文集》第5卷，P30

“柳屯的”，《骆驼祥子》里的虎妞等。甚至在老舍不少小说的命名上，都不难找到唐传奇印记。唐传奇中大多借用主人公的名字为篇名，如《柳氏传》、《霍小玉传》等。老舍也有不少小说延袭了这一作法，如《二马》、《牛天赐传》、《骆驼祥子》等。文学史家郑振铎先生曾这样评价过老舍的小说：“每每有传奇的气味”。这不论是从情节还是从标题上来说都是很贴切的。¹

第五章 “北京话”与欧化句式的结合

5.1 北京话

老舍被称为“京派小说”的代表，这不能不归功于他深厚的北京话功底。许多老舍的作品是由纯熟的北京话写的，这使得作品的语言准确、新鲜、活泼、亲切。

首先，老舍改变了原有的词汇，使用了许多口语动词，口语名词，口语形容词、口语副词及口语连词。老舍注重日常人物的语言习惯，其作品中的动词常出现一些附加词，使语言变得俏皮，生动。

第一，老舍引用了许多北京话中的惯用语、歇后语等。

第二，在口语里，词类活用的情形较多，这往往使语言显得灵活、俏皮。

第三，老舍的作品中句子简短，符合口语习惯。

5.2 欧化句式

然而，人们因过于注意了老舍语言的“北京味”特征，常常忽略了英语已是老舍的第二语言。当老舍接受西方文化并以此为小说构思的借鉴时，他在写作过程中就不可能不借助西方语言——主要是英语的语法、词汇、句式等。

首先是倒装语句的应用，这类句子在老舍的小说中相当普遍。这大致可分为关系从句主从句的倒置；单句中状语后置；主谓语后置等。

其次，在老舍作品的语言中还广泛地使用了穿插成分，这也是典型的英语句型。

第三，汉语的人称代词及指人的专有名词前原来是很少带修饰语的。在老舍的作品中，这些修饰语却时常出现。

第四，主谓结构做主语、宾语时，主语与谓语之间加“的”。

结 论

综上所述，作为中国现代文学大师，老舍受到了西方的多元影响，并在不断的

¹ 转引自老舍：《一个近代最伟大的境界与人格的创造者》见《老舍论创作》，1982 P301

探索中把外来的艺术元素与富含本土民族特征的中国文化紧密交织，从而造就了一位独一无二的伟大的人民艺术家。

由此我们可以得出一个结论：在经济和文化全球化的今天，有些作家也许会在接受外来文化冲击的时候完全被同化，而有的作家却是利用外来文化及文学作为借鉴，表现其本民族独特的文化观念和艺术特色。后者不但在其本身的文学成就上创造辉煌，同时亦为世界文化的交流与融合做出不朽的贡献。

关键词：老舍、西方文学、西方文化、中国传统文化、满族、圣经、古典文学、北京话、英语言

Synopsis

Incorporation of Things from the East and West — On the Influence of Western Literature upon and the Elements of Chinese Culture in Lao She's Works

In the special time of the early 20th Century, with the introduction of Western literary trends and translations of foreign works, many leading Chinese writers found themselves modeling their works on Western literary ideas, forms and techniques. Lao She, one of the most popular authors in modern Chinese literature, was no exception. He derived inspiration from a number of Western sources. Lao She and his works are unique, because in Lao She's works, the intake of Western literature and culture is melted into his marvelous depiction of traditional Chinese culture. This thesis attempts to explore the influence of Western and Chinese culture and literature upon Lao She's works. The paper consists of five chapters and one conclusion.

Chapter One The Influence of Western Literature

1.1 Pure imitation in early works

Lao She said more than once that if he didn't go to Britain, he would never become a novelist. His inspiration from Western literature can be divided in three aspects: his imitation in the early works, humorous writing style, and humanitarian ideology.

In 1924, Lao She went to teach Chinese in London for five years. During that period, he found his first and the most important literary teacher— Charles Dickens. It is obvious that at first, Lao She's learning was only limited to mere imitation. About his first novel *The Philosophy of Lao Zhang*, Lao She remarked that it lacked form because it was structured on the model of *Nicholas Nickleby* and *The Pickwick Papers*. First of all, the three novels have a common choice of the lower classes as their subject matter. Their characters are mainly merchants, usurers, schoolmasters, missionaries, students, orphans... Besides, they share a similarity in the portrayal of their main characters and the plots. The figure Lao Zhang in *The Philosophy of Lao Zhang* displays combined characteristics of Dickens's Ralph Nickleby and Wackford Squeers.

1.2 From Farcical Humor to Ironical Humor

In Lao She's second novel ---*Zhao Ziyue*, Lao She developed a writing style which makes Lao She's works fascinating, which is humor. But at first, his humor was only farcical humor, which to a large degree came from Charles Dickens. This farcical humor can be easily found in his early works such as *The Grand Opening*, *A Woman from the Liu Village* etc. Lao She learned from Charles Dickens in stressing the peculiarities of the visual details— the comic and funny facial expressions as well as clothes. For example, Lao Zhang "has eyes of a suckling pig, nose of a shrilling cicada mouth of a baked cake." And Liu Tianci is "with a big head whose back is as flat as a board, a pair of small eyes, and skinny arms and legs."

Another similarity lies in the ironic names the two authors gave to their characters. In *Martin Chuzzlewit*, the hypocrite Mr. Pecksniff named his two daughters "Mercy" and "Charity". In Lao She's works, he transplanted this technique. In the short story *A Kind Man*, Mrs. Wang maltreated her two maids, yet she named the two maids "Freedom" and "Fraternity".

As Lao She took inspiration from the French writers Maupassant and Flaubert's works, the French tragical style led him to change from farcical humor to ironical humor. He infused more tragical elements into laughter. The humor now was no longer for stirring people's laugh at certain people but for encouraging readers' consideration about the social background which resulted in such absurd phenomenal.

1.3 A humanitarian reformist---the influence of ideology

If we only trace the shadow western literature leaves in Lao She's works in terms of the imitation of plots or the humorous style, it would be far from enough. Because even between two unrelated authors, we can easily find some similarities in the plots or style. What's more important is the influence of ideology.

The English critical realists of the 19th century criticized the capitalist system from a democratic viewpoint; they failed to find a way to eradicate social evils. They were unable to find a good solution to the social contradictions. The chief tendency in their works was not of revolution but rather of reformism. They often started with a

powerful exposure of the ugliness of the bourgeois world, merely to close in a much too coincidental happy ending or an impotent compromise.

It is obvious that Lao She was drawn especially to his British mentors' method of softening piercing satire with humor. His humanitarian ideology was manifested in his attitude towards politics. He "hated the reactionary forces" and was "patriotic", but "looked lightly upon politics" and did not care for it.¹ In *Zhao Ziyue*, he described the students' movements as a blind, aimless and fanatic aggression. Secondly, in his works, he depicted various perpetrators in Chinese society, however, he made no attempt to analyze all the causes of the contradictions, nor did he try to give any revolutionary solutions. The moral charm of personal kindness is expanded to save all the sufferings of the people.

Chapter Two Christian and Bible's Influence on Lao She

Lao She's tight connection with the Bible can be traced back to his adolescence when he was fervent about Christianity. In 1922, when Lao She was twenty-three years old, he became a Christian. In 1923, he took a job of telling stories of the Bible to children in Gangwashi Church. From this, we can see Lao She was very familiar with the Bible. And his profound knowledge of the Bible and his devotion to Christianity were reflected in his writing.

1. In Lao She's works, he used a lot of allusions to the Bible.
2. In his works, he described vividly the life of Christians.

Lao She wrote about some missionaries' hypocrisy and arrogance. Also in his works, he depicted some Chinese who claimed to be Christians, but didn't truly believe in God; rather they bullied others in the name of Christianity.

3. Characters with Christian spirit

When presenting various hypocritical and egoistic Christians, Lao She also molded some idealistic characters, most of whom were not Christians. While we can see from their words and deeds the spirits of Christians: forgiveness, self-sacrifice and fraternity.

¹ Vohra, Ranbir. *Lao She and the Chinese Revolution* P15

Chapter Three The Inheritance of Chinese Culture

From imitation to the influence of ideology, Lao She had built a bridge connecting Western and Chinese literature. And more amazingly, Lao She's immersion of Western influence is against a grand background of Chinese culture.

3.1 The culture of Manchu

Lao She is a Manchu. In his novels, there are lots of descriptions about Manchu people, their life and Manchu culture.

(1) Lots of Lao She's characters are of Manchu identity, e.g. Fuhai in *Beneath the Red Banner*.

(2) Also, Lao She depicted a lot of scenes of Manchu's life. He presented to us the great disparity between the rich and the poor and class antagonisms among the Manchu people. In *Beneath the Red Banner* two different banquets were described. The difference between those two banquets showed vividly the disparity.

(3) Manchu looked down upon labor or handicraftsmen while tended to enjoy a "life of art". In *Teahouse*, the Second Master Sung was starved and the only thing he could wear is a gray gown, but he was still reluctant to work. In *Beneath the Red Banner*, Fuhai was teased and considered "half a Bannerman" just because he was a house painter.

In *Beneath the Red Banner*, "my" sister's father-in-law, as a military officer, never talked about soldiers or fighting, rather, his topics were always bird-raising techniques.

(4) The over elaborate formalities of the Manchu people:

The meaningless artificial courtesy was a great component of Manchu life. Through describing this phenomenon, Lao She drew readers' attention to the weakness of our national character.

3.2 Customs and Manners in Old Beijing

Lao She's novels reflect the political and economic situation of the Qing Dynasty in its last years, and paint a word picture of the people's everyday life, their customs and habits at that time.

Lao She didn't choose unusual or eccentric events but attached great importance to the everyday life of the people and their folk habits and customs. The details of everyday

life were all depicted concretely and realistically and thus clearly mirrored the characteristic features of the time.

Lao She's depiction of customs serves for two purposes: one is to mold characters. For example, in *Camel Xiangzi*, how Huniu arranged the wedding reflects her strong desire to get married, and the route Huniu planned to walk on the wedding day shows Huniu, as a daughter of a rich man, wanted to maintain her "price".

Secondly, the description of the customs is to dissect the national character of the whole Chinese people. Lao She described multitude of incidents happening to his characters in connection with the turbulent times. The minutest details of his novels and all the dialogues and movements of his characters help strengthen the sharpness of his social criticism. The depiction of customs is for criticizing the feudalistic culture and tradition. For example, in *Four Generations Under One Roof*, on the Fifth of May, the people in Beijing swarmed to the North Sea to attend the Masque skating competition. "No matter whether they have money or not, they all try to eat some dumplings, and put on their best clothes; if they can't find anything descent, they will borrow one from their friends or relatives." Obviously Lao She described the "Masque skating competition" in order to reveal the coward soul of the people at the time.

