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**Paralysis and Paranoia: Comparing Lu Xun and Joyce:
Two Contrasted Modes of Modernism**

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Paralysis and Paranoia: Comparing Lu Xun and Joyce: Two Contrasted Modes of Modernism

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Abstract

In this article I discuss Lu Xun's *Outcry* and James Joyce's *Dubliners* in relation to the psychoanalytic concept of paranoia. Lu Xun's literary pursuit relates closely to an attempt to save China from a national paralysis (*mamu*), which he claims was rooted in feudal or Confucian values prevalent in traditional Chinese society. I argue that Lu Xun's attempt – like those prevailing during the May Fourth Movement (1919) – to eliminate such a paralysis may be compared to paranoia.

Paralysis is also a central motif in Joyce's *Dubliners*, referring to a national stagnation in emotion, will, and social values among Irish people. Joyce's reference to this pseudo-medical term also leads to a paranoia permeating his writing, which is ultimately characterized by a self-contained, autonomous language, as in *Finnegans Wake*. In comparing Lu Xun to Joyce, I examine paranoia as source and by-product of modern literature, Chinese or Western.

This essay compares Lu Xun (1881-1936) to James Joyce (1882-1941) in relation to the psychoanalytic concept of paranoia, proposing that their works embody two different modes of modernism. Focusing on Lu Xun's *Outcry* (*Nahan*, 1923) and Joyce's *Dubliners* (1914), I begin the comparison by discussing a pseudo-medical term 'paralysis', which is a foremost motif in both these two collections of short stories, depicting a state of disillusionment permeating people in modern times. I argue that this paralysis may be compared to paranoia. The concern over the mental paralysis of their respective nations and compatriots in the two writers, however, reveals two different kinds of paranoia respectively underlying Chinese and European modernisms. In the case of Lu Xun, along with the prominent role that he played in Chinese modern literature since the May Fourth Movement (1919), he succeeded in arousing a nationwide cultural awareness of the stereotype of China's feudalistic backwardness¹. Characterized by an

¹ Lu Xun's preeminence in China is thus noted by Leo Ou-fan Lee in *Lu Xun and His Legacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1985): 'Lu Xun cult in China...has resulted in the canonization of Lu Xun's writings and has established his fame as second only to that of Mao [Zedong] himself. The official Lu Xun "industry" in the People's Republic has turned out an impressive quantity of artifacts: at least three editions

exigency to save the country, Chinese modernity was propelled by a radical attempt to eliminate such stereotypical backwardness which is regarded as hindering national salvation (*jiuguo*).

As different from this mode of paranoia which relates to the public, on the contrary, Joyce's concern over his paralytic Dubliners subsequently develops into an increasing tendency towards producing a private and autonomous language, as in *Finnegans Wake* (1939). This tendency demonstrates a paranoia which Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) – who drew on Joyce extensively in his last period of teaching – calls the *sinthome*². In comparing these two modern(ist) writers, this essay looks into paranoia as both the source and by-product of modern literature, Chinese or Western.

In an early attempt to save China from being oppressed by first the Western and then the Japanese colonial powers at the turn of the 19th- and 20th- centuries, Lu Xun was determined to study medicine as he thought that it was a physical weakness among Chinese people that made China the object of oppression, and that the popularization of Western medical science in China could cure the men and the country. But later he turned out to realize that curing people's bodies could not help save the country if their souls remained unchanged, e.g. being in a pre-modern, or feudalistic, state. He thus says in the 'Preface' to *Outcry*:

I no longer believed in the overwhelming importance of medical science. However rude a nation was in physical health, if its people were intellectually feeble, they would never become anything other than cannon fodder or gawping spectators, their loss to the world through illness no cause for regret. The first task was to change their spirit; and literature and the arts, I decided at the time, were the best means to this end³.

of his complete works [each of which amounts to about 20 volumes], numerous collections of his individual works (some are reproductions of his original drafts)... It is hard to think of any other modern writer who has been so lavishly and laboriously honored by an entire nation' (ix).

² Culminating in his seminar 23 entitled '*Le sinthome*' (1975-76) which is entirely on Joyce.

³ Lu Xun, *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*, trans. Julia Lovell (London: Penguin Classics 2009), p.17. This is a new translation of all Lu Xun's short stories (including 'Nostalgia', written in 1911), 53 years after the short stories' first English translation by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang (*Lu Xun: Selected Works* vol. 1, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press 1956). The Yangs' version only contains 19 stories out of the 33. The English translations of Lu Xun's fiction are rather few; another notable translation is by an American, William Lyell (*Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press 1990). Jeremy Tambling discusses various translations of Lu Xun's short stories – in relation to the concept of translation – in *Madmen and Other Survivors: Reading Lu Xun's Fiction* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press 2007); see pages 1-11. The Chinese version I use is edited by Jin Yinming, *The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun* (Gui Lin: Li Jiang Publishing House 2005), which contains 33 stories, i.e. 14 from *Outcry*, 11 from *Hesitation*, and 8 from *Old Stories Retold*.