Chapter Four The Influence of Chinese Popular and Classical Literature

Another aspect which leaves trace in Lao She's works is Chinese popular and classical literature.

Various folk art forms such as Xiangsheng and Guci were very popular in the late Qing period; this social context provided Lao She with a good access to popular literature. The characters under his pen often remind us of Chinese chivalric spirit. This may mainly be attributed to the martial arts novels Lao She liked to read.

As early as his middle school years, Lao She showed much interest in classical literature. His early lessons in life and the arts he saw were deeply imprinted on his later works.

Firstly, his humor and the themes of his works may well be traced back to Chinese

classical literature, especially to late Qing fiction of exposure such as Wu Woyao's *Strange Things Seen in the Past Twenty Years*.

Secondly, we can easily find the influence of Tang Dynasty stories upon Lao She's works.

In the first place, the character types in Lao She's novels, especially the female characters are similar to those in Tang stories. There are two most typical characters in Tang stories; one is pathetic girls who are forced to turn to prostitution. In Lao She's works, we can find a long list of this kind of women. Tang Yuer and Wang Lingshi in *Zhao Ziyue*, "Y" in *The Crescent Moon*, and so on.

The second typical type of female character in Tang Dynasty is viragoes. This kind of women also abounds in Lao She's novels. The ferocious daughter-in-law in *The Woman from the Liu Village*, Huniu in *Camel Xiangzi*, the ambassador's wife in *The City of Cats*, etc.

In addition, the similarity lies in the titles of the works.

Tang stories began to have titles, although the titles were comparatively simple—many stories used the names of the heroes or heroines as titles. In Lao She's works we can find the same approach to entitling his novels: such as *The Philosophy of Lao Zhang*, *Zhao Ziyue*, *Two Mas*. No wonder Mr. Zheng Zhenduo once said that Lao She's works were always fragrant with the taste of Tang stories.¹

Chapter Five The Mixture of Westernized Language and Beijing Spoken Language

5.1 Beijing Spoken Language

Lao She's works prove his miraculous mastery of the art of language. He usually used the spoken dialect of Beijing very fluently and wittily. Using spoken dialect of Beijing makes his language more refined and terser and gives it a deep emotional color. He used the language for the need of expression of ideas and the portrayal of characters.

1. Lao She liked to employ verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs and conjunctions which ordinary people used in daily spoken language.

2. Lao She used some idioms and proverbs in Beijing Dialect.

¹ 转引自老舍：《一个近代最伟大的境界与人格的创造者》见《老舍论创作》，1982 P301

3. The part of speech of words is sometimes changed.

4. The use of short sentences makes the sentences sound more like daily conversation.

With the typical language of Beijing Dialect, Lao She's works are infused with vitality, becoming vivid and immortal.

5.2 Westernized Language

Undoubtedly, we can not ignore that since Lao She owed so much to the Western novelists in terms of literary style and ideology, his language was also influenced by the Western language— mainly English grammar, vocabulary and sentence pattern.

The Westernized language entered his writing unconsciously. The language transplantation can be easily found in his works.

There are mainly four types of Westernized language phenomena in Lao She's works.

(1) The use of inverted sentences.

A. In an adverbial clause sentence, the positions of the main clause and the subordinate clause are usually inverted.

B. The inversion of the adverbial modifier.

C. In Chinese, adverbs are always placed after the subject and in front of the verb, but in Lao She's works this sequence is not always followed. The adverbs are often placed at the beginning of a sentence, in front of the subject.

D. The inversion of the verb and the object.

(2) In Lao She's literary language, he used insertion extensively, which is prevalent in English.

(3) There are seldom modifiers in front of personal pronouns or names in the Chinese language. Yet in Lao She's works, it appears frequently.

(4) “的” is added between the subject and predicate.

Conclusion

As analyzed in the above five chapters, Lao She obtained much benefit from Western literature and culture in forming his writing styles and ideology. However, it is the Chinese culture that bestowed him the irreplaceable status in Chinese literature.

We may come to the conclusion that with economic and cultural globalization, some writers may be assimilated by foreign culture; some take the foreign culture as a tool for presenting their own culture. The latter will not only achieve great success in their writing but will also make contribution to the literature of the whole world.

Key words: Lao She, Western literature, Western culture, Chinese culture, Manchu, Bible, Classical literature, Beijing dialect, English language

Introduction

As one of the most distinguished modern Chinese novelists and playwrights, Lao She first impresses readers with his hilarious plots and paraded clowns that enliven his early works. But when engaged in a critical survey of his works, readers have been more apt to praise the warmth of his humor, his vivid portrayal of ordinary life or his compassion for the downtrodden. His most famous novels are believed to be *Four Generations Under One Roof* and *Camel Xiangzi*, and *Teahouse* has always been considered his best play.

Lao She (1899-1966) was born of Manchu descent in Beijing. His father, who was a guard soldier, died in a street battle during the Boxer Uprising. Fatherless since early childhood, Lao She worked his way through Peking Teacher's College. After graduation he supported his mother and himself through a series of teaching and administrative posts. He served as a principal of an elementary school at the age of 17, and later he became a district supervisor. Lao She spent the years from 1924 to 1929 in London, where he taught Chinese at the School of Oriental and African Studies. By reading a large amount of Western writers' works especially those by Charles Dickens, Lao She improved his English, and decided to write his first novel.

In 1931 Lao She returned to China and continued to write and teach in various universities. He reversed his early individualist theme and came to show concern about the whole society. The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) radically altered Lao She's political and literary views. Between the years 1937 and 1945 he wrote a number of plays concerning politics, worked as a propagandist, and headed the All-China Anti-Japanese Writers Federation.

Between the years 1946 and 1949 Lao She lived in the United States on a cultural grant at the invitation of the Department of State. When the People's Republic was established in 1949, Lao She returned to China.

He then became a member of the Cultural and Educational Committee of the Government Administration Council, a deputy to the National People's Congress, a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative

Conference. He was assigned vice-chairman of the All-China Federation of Literature and Art and vice-chairman of the Union of Chinese Writers as well as chairman of the Beijing Federation of Literature and Art, and was named as "People's Artist" and "Great Master of Language". Lao She died in 1966 in the Cultural Revolution. His last novel was *The Drum Singers* (1952), which was published only in English.

Looking back at the study of Lao She, we can roughly divide it into three periods: (1) 1928-1949, before the founding of People's Republic of China; (2) 1949-1976, between the founding of P. R. China and the Cultural Revolution; (3) 1976-present.¹

In the first period, since the first two advertisements about Lao She's works *the Philosophy of Old Zhang* and *Zhao Ziyue* were published in 1928, which were assumed to be the first critiques about Lao She, Lao She had been starting to attract critics' attention. From Lao She's language, characters to his humor, Lao She was studied extensively, especially his works *The City of Cats*, which drew the widest attention. In this period, the critiques were mainly short articles about Lao She's specific works instead of his general writing features, and no single critical book about Lao She was published.

During the Anti-Japan War, Lao She changed his standpoint. He once told his friend Lo Changpei that he "looked lightly upon politics"², but between the years 1937 and 1945 he worked as a propagandist, and headed the All-China Anti-Japanese Writers Federation. During that period, politics was emphasized and the writer's works were usually judged in terms of political values. In this sense, their literary values were to some extent ignored.

In the second period, the newly established China needed literary support, so after coming back from America, Lao She devoted most of his literary creation to the political needs, producing *All Members of the Family*, *Fang Zhenzhu*, *Spring Flower and Autumn Fruit* and so on. And these works did win him lots of words of praise. And it was during these years that Lao She was conferred on the title "People's Artist". Actually, the study of Lao She this time came across the boundary of literature and became an appendage of politics. Strictly speaking, purely academic or literary critiques about Lao She didn't appear in this time.

¹ 宋永毅《老舍与中国文化观念》P253

² Vohra Ranbir: *Lao She and the Chinese Revolution* P15

In the third period, the study of Lao She managed to get rid of the political thinking style and became more pluralistic. The critics analyzed Lao She from diverse points of view, for example, Zhou Guandong's *Metaphor in Lao She's Literary Language* and Zhang Kaidi's *Two Linguistic Features in Camel Xiangzi* are written from linguistic point of view or from the cultural sociology point of view; Su Yi's *the Beijing City in Lao She's Works* is from the cultural sociological point of view; Leung Yeoman's *Charles Dickens and Lao She—A Study of Literary Influence and Parallels* is from the comparative literature's point of view. Song Yongyi's *Lao She and Chinese Culture* is the book which contributes a lot to this thesis and is a good example of comparative literature study. Other relevant articles or books are written with aesthetic point of view, psychological analysis, and biographical criticism and so on.

In August, 1985, "Chinese Committee of the Study of Lao She" was founded, and since then the study of him has been encouraged and flourished rapidly. In February 1980, the first international group of Lao She study was founded in Paris and this marked a new horizon of Lao She study all over the world.

I concentrate my study on Lao She for the reason that he indicated how, in an special era of opening up to the Western literature and culture and of radical anti-traditionalism, the conventions of classic Chinese literature and culture were not thrown away but integrated with those of nineteenth century European realism to form "new" visions of reality by him.

That Lao She was indebted to Western literature especially English literature has become a commonplace opinion held by scholars, East and West. At the threshold of the twentieth century, a number of pioneers introduced Western literature and culture to the Chinese public, and Lao She also developed a special interest in the techniques and plots employed by Western writers. However, paradoxically, Lao She's most works were written about Beijing people, depicting Beijing customs and using Beijing language. What's the most exceptional about Lao She was his good command of Chinese culture and literature.

Therefore, my thesis attempts to explore the influence of Western culture and literature upon Lao She's works and his inheritance of Chinese cultural and literary

tradition. It covers the following aspects: the Western literature, which left Lao She a threefold influence: plot structure, writing techniques and writing ideology; Christianity and the Bible; Chinese culture, which includes Manchu culture and customs; Chinese literature; the influence of both English language and Beijing dialect. And this thesis intends to manifest that in the era of economic and cultural globalization today, intaking new things and at the same time maintaining what's unique about one's own nation will be more rewarding in literary creation, which will not only promote the writers' work, but also make contribution to the literature of the world as a whole.

Chapter One The Influence of Western Literature

The various methodologies which govern comparative literature study in the East and West are not altogether different from the approaches employed either by the French or the American schools of comparatists. Among these approaches, influence and affinity studies seem to be the most fundamental. But one is bound to be frustrated in hunting for foreign influence on authors of classical Chinese literature, owing to the fact that prior to the nineteenth century there was hardly any trace of cultural interchange between China and the West save for commercial transactions and missionary endeavors. At that time, China remained isolated from the world as a result to her adoption of a closed-door policy. She opposed anything foreign in keeping with her strong sense of superiority over the Westerners. In view of the absence of cultural contact between china and the Occident, literary influence, if compared to water current, is primarily a one-way traffic cultural influence of China upon the West.

After her defeats by foreign powers in the Opium (1840) and Sino-Japanese Wars (1895), China was humiliated and forced to sign unequal treaties. Paradoxically, her attitude toward the West changed drastically and she threw her doors wide open. Chinese intellectuals came to a realization that their motherland was backward and that Western technology, science, and armament were far superior to China's. In order to save their country, they made great efforts in internal reforms and modernization, carrying out such programs as the Self-Strengthening Movement and Hundred Days' Reform. They attempted to absorb Western technology by sending students abroad.

China's response to the West was by no means confined to the modernization of education, politics and military science. Changes also took place in the literary realm. The impact of Western literature was reflected by an increase in translations of foreign works in the late Qing dynasty. With the introduction of Western literary trends and translations of foreign works into Chinese, many leading writers of the 1920's and 1930's found themselves modeling their works on Western literary forms, ideas, and techniques.

Notable examples are Lu Hsun, Kuo Mo-jo, Mao Tun, Tien Han, Tsao Yu, and Hsu Chi-mo, whose literary creations are saturated with ideas borrowed from such monumental figures as Gogol, Goethe, Zola, Ibsen, Eugene O'Neill, Baudelaire, and Hardy. Lao She, one of the most popular authors in modern Chinese literature, belongs to this group. He derived inspirations from a number of Western sources. As what I will stress in this essay, the inspirations involve three aspects: from Western literature, which includes his imitation in the early works, writing style of humor, humanistic ideology; from Christianity and Bible; and language features transplanted from the English language.

1.1 Imitation of the plots and character portrayal in Lao She's early works

In July, 1924, Lao She accepted an invitation to teach Chinese at School of Oriental Studies, University of London, where he spent five years, from August 1, 1924 to July 31, 1929. Britain was then the most developed capitalist nation in the world, a striking contrast to the old and declining China. This new life experience greatly broadened his horizon, deepened his understanding of human life, and made him even more anxious when he considered the future of his disaster-ridden motherland. Although he was far from his native land and kinsfolk, he was in fact even closer to them in heart. For the sake of improving his knowledge of the English language, he read in those years a great number of classic Western European literary works, which opened up for him a wider vista of a world than the one in which he had lived and nourished his spirit with ideologies of democracy and humanism. At the same time, the brand-new life and literary experiences also exposed to him the modern artistic forms which were completely different from the traditional Chinese ones familiar to him since childhood, and were more skillful and developed than the newborn literature of the May Fourth Movement. This not only stimulated his interest in literature, but also awakened his desire for literary creation.

Lao She had never written any works before, except the one piece for the Nan-kai Middle School magazine, and he was not even aware that there were books dealing with

the art of writing. He had read Chinese traditional novels but he did not want to use this form for his own writings. So all he had to do is to seek a pattern which would suit for his own thinking. As a result, Lao She decided to use the European structure of the novel although his knowledge of Western literary models was "very superficial." And, of course, his models had to be drawn from the literature of social criticism.

As time elapsed he developed a special interest in the techniques and plot structures used by the British novelists. In his *An Old Ox and a Broken Cart* (Lao-niu Po che), Lao She admitted without reservation that he was familiar with the works of such diverse writers as Aristophanes, Dante, Shakespeare, Swift, Walpole, Maupassant, Thackeray, George Meredith, Hardy, Wells, Lawrence, Flaubert, F. D. Beresford, Conrad, Henry James, and in particular Dickens. In 1935, he published in *Literary Times* No.1 *the Greatest Modern Creator of Scenery and Personality—Conrad, the Writer I Love Most* to show his admiration of Conrad and Conrad's great influence towards him.

Just before settling down to write his first work of fiction, *The Philosophy of Lao Zhang*, Lao She had finished reading two of Dickens's novels—*Nicholas Nickleby*, and *The Pickwick Papers*. Only then "Was I able to have the will to experiment with a pen"¹ He used these novels as a model. Reminiscing in 1935 about how he wrote *The Philosophy of Lao Zhang*, Lao She said there was no central theme in the novel, and that like a person "with a new camera, taking pictures at random everywhere," he had set down "characters and incidents as they came to [his] mind."² Adding to this note on the contents of *Lao Zhang*, Lao She remarked that it lacked form because it was structured on the model of *Nicholas Nickleby* and *The Pickwick Papers*.

First of all, they have a common choice of the lower classes as their subject matter. Lao She's and Charles Dickens's characters both include: gentlemen, merchants, usurers, schoolmasters, missionaries, students, orphans ... Besides, they share a similarity in the portrayal of their main characters and the plots. In his *The Philosophy of Lao Zhang*, Lao She has transplanted Ralph Nickleby and Wackford Squeers into a single character—Lao Zhang. Avarice is the most salient characteristic of Dickens's Ralph Nickleby and

¹ Lao She: *Twenty Years of Practice in Writing*

² Lao She: *How I Write The Philosophy of Lao Zhang*

Lao She's Lao Zhang. Totally absorbed and buried in their quest for money, both Ralph and Lao Zhang ignore human values and see their fellow men as mere merchandise to be purchased at the lowest price. Their minds are constantly occupied with schemes for the acquisition of wealth.

Ralph earns his living as a usurer and one of the directors of the United Metropolitan Improved Hot Muffin and Crumpet Baking and Punctual Delivery Company. Lao Zhang, too, engages in a variety of activities: he is a moneylender, a proprietor of a store, a schoolmaster, and a police watchman. "Doing business is for money; being a soldier is for money; and running a school is for money! To teach, do business, and be a soldier at the same time will make big money and yield enormous profit. This is called 'money as the Centre and Three fold principle.'"(*The Philosophy of Lao Zhang*)

Ralph has a similar philosophy embodying two maxims: "riches are the only true source of happiness and power, and that it is lawful and just to compass their acquisition by all means short of felony."(*Nicholas Nickleby*)

Lao Zhang is a composite figure bearing typical characteristics of both a moneylender and a schoolmaster. His meanness and miserliness resemble Ralph's, but his cruelty and incompetence are reminiscent of Squeers's. Lao She's protagonist runs the Private Public Official Trade Elementary School of Te-sheng district as Squeers owns Dotheboys Hall. "Both schoolmasters operate their schools in a ruthless manner, disregarding the dignity of their pupils. Unfitted to be either administrators or educators, both show no concern about the welfare of their students, but consider education as an enterprise by means of which they can squeeze money out of the students' parents. Ignorant and illiterate, they are unable to fulfill their pedagogical responsibilities."¹

Besides Charles Dickens's characters, another figure which has deeply affected Lao She's literary imagination is Shakespeare's Hamlet. Though Lao She's interpretation of Hamlet's syndromes remained mostly comical, he recapitulated the Danish prince's problems: procrastination, prolonged anguish, and self-torturing philosophical poses. Lao She has used the name of Hamlet in the titles of his works. "*Xin hanmuliede*" (*New*

¹ Leung, Yiu-Nam: *Charles Dickens and Lao She: A Study of Literary Influence and Parallels*. 1987 P. 66

Hamlet, 1936) is a short story which deals with a weak-willed college student's failure either to carry out his revolutionary ideals or to help his businessman father withstand local turmoil in the name of revolution. Named Tian Liede, the hero declares, "I am Shakespeare's Hamlet; we share the same first name (liede/ Ham let)." "He always looks at himself in the mirror, a long, thin face, with a wide and pale forehead. His eyes look languid; he has big mouth and thin lips, which often form a long line in between." And "he is very proud, very serious. He plans everything thoroughly, and he ponders all the time." (*New Hamlet*) On the other hand, Lao She's anti-Japanese patriotic drama, *Guiqulaixi* (*Homecoming*, 1942), was originally called Hamlet; its central character is clearly based on Shakespeare's creation.

Ma Wei in *The Two Mas* may well be one of Lao She's earliest parodies of the image of Hamlet. "He is the first clown in modern Chinese fiction with a sullen face and melancholy posture, a clown who is vulnerable and laughable." ¹Ma Wei has a clear cause to fight for—patriotism. In view of Ma Wei's Hamlet-like idiosyncrasy to pose and think, this narrative format neatly reflects his psychological habit of looking back and thinking rather than acting. By the end of the novel Ma Wei seems to reach some decision. He makes up his mind to break away with his father and flee England – but to France, not back to china. Ma Wei's decision or indecision anticipates the ending of *New Hamlet*: "run away, run away, run away."

Besides, C.T.Hsia notices the novel Niu Tianci's striking parallel to Fielding's Tom Jones: "The hero is a foundling, his foster parents, his nurse, his amah, his boyhood friend Si Huzi, and his tutors all have their comic counterparts in Fielding's novel." ²

1.2 From Farcical Humor to Ironical Humor

Until the beginning of the twentieth century the Chinese language had words for "wit," "irony" and "satire," but no word for "humor." It appears that some time in the first decades of this century the word you-mo, transliteration of the word "humor," came

¹ Wang Dewei: *Fictional Realism in Twentieth-century China: Mao Dun, Lao She, Shen Congwen* P126

² Wang Dewei: *Fictional Realism in Twentieth-century China: Mao Dun, Lao She, Shen Congwen* P125

to be used in Chinese. It gained greater currency and became popular after Lin Yutang started his magazine of humor, *Lun Yu*, in 1932, which featured a regular you-mo column. But long before this happened, Lao She had already begun writing in a humorous vein in 1924.

Undoubtedly, Lao She is regarded the master of humor in the modern Chinese literature, while we have to admit that humor was a foreign commodity and Lao She seems to have chanced upon it when he read Charles Dickens and made him his first model. Both writers tended to consider social evils and irrational institutions not only monstrous but absurd as well.

In an essay entitled *What Is Humor?* Lao She tried to define his subject. Then he placed Dickens alongside Gogol and Mark Twain as one of the world's greatest humorists.

“Their works, like many other great ones, are antagonistic to hypocrisy and craftiness but sympathetic to the weak, oppressed, and the miserable. Their love and hatred are expressed in a humorous style. That is to say, their writings produce laughter and have a sense of the ludicrous.”¹

“When young, I liked to read the works of a great British novelist, Dickens, and loved them to such an extent that I could not part from them. As I tried my hand at novel writing, I, somehow, imitated Dickens. What was great about Dickens? I did not know. I emulated him because I wanted to show off my joking talent and to learn the key to evoke laughter.”²

However, the fact that Lao She's early works were enlightened by Dickens was mainly reflected in farcical humor. When treated as a narrative mode, farce refers to a type of writing that uses outrageous comedy to defy formalistic and thematic conventions, attack pre-established values, and test audience sensibilities.³

Lao She's first novel *The Philosophy of Lao Zhang* can be read as a good example of

¹ Lao She, *What Is Humor?* in *Discussion of Creative Writing* by Lao She

² Lao She, *the Description of Scenery* in *Discussion of Creative Writing* by Lao She

³ Wang Dewei: *Fictional Realism in Twentieth-century China: Mao Dun, Lao She, Shen Congwen* P 115

the author's farcical discourse. In the novel, Lao She ridiculed the chaotic situation of modern Chinese society, caught in a drastic transformation from the old to the new. "Lao She created Lao Zhang as an invulnerable robot. Neither social norms nor moral criteria are barriers to Lao Zhang's lust and ambition; instead, he makes use of those norms to develop his own system of values. Thus we have the pleasurable expectation of seeing Lao Zhang continuously step beyond the limits to work out something more outrageous for more profits."¹ In fact, the novel is organized like a series of spectacles with each one more hilarious than the last. What Lao She really tried to create is something like a farce.

In some of Lao She's short stories, one finds a full-fledged expression of the farcical mode. "*Kaishi daji*" (*The Grand Opening*, 1933), for example, deals with four quacks running an expensive charity hospital like a three-ring circus. Almost without any medical knowledge and facilities, they nevertheless manage to attract many dupes looking for magical cures. They encourage an old lady with ulcers to eat as much Beijing duck as she wants, and prescribe a shot of jasmine tea as a new medicine for an officer with venereal disease. At one time, they almost mistake a fat man for a pregnant woman; at another, they bully a patient with hemorrhoids to pay more for anesthetic treatment — right in the middle of his surgery.

Similar examples can be found in other short stories: "Baosun" (Grandson, 1933) in which a grandmother feeds her pregnant daughter-in-law so well that she is the focus of a hilarious harrow when she delivers a thirteen pound baby; or "*Liucun de*" (*A Woman from the Liu Village*, 1934) in which a monstrous shrew persecutes her husband, family, and even the whole village in the name of God, since she is a converted Christian.

In addition, Lao She borrowed other devices from Charles Dickens. He followed closely the Victorian master in stressing the peculiarities of the visual details. The comic and funny facial expressions as well as clothes were repeatedly focused on. For example, when introducing Lao Zhang, Lao She said: "Lao Zhang is five feet two inches in height, with a red face containing a few black spots. He has eyes of a suckling pig, nose of a shrilling cicada mouth of a baked cake." (*The Philosophy of Lao Zhang*) And Liu Tianci is "With a big head whose back is as flat as a board, a pair of small eyes, and skinny arms

¹ Wang Dewei: *Fictional Realism in Twentieth-century China: Mao Dun, Lao She, Shen Congwen* P114

and legs.” (*The Biography of Niu Tianci*)

Another similarity lies in the ironic names the two authors gave their characters. In Charles Dickens’s works the swindler has a beautiful name of Alfred Jingle. In *Martin Chuzzlewit*, the hypocrite Mr. Pecksniff named his two daughters “Mercy” and “Charity”. In Lao She’s works, he transplanted this technique. In *Zhao Ziyue*, the leading character Zhao Ziyue is a student who spends most of his time gambling, drinking, chasing after women and daydreaming. However, Lao She gave him the name after *Analects of Confucius*. In the short story *A Kind Man*, Mrs. Wang maltreats her two maids, while she names the two maids “Freedom” and “Fraternity”.

But what I have to stress is that, in Lao She’s early works, he put too many efforts on how to make fun of his characters’ outlooks or pitfalls. Without exception, he made his leading characters clowns and made all the comedies and tragedies into farcies. The humor took the place of all the righteousness. Lao She soon realized that, and his admiration for Dickens proved not blind. Lao She said, “Later, after reading some kinds of studies on Dickens, I discovered that what I had imitated from this great writer was his shortcoming. He is immortal not because he deliberately evokes laughter. If he could control himself and cut down those jokes, he would be even greater.”¹

In consequence, from *The Two Mas*, Lao She was able to make a breakthrough. Before the book, he was troubled about the relevance of humor in literature which was meant to have a serious social purpose. Now, he deliberately eschewed humor and took to satire in the interest of “seriousness.” He came to the conclusion that humor could serve a social purpose, but not just a description of the comic. When writing *Divorce*, he managed to keep comic exaggeration, which had marked his earlier humorous writing, under fairly strict control and subordinate to the design of the whole. Laughter is now the means by which Lao She questioned the cultural or moral codes that sanction the concept of the real in the society.

As Lao She drew inspirations from the French writers Maupassant and Flaubert’s works, the French tragical styles led him to change from the farcical humor to ironical

¹ Lao She, the Description of Scenery in Discussion of Creative Writing by Lao She

humor. He infused more tragical elements into his laughter: amid the outrageous laughter, there arose cries.

Li Zhengxuan talked about the source of Lao She's humor in this way: 1. Chinese classical humorous literature, for example, the late Qing fiction such as Li Baojia's *Guanchang Xianxingji* (*Exposure of the Officialdom*), and Wu Woyao's *Strange Things Seen in the Past Twenty Years*. 2. The traditional popular arts in Lao She's hometown—Beijing city such as storytelling, operas and plays. 3. The humorous elements in Western works, such as the works by Charles Dickens.¹

Since Lao She mixed various sources into his own use, in the end, humor did provide him with a liberal and a humane approach and gave his writing a depth and a universality which would make them outlast many other works of that period.

1.3 A humanistic reformist—the influence of ideology

Apart from the plots, character portrayals, and the humorous style, there are other good reasons to believe that Lao She owes a lot to his British mentors. If we only trace the shadow western literature leaves in Lao She's works in terms of the plot's imitation or the humorous style, it would far from be enough. Because even between two unrelated authors, we can usually find some similarities in the plots or details. What's more important is the influence of writing ideology.

Lao She embarked on the literary career as a mild democratic humanist. On one hand, his great patriotism made him devote his subject matters to the lower classes and he was concerned about social problems as well as injustice. At the same time he showed his deep sympathy for the suffered. On the other hand, in his works, he tried to take reformism as the prescription of all the social contradictions. Having traced the source of his humanist writing ideology, we can find it still comes from his western mentors.

“Followed the tradition of the revolutionary romanticism of Byron and Shelly, the English humanist and democratic literature—the English critical realism of the 19th century proclaim an irreconcilable struggle between the proletariat and the ruling classes

¹ 转引自宋永毅：《老舍与中国文化观念》

and expressed firm faith in the ultimate victory of the suffering people. The critical realists described with much vividness and great artistic skills the chief traits of the English society and criticized the capitalist system from a democratic viewpoint; they described the misery and sufferings of the common people and showed profound sympathy for them.”¹ But the critical realists did not find a way to eradicate social evils. They did not realize the necessity of changing the bourgeois society. They were unable to find a good solution to the social contradictions. The chief tendency in their works is not of revolution but rather of reformism. They often start with a powerful exposure of the ugliness of the bourgeois world, merely to close in a much too coincidental happy ending or an impotent compromise.

The greatest English realist of the time was Charles Dickens. In his works, there never appears a true proletarian, like the revolutionists of the Chartist Movement of his time. Instead, he opposed the people’s violence. In his famous novel *A Tale of Two Cities*, for example, Dr. Manette hated the Evremonds for their atrocities. He wrote an accusation against them, and was put in prison by them for 18 long years. But after his release, he first let his daughter marry the son of his oppressors, then sorrowed over his son-in-law’s death sentence, and thus getting himself into trouble with the revolutionary people, from which he was extricated only by the self-sacrifice of another person, his fate is typical of those bourgeois intellectuals who had hoped for a change of the established social system, but recoiled aghast before the excesses of the French Revolution. Dickens depicted the revolutionaries as relentless ones seeking the people’s vengeance on the criminal noble slogans. Also in *Nicholas Nickleby*, the violence of the urban crowd was considered as “the immense explosion of destructive energy, dehumanized humanity, and the brutal, violent and animalistic instinct in human nature.”

It is obvious that Lao She was drawn especially to his British mentors’ method of softening piercing satire with humor. Under such influences the Chinese author tended to “look at the world half hating and half laughing”². Lao She expressed in his works the critique and castigation of the old society and its evil forces. Manifest in all his early

¹ 刘炳善：《英国文学简史》P326~328

² Lao She: *How I Wrote the Philosophy of Old Zhang*

works were profound patriotism, a broad humanism, the moral standards of the lower classes. But at the same time he blurred the social values, dissolved the pain the characters should feel into a miming of it, and turned an otherwise sad story into a hilarious extravaganza. Like the works by those English realists, Lao She's works often begin with the persecution of the good and end with the reward of virtue. The core of their melodramatic writing lays a deep concern with the moral consequences behind our everyday life and actions, and the aim is to restore the lost social order and ethical imperatives.

We can roughly distinguish his humanistic ideology from the following two aspects:

(1) Attitude towards politics

Lao She repeatedly emphasized to his Manchu friend Lo Changpei that he "hated the reactionary forces" and was "patriotic", but "looked lightly upon politics" and did not care for it.¹

Lao She dealt with the theme of the student's movement as early as his second novel — *Zhao Ziyue*. Through the adventures of naive, kind-hearted Zhao Ziyue, Lao She speculated on the role of students in the post-May Fourth social and political turmoil and on their responsibility for the national fate. Students played an important part in the May Fourth Movement and in patriotic campaigns thereafter. At a time when students were honored as the vanguard of political reform and the voice of social conscience, Lao She sensed the thin line between patriotic fervor and fanatic aggression, between the call for self-sacrifice and the opportunity for self-aggrandizement. One of the best examples in *Zhao Ziyue* suggests Lao She's attitude towards the students' movement ---- the student riot on campus. Dissatisfied with their president and teachers, students launch a "revolution" that essentially turns the campus into a slaughterhouse: "outside the President's office lay a broken strand of rope: the president had been tied up and beaten. In the hallway were five or six satin slippers: the teachers had escaped barefoot. Pinned against the door-frame of an office by a three-inch-long nail was an ear with its blood already congealed: it had been lopped off the head of a faithful, prudent (his crime!) supply clerk of twenty year's standing. On the green near the hothouse was a patch of

¹ Vohra Ranbir: Lao She and the Chinese Revolution P15

blood that had turned purplish-black: it had poured forth from the nostrils of a gardener whose income was ten dollars per month.” (Lao She : *Zhao Ziyue*)

In 1935, when Lao She was already a well-known author, he had been criticized for showing in some of his works that the students of the May Fourth period were destructive and had little sense of positive revolution. He wrote a series of essays in which he gave his comments on the novels he had already published. In an apologetic vein he explained that he had only been a by-stander at the time of the May Fourth Movement and had missed the Kuomintang Revolution of 1926-1927 because he was in England at that time.

(2) The solution to contradictions

As what has been mentioned above, critical realism has a weakness — the reformists started their stories with a powerful exposure of the sharp contradictions, but finally they turned to a much too coincidental happy ending or an impotent compromise.

Lao She also showed the same weakness. In his works, he depicted various perpetrators in Chinese society; however, he made no attempt to analyze all the causes of the confusion and the contradictions which faced many people at the time, nor did he try to give any revolutionary solutions. The moral charm of the personal kindness was expanded to save all the sufferings of the suffered. In *The Philosophy of Lao Zhang*, the girl Li Ching is forced to marry Lao Zhang. The wedding does take place as promised, and to nobody's surprise, it turns out to be a circus of follies. The wedding is never completed, because of the last minute intervention of a member of the local gentry, Regional Commander Sun, and a rickshaw puller with a chivalric spirit, Zhao Si. The rich, kind-hearted Commander Sun saves Li Ching by paying off her uncle's debt. In *The Biography of Niu Tianci*, when at last Liu loses his family and his fortune, Mr. Wang helps him to rehabilitate to the petty-bourgeois community and he will be able to continue to attend the Peking University. Whenever Xiang Zi meets with hardship, it is the saint Mr. Cao who helps him out. In *A Woman from the Liu Village*, the villainous woman beats her husband and her father-in-law and rules the whole village. When there is nothing to do to oppress her, she is suddenly captured by an officer's wife who happens to hear about her behavior.

However, the Chinese social contradictions were far sharper than those of Britain in

Dickens's time. As a consequence, Lao She was more awakened and realistic than Dickens. Dickens's happy ending seldom appeared in Lao She's works. Instead, we find another solution to all the contradictions—assassination. In *the Philosophy of Lao Zhang*, it is Wang De who breaks in with arms to stop the wedding; in *Zhao Ziyue*, at last Li's action—assassination of the evil officials awakens Zhao's conscience. In *Divorce*, the villain Little Zhao tries on one hand to get Li dismissed from the Bureau, and on the other hand to acquire Zhang's daughter as his wife, with the intention of trading her away later on. Not only does Zhao fail in both these plans, but he also loses his life in the bargain because Second Master Ting — Zhang's servant, lures Zhao to a lonely place and murders him, and his death is followed with the release of Old Brother Zhang's son and disappearance of all the hardships. These results, to some degree, reflect Lao She's resistance to the repression, and at the same time, they suggest the limitation of the solutions of the contradictions in Lao She's mind.

Chapter Two Christian and Bible's Influence On Lao She

Lao She's life seemed extremely difficult before 1924. He was poor and his work was taxing. He could easily have lost faith in the situation he was living in. Lao She had to search for a new value system, and the self-denying Christian faith, which provided ultimate hope to its followers, may have proved the spar that saved him from drowning. In 1922, when Lao She was twenty-three years old, he was baptized in Gangwashi Church in Beijing and became a Christian. After that, he changed his name to Sheyu (舍予 self sacrifice), this name was obviously affected by Christian spirit of sacrificing oneself to rescue the world. In December his translation "The Great Harmony of Christianity" was published under the name of Shu Sheyu.¹ Also, he helped the Gangwashi Church to change into a Chinese one and drafted a constitution for its re-organization. There is even a suggestion that his devotion at that time not only helped strengthen himself when he was in a deep depression, and his missionary contacts also led to the opportunity for him to go abroad.

In the novel *The Philosophy of Lao Zhang*, one of the characters — Li Ying reflects some of the author's own characters. Li Ying is converted to be a Christian, and the reason for the act is described in the following statement: "He is basically a sincere and guileless person, but he suffered from oppressive circumstances, and so he lost some self confidence. Furthermore, he had no faith in anything in society and so was attracted to religion." (*The Philosophy of Lao Zhang*) This claim may well reveal Lao She's mind and experience at that time.

Lao She's tight connection with Bible can be traced back to his adolescence when he was fervent about Christianity. In 1923, he took a job of telling Bible stories to children in Gangwashi Church. From this, we can see Lao She was very familiar with the Bible. And his profound knowledge of the Bible and his devotion to Christianity were reflected in his writing.

¹ Lao She: *Bao Guanglin's Life*, No.4, Vol.3

2.1 In Lao She's works, he used a lot of allusions to the Bible.

In *The City of Cats*, the expression "destroying finger" was used many times, and this "finger" comes from *Daniel* of *The Old Testament*.¹ Here are some other examples:

Ma Wei opened the window and in doing so noticed that a ray of sunlight was falling on Katherine's hair, creating a golden ring of incandescence around her head. She looked a little like a Madonna out of a painting. (*The Two Mas*)

Instead of affecting indifference, he simply reduced Big Duo's "Revelations" subsidy to a single string of cash despite Big Duo's protests that his tunic was beginning to resemble one of those four animals—"its body full of eyes" (*Beneath the Red Banner*)

Lao Li's hands were a little bit shaking, but it was not the end of the world yet. (*Divorce*)

2.2 In his works, he described vividly the life of the Christians.

Among the Christians Lao She wrote about, there were missionaries in China, like Reverend Eden in *The Two Mas*, and Reverend Bull in *Beneath the Red Banner*. In his novels, Lao She wrote about their hypocrisy and arrogance. Reverend Eden "had been a missionary in China for twenty years. He knew everything about Chinese—from Sage Fu Shi's creation of the eight trigrams to Yuan Shik-kai's arrogation of the title of Emperor (which he liked most to hear about). Apart from not speaking Chinese well, he could be considered genuine walking 'Encyclopedia Sinica'". "He really loved the Chinese people", but when he helped Mr. Ma to find a house, "once out on the street he found a quiet spot before muttering in a low voice, 'dame it! Just for two bloody Chinamen.'" "He would always pray to God that China would soon become a colony of England. With fervent tears he said to God: 'If the Chinese are not administered by the British, those yellow-faced, black-haired creatures will never get to heaven, not matter what.'" (*The Two Mas*)

Again there is Mrs. Eden: "when she prayed, Mrs. Eden always closed one eye so she could envision God in Heaven, but she invariably kept the other open to focus on the group of students who should go to Hell." And Ma Wei, "while his head was bent in

¹ 宋永毅:《老舍与中国文化观念》P64

prayer, he would look furtively at them (some women) out of the corner of his eye.”(*The Two Mas*) Another example is Lao Zhang, who believed in Christianity, but at the same time in Buddhism and Islam.

Also in his works, Lao She depicted some Chinese who claimed to be Christians. However, they didn't truly believe in God, rather they bullied others in the name of Christianity. In *The Woman from the Liu Village*, the daughter in law claimed to be a Christian and all the villagers became her followers, thus it made her the queen of the village. She maltreated, threatened and even beat her husband's family. Big Duo in *Beneath the Red Banner* thought: “before I've even had a chance to bring in Reverend Bull and scare the hell out of Manager Wang, he's given me a whole soy sauce chicken without saying a word. Just like my own obedient son!” (*Beneath the Red Banner*)

2.3 Characters with Christian spirit

While presenting various hypocritical and egoistic Christians, Lao She also molded some idealistic characters, most of whom were not Christians. But we can see from their words and deeds the spirits of Christians: forgiveness, self-sacrifice and fraternity.

In *Black Li and White Li*, for saving his brother, Black Li risked himself and died; in *the Biography of Liu Tianci*, Li Jingchu was determined to assassinate the evil officials. They both showed the self-sacrifice spirit of Christianity. In *the City of Cats*, the “Big Eagle” was forced to commit suicide and his head was hanged in the city to be on show. This is just like Jesus Christ, who wanted to save the world and was murdered. After he died, his body was showed on the Cross.

Chapter Three The Inheritance of Chinese Culture

Lao She received the influence from Western literature and culture, thus constructing a bridge connecting Western and Chinese culture. Moreover, in Lao She's works, the intake of Western literature and culture is melted into his profound understanding and expression of Chinese culture. In 1951, Lao She was titled as "People's Artist". This was mainly because of the Chinese features in his works.

Lao She ranks among the representatives of the Beijing School in literature. There is a mixture of various Chinese culture and literature in his works, which includes the culture of Manchu, the customs of Beijing, and Chinese classical literature.

3.1 The Culture of Manchu

In the psychological sense, the mind of an adult is determined when it is in childhood. Lao She was born in a Manchurian family and was brought up in such an environment. His family, relatives, friends and the Manchurian customs were inevitably rooted in his literary works. In fact, he devoted a lot of his writings to the description of the Manchurian people and their lives.

3.1.1 Quite a lot of Lao She's characters are of Manchu identity

These characters' Manchu identity is sometimes obvious but sometimes hidden (although the identity is not mentioned, their personalities and experiences can suggest it).¹ The obvious Manchus are: Fuhai in *Beneath the Red Banner*, the couple Wen in *Four Generations Under One Roof* and so on. The hidden Manchus include "P" in *This Life of Mine*, the heroines in *the Crescent Moon* and *Vision*. Sometimes even the Han families were endowed with Manchurian features. For example, the Qi family in *Four Generations Under One Roof*. The surname "Qi" suggests the characteristic of this

¹ 宋永毅：《老舍与中国文化观念》 P15

family ("Qi" means Manchu) --- worship and imitation of Manchu.

3.1.2 Lao She's depiction of the essence of Manchurian lives

(1) The great disparity between the rich and the poor and class antagonism

Just take *Beneath the Red Banner* as an example. Since this novel is a sort of family saga about the life of those city paupers who were low-class banner men during the last years of the Qing Dynasty, it is wholly devoted to the portrayal of Manchu lives. In the novel, the author demonstrates such social phenomena as the great disparity between the rich and the poor, and class antagonism, which were typical of Old China. The novel focuses on the narrator's family living in straitened circumstances. Although the family never fails to receive the monthly pay of three Liang of silver, it belongs to the lowest class of the Banner men. The shadow of pawning, borrowing and buying on credit constantly hangs over them. The birth of the baby, the coming of the New Year, and the arrival of a guest, which are usually moments of great joy, are all overcast by the cloud of worry caused by the lack of money and grain. Even the mother-in-law of the narrator's sister, the wife of a "Zuolin"—a low-raking official in charge of household residence registration and other affairs, has to buy things on credit and pawn thing in order to keep in living a none-too-rich life. In sharp contrast to the miserable life of the narrator's family is the life of luxury led by Dinglu, one of the descendants of the Manchu bureaucrats, who spends money like water. Dinglu "had been playing with small gold and silver ingots and with agate and jadeite toys ever since childhood, so he did not know they were valuable." When he is in the right mood, he gives silver away; when he is angry, he dashes curios and household utensils to pieces. "He disdained to ask the price of things; if something caught his fancy, he would buy it, no matter how much it might cost." This juxtaposition vividly brings out the gulf between the two different types of people.

While making such contrasts, Lao She is good at concentrating on typical incidents and narrating them clearly and vividly, so the contrasts are more striking. Two different banquets are described in the novel. One, held to celebrate "my bath on the third day after my birth," is a "noodles banquet," a very humble affair. The host dilutes

the wine with water and has to buy sesame seed cakes for the guests who have already had one bowl of hot noodles but are not yet full. Another one is held in honor of Priest Niu. Before going over the description of the banquet itself, the reader can already imagine how expensive and luxurious the banquet will be. While being led into the banquet hall, the guest of honor passes through one elegant courtyard after another, sees different sets of costly furnishings, is greeted with elaborate formalities and introduced to a number of guests belonging to the leisured class.

(2) Manchu look down upon the labor or handicraftsmen while enjoying a “life of art”.

After the “eight banners entered Shanghaiguan and established the Qing Dynasty, “eight banners” became an instrument for implementing a policy of oppression and enslavement of the people. In order to maintain their rule over other nationalities, they attach great importance to military power. All the soldiers were paid by the government and were not allowed to trade or farm. As a result, this gradually forms a custom in Manchu people----they did not work, no matter how poor their lives were, they lived only on the government’s payment and pawn.

For example, in *Teahouse*, although the Second Master Sung was starved and the only thing he could wear remained a gray gown, he was reluctant to work. In *Beneath the Red Banner*, Fuhai was teased and considered “half a Bannerman” just because he worked as a house painter.

The lower classes of the Manchu looked down upon labor so much, let alone the upper classes. After they occupied China, there was no serious war or disturbance, thus led to a contradictory result. The Manchu army conquered the nation with force which they were very proud of, but now, what the Manchu people really cared was only the “art of life”. In the last years of the Qing Dynasty, they fed on the rice grown by the Han people, and they spent money earned by the Han people, their lives were dedicated to various arts. From the royal family to the ordinary people, they could all sing “Cross Talks”, “Guci”, “Dagu” and “Tunes”, they could write a good hand, they could draw paintings, and even write good poems.

In *Beneath the Red Banner*, there is a characteristic figure— “my” sister’s father-in-law. “Although my sister’s father-in-law was a military officer of the fourth rank, he rarely spoke of leading soldiers or fighting. When I asked him if he could ride a horse or shoot with a bow and arrow, his response was a fit of coughing, after which he steered the conversation back to bird-raising techniques.” “He spent hours telling me how to raise ‘bluethroats’ and ‘rubythroats’, how to take them out for an airing, how to train them to sing, how to adjust their diets during the moulting season, ... Apart from cages, he held forth in great detail on the little porcelain feeding and drinking vessels inside them and the miniature bamboo shovels used to clean out bird droppings — who could deny that these were works of art? ... and he could sing opera too!” “Truly, he was spending all his energy trying to imbue little feeding vessels and shovels, as well as his coughing and laughter, with a sublime artistry...” (*Beneath the Red Banner*)

(3) The over elaborate formalities:

The formalities are a great component of Manchu life. We take the Qi family in *Four Generations Under One Roof*, as an example. “Because they grow up in Beiping, they have learned from the Manchu people some good customs and manners”. Mr. Qi has a clear division of casts. He divides the people living in his Hutong into nine ranks, and regards himself as “the person over other people”. He thinks it is ridiculous to talk with those whose ranks are lower than him. In his family, he has strict rules. When his daughter-in-law sees him, she should stand by and serve him.

The “noodles banquet of the baby bath” in *Beneath the Red Banner* is another example. “Although the feast was rather modest, the etiquette involved in seating the guests was being performed with the greatest punctiliousness. ‘Please sit at the head table!’ ‘I don’t deserve such an honor! I really don’t.’ ‘If you don’t sit there, no one else is going to sit down.’ It wasn’t till Fuhai shouted, ‘Be seated quickly! The food’s getting cold!’ that everyone reverently and obediently took their places. After three toasts of wine (no one felt in the least tipsy) and two courses (broad beans and hot spiced pigskin), the banquet reached its climax ---- the steaming hot noodle soup was

served. It seemed as if everyone present had suddenly abandoned etiquette as well as speech as the room became filled with the sound of noodle-slurping. It was like an earthquake, a tidal wave, a chorus of roaring tigers and howling dragons.” (*Beneath the Red Banner*)

The description of the senseless etiquettes suggests that Beijing of that time was like the “City of Cats” under Lao She’s pen, peopled by “heartless residents who, in the name of courtesy and decorum, practice cannibalistic rituals as routine entertainments”. Lao She wrote, “There was no good or evil in the hearts of these people living in Beijing. They didn’t understand virtues or vice, nor could they distinguish right from wrong. They could cling to a few moral rules handed down to them and they were willing to be called civilized people.”¹ For three hundred years, the Manchu culture kept laying a heavy burden on China, and brought an inevitable dark fate to the Chinese people.

3.2 Customs and Manners in Old Beijing

H. de Balzac, the great writer of France, expressed his viewpoint about novels in this way: “The novelists can present to the world a history that has been neglected by historians, that is the history of customs”.² The studies of the customs is the essence of his great works *la com die humaine*, with which H. de Balzac had finished his research of the customs of Paris. In the same way; Lao She devoted his works to the study of the customs of Beijing.

Lao She’s novels reflect the political and economic situation of the Qing Dynasty in its last years, and paint a word picture of the people’s everyday life, their customs and habits at that time. His works are like a long scroll, depicting the semi-colonial and semi-feudal society and are therefore a valuable “text-book” of the corrupt society of old China.

Lao She was extremely skillful at making detailed and vivid descriptions and

¹ Wang Dewei: *Fictional Realism in Twentieth-century China: Mao Dun, Lao She, Shen Congwen* P 154

² 《宋永毅：老舍与中国文化观念》P150

drawing colorful genre paintings. The author described the life and customs of Beijing. What's unique about his works lies in the fact that Lao She didn't choose the eccentric and unusual events but laid store by the everyday life of the people and their habits and customs. We can learn from his novels ordinary customs such as marriage ceremony, funeral, celebration of the birth of a baby, baby's bath on the third day after its birth, and the celebration when the baby is one month old; some pre-and post-festival activities such as worshipping the Kitchen God, staying up all night on the eve of the Chinese New Year and paying New Year calls. He also presented to us a colorful painting of daily lives of ordinary families of late Qing Dynasty: the men gave spare-time theatrical performances and kept pet birds while the women did household work and entertained guests; the way they paid respects to others, even how they filled the tobacco pipes. The details of everyday life were all depicted concretely and realistically and thus clearly mirroring the characteristic features of the time.

In the research of Chinese modern literature, we usually relate Lao She to Chinese customs, because he was not only a writer but also an artist who had a profound knowledge of the customs and life style in Beijing. People's eating drew much of Lao She's attention. The Chinese people like eating and attach great importance to eating. A Chinese proverb says: "Food is the sky of people." From his first novel *The Philosophy of Lao Zhang*, Lao She repeatedly wrote about the customs of eating. In *The Philosophy of Lao Zhang*, Lao She used more than one thousand words to describe the scenes in restaurant: how the chef cooks, how the customers drink and eat, how they toast, how they get drunk... Beside, in his works, Lao She almost mentioned all the special restaurants in Beijing, presenting to us a social atmosphere of eating.

Through his works, Lao She also talks a lot about etiquettes. Etiquette is the customs of all Chinese people. In *The Two Mas*, Mr. Ma Senior insisted on buying the good present although he didn't have extra money for it. In *Divorce*, when Li's wife came to the city from hometown, Li's colleagues needed to send presents. When Brother Zhang's son was released from the prison, this was undoubtedly an event of sending presents. In *Camel Xiangzi*, Huniu asked Xiangzi to send presents to Mr. Liu.

in *Four Generations Under One Roof*, the Qi family were determined to celebrate Mr. Qi's birthday no matter how tense the situation was —“no matter how disturbing the society is, we — people of Beiping city can not forget the proprieties.”

Lao She's customs depiction serves for two purposes: one is to mold characters. For example, in *Camel Xiangzi*, how Huniu arranges the wedding reflects her strong desire to get married. Normally, as the customs go, the woman can't meet the groom the day before the wedding day. While Huniu said to Mr. Feng “you keep an eye on him, tomorrow I'm coming to pick him up,” she also fixed up everything quickly---she “rented two small rooms with a southern exposure in a large tenement yard in the Maojiawan district. She hired a paperhanger to paper them in white from floor to ceiling then asked Mr. Feng to write some “happiness” characters and pasted these on the walls.” All these show her eagerness to get married as an old girl. “After that, she went out to hire a sedan chair decorated with silver stars and sixteen musicians, ” and the route Huniu planned to walk on the wedding day was—“the procession made its way steadily past Xi'anmen Gate and the Xisi Arch.” These reflect that Hu-niu, as a daughter of a rich man, wanted to maintain her “price”. And besides, her name — “Huniu” (tiger girl) suggests her fate. According to the old Beijing superstition, the girls born in the tiger year would live a miserable life, and after marriage, they might bring misfortune to their families.

Secondly, the description of the customs is to dissect the national character of the whole Chinese people. As said by Belinsky, the customs are the skin of a nation, without them, the nation becomes a person without face.¹ Lao She did not separate the descriptions of everyday life from politics. Lao She described the multitude of incidents happening to his characters in connection with the turbulent times, making the readers hear the tidal waves of the era through the ripples. The details of his novels and all the dialogues and movements of his characters help reveal the sharpness of his social criticism. The depiction of customs is for criticizing the feudalistic culture and tradition. For example, in *Four Generations Under One Roof*, Mr. Qi was worried

¹ 《别林斯基选集》，引自《读书》1984年第8期P77

because he couldn't forget his birthday banquet although Beijing was being attacked by the Combined Armies of English and French. On the Fifth of May, the people in Beiping swarmed to the North Sea to attend the Masque skating competition. "No matter they have money or not, they all try to eat some dumplings, and put on their best clothes; if they can't find anything descent, they will borrow one from their friends or relatives, and then they all come to the North Sea— today, tickets are not charged— they forget the soldiers fighting, they forget their relatives still tortured in the jail, they forget the chains around their necks, now, all they are thinking about is to enjoy their lives, nothing has changed for them."(*Four Generations Under One Roof*) It is clear that the reason why Lao She described the "Masque skating competition" is to reveal the coward soul of the people at that time, to reveal "the heartless people, who in the name of courtesy and decorum, practice cannibalistic rituals as routine entertainments."

Chapter Four The Influence of Chinese Popular and Classical Literature

Another aspect which has made impression on Lao She's works is Chinese classical literature and popular literature. Because of its needs of ruling Han people, the Qing government encouraged the officers to learn Han culture and literature, thus led to the merger of the Manchu and Han culture. The hobby of reading Han poems and novels became prevalent in the Manchu families. In the prime of the Qing dynasty, some distinguished novel writers appeared, including Cao Xueqing, Wen Kan etc. This social context provided Lao She with a good access to Chinese classical literature.

In addition, one of Lao She's uncles ran a teahouse, which Lao She usually visited in his childhood. It's in this place that Lao She came into contact with different kinds of traditional arts such as Xiangsheng (a Chinese form of comic talk show) and Quci.

When he was a child, Lao She had experienced a particularly artistic atmosphere which instilled in the young, artistically-talented Lao She an interest in the traditional popular street performances, storytelling, operas, and plays. Lao She's friend Luo Changpei recalled, "In the afternoon after school we would often go to a small teahouse and listen to the *Five Younger Gallants* or *Magistrate Shih*. Soon he was able to tell a few lines and doing a few bars himself. This was the earliest artistic discovery in his education, and it was also his earliest demonstration of an artistic interest and talent. The traditional arts, especially the popular and folk arts, cultivated his artistic taste and aesthetic pursuits."¹ Lao She's adoration towards the traditional arts ran through his whole life, and he always treated them as a good connection with the masses. In 1938, he published two critical articles about popular literature, one is *Discussion on Popular Literature*, published in *Free China*, and the other is *On Singing Ballads in Literary Front*. He especially spoke highly of the art of Xiangsheng and Beijing Opera. Lao She made great efforts to collect and assess them. In November 1938, his collection of ballads and Peking operas was published by the Independence Publishing House.

¹ Lao She: Grieving over Mr. Luo Changpei 1984

Besides popular literature, he read large amounts of classical novels. During his spare time in childhood, he often read these kinds of books to his aunts and sisters in the evening. During his teaching period in Britain in 1925, Lao She began sharing a house with the scholar Clement Egerton and his wife. While living with the Egertons, he helped Mr. C. Egerton to translate *The Plum in the Golden Vase*.

As early as his middle school years, Lao She showed extreme interest in classical literature. He loved such poems as Selected Poems of Lu Fangweng. He said, "When others were doing the mathematical questions or remembering new English words, I was always reading poems, I read them and I also tried to write poems by myself."¹ "Before May Fourth Movement, although I was still young, in my essays I emulated the Tong Cheng school of writing, and in my poems I emulated Lu Fangweng and Wu Meicun" (Lao She: Selected Works of Lao She). His early lessons in life and the arts he appreciated were deeply imprinted on his later works.

Firstly, his humor and the themes of his works may well be traced back to Chinese classical literature, especially to late Qing fiction such as Wu Woyao's *Strange Things Seen in the Past Twenty Years*, a novel deriving its vitality from the absurd events and characters it openly denounces. Just like Wu Woyao, Lao She felt indignation over the evils in the stories he himself was recounting. It is noticeable that Lao She projected in his novel a theme which highly resembles the realistic novels of the late Qing Dynasty: the dark side of the government and the dumb Chinese people, as what is said in *Strange Things Seen in the Past Twenty Years*, "evil always defeats good, and the great evil defeats the minor one." In *Divorce*, Lao She furnished us with a gallery of petty bureaucrats, each of whom is grotesque in his unique way. Their humorous behaviors are shadows of the clowns from *Guan Chang Xian Xing Ji (Exposure of the Officialdom)* by Li Baojia.

Secondly, the characters under his pen often remind us of the Chinese chivalric spirit. This may mainly be attributed to the martial arts novels Lao She liked to read. He once tried to write a full-length novel named *Two Boxers* but did not finish it, then he also published plays *The Country Comes First*, *Miraculous Boxing* and so on, all of which contain chivalrous themes. The masculine characters in his works are not only men such

¹ 老舍：《我的创作经验》

as Sa Zilong in *The Soul-Slaying Spear*, and even some women in Lao She's novels are infused with chivalric spirit. There is a prostitute "T" in *The Crescent Moon*. As soon as "T" knew the "husband" already had a wife, "T", who had always been as obedient as a toy girl, immediately agreed to break up with him. In *Camel Xiangzi*, when determined to marry Xiangzi, Huniu showed great courage and an indomitable spirit. "Now that she had spoken out, Huniu warmed up. 'Me, shameless? Who are you to talk? You wouldn't like me to crake out all your much, would you?' 'I'm packing up and leaving. How much money do I get?'" These words said by Huniu to her father show her great audacity.

Assassination --- the most typical chivalric behavior which seems to spring from Lao She's admiration for the heroes of Chinese traditional novels like *Shui-hu Chuan* (*Water Margin*) appears many times in his works. Some characters in his novels go forth to avenge foul people by destroying the perpetrators of evil. Wang Te in *The Philosophy of Lao Zhang*, Second Master Ting in *Divorce*, Li in *Zhao Ziyue* are all in this league. Assassination also appears in his other works such as *The Biography of Liu Tainci*, *The Birthday of Xiaopuo*, *Four Generations Under One Roof* and so on.

Thirdly, we can also easily find the influence of the fiction of the Tang Dynasty over Lao She's works. Lao She showed much interest in the fiction of the Tang Dynasty. He made a vast study about it. In 1932, he wrote an essay about the love stories of the Tang Dynasty. Because of his great interest and concern, he was consciously or subconsciously affected by the Tang fiction.

Generally speaking, Lao She used the Tang fiction for reference in two ways. In the first place, the character types in Lao She's novels, especially the female characters, are similar to those in the Tang fiction. There are two most typical female characters in the Tang Stories. One is pathetic girl forced to turn to prostitution. In Lao She's works, we can find a long list of this kind of women. Tang Yuer and Wang Lingshi in *Zhao Ziyue*; "T" in *The Crescent Moon*; the heroine in *Vision*, Joy in *Camel Xiangzi*, Tong Fang in *Four Generations Under One Roof* and so on. In addition, these girls' temperaments are the same with those in the Tang fiction --- kind and gentle. In *The Crescent Moon*, both the Mother and daughter are prostitutes. This detail is the same with one of the famous Tang stories --- *Huo Xiaoyu*.

The second typical type of female characters in the Tang fiction is virago. This kind of women is also prevalent in Lao She's novels. The ferocious daughter-in-law in *The Woman from the Liu Village*, Huniu in *Camel Xiangzi*, the ambassador's wife in *The City of Cats*... Again, they share the same personality with those shrews in the Tang stories, unreasonable, fierce and lacking in femininity.

Another similarity lies in the titles of the works.

The Tang stories stands for a milestone in the history of Chinese fiction. The fiction of that dynasty improved greatly compared with its counterpart of the Southern and Northern Dynasties. One of the improvements was that the Tang stories began to have titles. Most of them used the names of the heroes or heroines as titles, such as: *the biography of Liu, Huo Xiaoyu*. In Lao She's works we can also find the same approach to entitling his novels: such as *The philosophy of Lao Zhang, Zhao Ziyue, The Two Mas, The Biography of Niu Tianci, Camel Xiangzi*... No wonder Mr. Lu Shuxiang once said that Lao She's works are always fragrant with the taste of the Tang stories.¹

¹ 转引自老舍:《一个近代最伟大的境界与人格的创造者》见《老舍论创作》, 1982 P 301

Chapter Five The Mixture of Westernized Language and Beijing Spoken Language

5.1 The Beijing Dialect

Prime Minister Zhou Enlai once remarked that Lao She and Hou Baolin are both the masters of language for their good command of the Chinese language. Of the Chinese language, there are two categories: one is classical language, which had been used formally throughout China before the 20th Century; the other is Pai-hua (vernacular), which developed rapidly during the early years of the 20th Century. Lao She's command of language is mainly of the latter one.

In 1917, Hu Shih published an article on the need for literary reform in *New Youth*. With the support of Chen Tu-hsiu, he urged writing in the vernacular instead of classical Chinese and won over many of the younger intellectuals. In the May 1918 issue of *New Youth*, Lu Hsun published his first story in Pai-hua (vernacular) — “*The Diary of a Madman*.” By the time, Hu Shih had published his famous article “*Constructive Literary Revolution: A Literature of National Speech— A National Speech of Literary Quality*,” in which he emphasized the need for using “plain speech” to produce living literature based on real life experiences and dealing with the lives of the common people.

The proposal for literary reform aroused considerable opposition, but the dynamic May Fourth Movement helped the reformists win. In 1920 the Peking government ordered the introduction of textbooks for the first two grades in Kuo-yu (National language, which was the official name given to Pai-hua demanded by the reformers.) Most of the writers had themselves been educated in the classical language. Now when they turned to writing in Pai-hua, they did so out of a conviction that it was good for the country. For a long time they experimented with the new medium and wrote in a peculiar half-classical, half-vernacular style, until they evolved a Pai-hua rich enough to produce good literature and yet not too far from the common man's level of understanding. However, Lao She excelled all others. He was a native of Beijing, whose dialect was the basis of the new “national language”.

Lao She's first novel, and to a lesser extent his second novel, also suffer from the fact that they were written in a language which was half vernacular (Pai-hua) and half classical (Wen-yen). In each new work Lao She increased the proportion of the vernacular in his mix, and by the time he wrote the fourth novel, he could be considered as, more or less, a writer of true Pai-hua.

Lao She's works demonstrate his miraculous mastery of the art of language. He usually used the spoken dialect of Beijing very fluently and wittily. Using spoken dialect of Beijing made his language more lively and terse and gave it a deep emotional color. He used the dialect for the expression of ideas and the portrayal of characters.

5.1.1 Lao She liked to employ verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs and conjunctions which ordinary people used in daily spoken language.

(1) Verbs

In terms of the range of verbs which are used frequently, the spoken language of Beijing dialect is more vivid than written Chinese language, and the meaning of each verb is more detailed and specific.

For example:

- ① 谁知道刘老头怎么把钱攘出去，他和虎妞连一个铜子也没沾润着。

(*Camel Xiangzi*)

“攘” originally means “扬”，but here it means spending money lavishly.

- ② 房钱，煤米柴炭，灯油茶水，还先别算添衣服，也就将够两个人用的，还得处处抠搜，不能像虎妞那么满不在乎。(Camel Xiangzi)

“抠搜” means careful calculation and strict budgeting.

- ③ 不错，这里必是有很多的钱；但是为什么单到这里来鼓逗钱，他不明白。

(*Beneath the Red Banner*)

“鼓逗” is often used as “鼓捣”. It means showing off.

(2) Nouns

- ① 就是对那些花生，似乎也没心程去动。(Black Li and White Li)

“心程”，originally “心肠”，means desire and mind.

- ② 鬼没有他们这么多的吃累！(*Beneath the Red Banner*)

“吃累” means burden.

- ③ 明天落座儿，晚半天就有亲友来。 (*Beneath the Red Banner*)

“晚半天” : twilight hours.

- ④ 又绕到西安门来。刚走到门脸上，灯光下走下来了四十多岁的男人。

(*Camel Xiangzi*)

“门脸上”： around the gate of the city.

(3) Adjectives

- ① 放了点胆子，脚踏实地的走，雪很磁石，发着一点点响声。 (*Camel Xiangzi*)

“磁石” means firm, and sturdy.

- ② 大寿桃点着红嘴，插着八仙人，非常大气。 (*Beneath the Red Banner*)

“大气” means “大方” in good taste.

(4) Adverbs

- ① 您横是快六十了吧？ (*Four Generations Under One Roof*)

“横是”： maybe, a surmise.

- ② 这儿呢——我在这儿小三年子了。 (*Camel Xiangzi*)

“小”： about.

- ③ 别紧自蹲着，说话呀！你起来！ (*Camel Xiangzi*)

“紧自”： do one thing for a long time.

- ④ 仿佛把自从娶了虎妞之后所有的倒霉一股拢总都喷在刘四爷身上。

(*Camel Xiangzi*)

“一股拢总”： all.

(5) Conjunctions

- ① 饶这么样，窗上还冻着一层冰花。 (*Camel Xiangzi*)

“饶”： although.

- ② 再分能在北平，还是在北平。 (*The Philosophy of Lao Zhang*)

“再分”： if.

5.1.2 The idioms and proverbs

- ① 像你这么老实巴焦的，安安顿顿的在这儿混些日子，总比满天打油飞强。 (*Camel Xiangzi*)

“满天打油飞去” means wandering everywhere, without a place to dwell in.

- ② 还需要眼光, 手段, 小心, 泼辣, 好不至于都放了鹰。(Camel Xiangzi)

“放了鹰” means the debts cannot be collected..

- ③ 连个好儿也不问!你真成, 永远是客(怯)木匠——一锯(句)!(Camel Xiangzi)

5.1.3 Additionally, in Beijing dialect some words are usually put after verbs.

(1) Verb+巴

- ① 他们有时也抓出个泥块似的孩子砸巴两拳, 招得大家哈哈的欢笑。

(Camel Xiangzi)

- ② 他把棉衣卷巴卷巴全卖了。(Camel Xiangzi)

- ③ 你横是多少也有个积蓄, 凑巴凑巴就弄辆车拉拉, 干脆大局!

(Camel Xiangzi)

(2) Direction verb + “起去”

- ① 星星渐稀, 天上罩着一层似云又似雾的灰气, 暗淡, 可是比以前高起许多去。(This Life of Mine)

- ② 况且刘四的话是那么难听, 仿佛他办寿, 他们就得老鼠似的都藏起去。

(Camel Xiangzi)

- ③ 她的嗓门又高起去, 街上的冷静使她的声音显得特别的清亮, ……

(Camel Xiangzi)

(3) Verb+verb+着 如: 拉拉着腿, 眼角棱棱着, 弯弯着腰, 缩缩着脖

- ① 太阳平西了, 河上的老柳歪歪着, 稍头挂着点金光。(The Crescent Moon)

- ② 祥子的心还是揪揪着, 不知上哪去好。(Camel Xiangzi)

5.1.4 The part of speech of words is sometimes changed.

- ① 他不像先前那样火着心拉买卖了, (Camel Xiangzi)

“火” is a noun, but here it is used as a verb. “火着心” means “be keen on”.

- ② 看祥子没动静, 高妈真想俏皮他一顿, 可是一想他的直诚劲儿, 又不大好意思了。(Camel Xiangzi)

“俏皮” is originally an adjective, now it is used as a verb.

- ③ 祥子整着身子——因为一得意就不知怎么好了——走出来。

(Camel Xiangzi)

“整” is originally adjective, now it is used as verb.

5.1.5 The use of short sentence makes the sentence sound more like daily conversation.

① 有水！哪儿来的？行！怎么办呢？没错！都哑巴了？清华！

(*Camel Xiangzi*)

② 哼，你这个傻小子。你个傻骆驼！地道的窝窝头脑袋！受苦的命。

(*Camel Xiangzi*)

Here the whole sentence is made up of noun phrases.

With the typical language of Beijing Dialect, Lao She's works are infused with vitality, becoming vivid and immortal.

5.2 Westernized Language

We should say when we look into Lao She's use of language, we are astonished by his fully command of vernacular and we put too much emphasis on it. Therefore, we usually neglect that English is Lao She's second language. Undoubtedly, we can not ignore that since Lao She owed so much to the Western novelists in terms of literary style and ideology; his language was also influenced by the Western language----mainly English grammar, vocabulary and sentence pattern.¹When discussing the issue of Chinese modern works being influenced by western languages, Lao She said:

Between the First World War and the Second World War, the modern Chinese writers began to use clauses the adverbial modifiers. Besides, they make sentences according to the western grammar. They do this in order to make their thoughts more fluent. In terms of the western standard, the Chinese grammar is too simple. Now, we use clauses so that it's possible to express two or three sentences with a longer one. The new European language comes into the Chinese verbal and written language, and makes our new creation more delicate and accurate, which has never been achieved before.² The westernized language has entered his writing unconsciously. We can easily find out

¹ 宋永毅：《老舍与中国文化观念》 P69

² 老舍：《现代中国小说》，转引自宋永毅《老舍与中国文化观念》

language transplantation in his works.

There are mainly four types of westernized language phenomenon in Lao She's works.

5.2.1 The use of inverted sentences. For example:

① 老张不能再睡了，虽然试着闭上眼几次。(*The Philosophy of Lao Zhang*)

② 他不能承认他是“迷”住了，虽然他的理想有力的管束着一切行为。
(*Divorce*)

③ 我只觉得他们的历史上有些极荒唐的错误，现在的人们正在为历史的罪过受惩罚，假如这不是个过于空洞与玄幻的想法。(*The City of Cats*)

④ 多咱洋教不灵了，他会退出来，改信白莲教，假若白莲能够给他两顿饭吃。
(*Beneath the Red Banner*)

⑤ 因此我们就应该更忠诚正直：他们不是人，我们还要是人。(*The City of Cats*)

This kind of inversion is not only used for connecting two sentences, it also happens in single sentences.

(1) The inversion of the adverbial modifier:

① 清明已过了，大概是：海棠花不是都快开齐了吗？(*Vision*)

② 杨家的六姑娘确是像块软皮糖，粘在他口中，仿佛是。(*Votor*)

③ 那双大脚踩住了他的命，仿佛是。(*Divorce*)

(2) In Chinese, adverbs are always placed behind the subject and in front of the verb. For example: 她悄悄地拭去了眼泪。But in Lao She's works this sequence is not always followed. The adverbs are placed at the beginning of the sentence, in front of the subject.

For example:

① 很懒的他立了起来，看了她一眼，走过去帮忙。(*Camel Xiangzi*)

② 晃晃悠悠的他放开了步。(*Camel Xiangzi*)

③ 极快的他想出个道理来 (*Camel Xiangzi*)

(3) The inversion of the Verb and the Object:

① 戴着妈妈给我的一顶小帽儿，蓝布的，上面印着小小的花，我记得。(The Crescent Moon)

② 这是另一个爸，我知道，因为坟里已经埋好一个爸了。(The Crescent Moon)

③ 无心中的他掏出手巾擦了擦脸，擦完了，照旧的在那里愣的站着。(The Two Mas)

④ 渺茫的他觉到一种比自己还更有力气的劲头儿，把他要揉成一个圆球，抛到一团烈火里去；他没法阻止住自己的前进。(Camel Xiangzi)

5.2.2 In Lao She's literary language, he uses insertion extensively, which is prevalent in English. For instances:

① 老李高兴了些，吵，吵，吵，妥协的结果——假如不是报应——必是吵。
(Divorce)

② 大鹰的死——我不愿用“牺牲”，因为他自己不以英雄自居——对他所希望的作用是否实现，到了什么程度，一时还不能知道。(The City of Cats)

③ 可是，这又太不像安慰邻居——而且是一位好邻居——的话。(Four Generations Under One Roof.)

5.2.3 There are seldom modifiers in front of personal pronouns or names in the Chinese language. Yet in Lao She's works, it appears frequently. Here are some examples:

① 一个赤裸裸的她，把一切丑陋与美好一下子，整个的都交给了他。(Camel Xiangzi)

② 越说越痛快，忘了自己，因为自己也包在那些话中，每句话中都有他，那要强的，委屈的，辛苦的，堕落的，他。(Camel Xiangzi)

③ 体面的，要强的，好梦想的，利己的，个人的，健壮的，伟大的样子，不知

陪着人家送了多少回殡，不知道何时何地会埋起他自己来。(Camel Xiangzi)

5.2.4 “的” is added between subject and predicate

① 村犬向他叫，他没大注意；妇女和小孩儿们的注视他，使他不大自在了。

(Camel Xiangzi)

② 汽车夫对洋车夫的态度，正有一点像样子的对那些老弱残兵。(Camel Xiangzi)

③ 她的一点头，或一笑，都是最美满的回答，使他觉得真是成了家。(Camel

Xiangzi)

The mixed use of the Beijing dialect and westernized language makes Lao She's writing language more diversified and more appealing, and also proves Lao She's miraculous mastery of the art of language.

Conclusion

If we open the scroll of Chinese modern literature, we will find that the early 20th century was a special time which gave birth to the simulation of Western culture and literature, and brought in a brand-new future of Chinese literature.

Lao She embarked on literary career with the exposure to Western literature and culture. Although in his first two works, the influence was limited to simple imitation, Lao She gradually paid more attention to the writing techniques of Western literary works and their writing ideology. Moreover, Lao She was converted to Christianity in adolescence, and Christianity and the Bible had a great impact upon his works.

However, Lao She was the only Chinese writer who was praised as “People’s Artist”. This is mainly attributed to his profound knowledge and extensive command of Chinese culture and literature.

Lao She had a special identity---- he was a Manchu. This identity endowed his works with fresh content and special attractions. Some of Lao She’s works were devoted to the Manchu people and their life. Secondly, when writing about the common people’s life, Lao She presented us a valuable picture of the customs of the time, which not only made contribution to the modern literature but also to the study of Chinese customs. Thirdly, Lao She’s good command of Chinese classical literature and his interest in popular literature also benefited his works. Especially the Tang Dynasty stories played an important role in modeling the women characters of Lao She’s works.

Combining Western and Eastern culture and literature, Lao She drew nutrition from two totally different languages and successfully mixed them together into his unique language.

According to the study, we may arrive at the conclusion that just as China has been becoming stronger with the opening up policy, a writer who has an open mind and is enlightened by various cultures will create new and better art in his works. And what’s more, a writer should know only simulation is far from enough to be creative and successful; keeping what is unique inside him is what makes him sparkle.

With economic globalization, there comes the cultural communication. The mixture

of different kinds of culture has been showing its tremendous impact on literature. Facing the new situation, some writers might lose their identities in the whirls while some open their arms and use the inspiration as a tool of presenting to the world what's unique about their identities. The latter will not only promote their own works, but also make contribution to the literature of the world as a whole.

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