The most serious problem among Chinese people, according to Lu Xun, is their ‘paralysis’ (*mamu*)⁴. He sees that this ‘illness’ is rooted in a feudal or Confucian value in traditional Chinese society – as the title of his reminiscence ‘Father’s Illness’ (1926) symbolically indicates. Lu Xun’s attempt to cure the national illness results in producing a literature of ‘new life’⁵, constructing stereotypical Chinese people who are either paralyzed or mad. ‘Persecution complex’⁶, or paranoia, is one of the consequences of people’s paralysis he depicts in both his fiction and prose writing. We may look at this mental disorder from a psychoanalytic viewpoint.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) drew, early, on ‘paranoia’, discussing Schreber’s *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* (1903). Daniel Paul Schreber (1842-1910), an eminent lawyer in Dresden, suffered twice from ‘nervous illness’, and was admitted to psychiatric clinics and various asylums. During his second illness, staying at Sonnenstein Asylum, he wrote his *Memoirs* recounting his delusions and hallucinations. Freud – who had not met Schreber – began in 1910 to write down his remarks on the case, based on the *Memoirs*, and published them as ‘Psycho-Analytic Notes Upon an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)’ the next year⁷. For Freud, ‘it is a remarkable fact that the familiar principal forms of paranoia can all be represented as contradictions of the single proposition: “*I (a man) love him (a man)*”’⁸. For the paranoiac, according to Freud, one of the contradictions to deny this proposition is to create a delusion of persecution, as running in his unconscious, asserting that ‘I do not *love him* – I *hate him*, because HE PERSECUTES ME’⁹. Furthermore, as ‘the father-complex...was the

⁴ The word ‘paralysis’ (or ‘paralytic’, when an adjective is needed) is a literal translation of the Chinese term ‘*mamu*’ that Lu Xun uses in the ‘Preface’ to *Outcry*, which I think more accurately represents what Lu Xun means against his perception of his compatriots’ mental state. However, ‘*mamu*’ is not translated as ‘paralysis’ in major translations of the stories; for example, it is translated as ‘apathetic’ in the Yangs’ translation (2), and as ‘blank’ in Lovell’s (17).

⁵ ‘New life’ is actually the title conceived for an aborted new literary magazine Lu Xun and ‘a few other necessary associates’ were planning to publish. His first story ‘Diary of a Madman’ was originally written for this new magazine. The story was eventually published by *New Youth*, founded and run by Humanities teachers at Peking University, including first Chen Duxiu (1879-1942), and successively Hu Shi (1891-1962), Qian Xuantong (1887-1939), Li Dazhao (1889-1927), etc.

⁶ Lu Xun, ‘Diary of a Madman’, *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*, trans. Julia Lovell (London: Penguin Classics 2009), p.21.

⁷ Sigmund Freud, ‘Psycho-Analytic Notes Upon an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)’, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis 1955), Vol.12, pp.3-82.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.63; original italics.

⁹ *Ibid.*; original italics and upper cases.

dominant element in Schreber's case and with the wishful phantasy round which the illness centred', Freud interprets Schreber's paranoia as '[h]aving its origin in the boy's inverted Oedipus situations, i.e. his homosexual attachment to a father figure'¹⁰. Paranoia, in short, is hence for Freud an unconscious fear as well as a defense against an inverted Oedipal homosexuality.

Lacan, while paying tribute to Freud, developed the concept of paranoia in Seminar 3, *The Psychoses* (1955-1956). First, Lacan acknowledges the importance of the paternal function that the relation of the father to the boy has to do with channeling him towards heterosexuality. Furthermore, he discusses the issue in relation to 'foreclosure' of the Name-of-the-Father which indicates a failure of patriarchal power in the normal processes of signification, and so producing psychosis. Unlike Freud who only works with a text, that is, Schreber's *Memoirs*, the diagnosis of paranoia for Lacan is predicated on speech, with, for example, the psychoanalytic treatment known as the 'talking cure'. Speech for Lacan is inevitably associated with the concept of *the Other* 'with a big O'. For the subject, this Other is absolute in the sense that 'he is recognized but that he isn't known'¹¹. Unlike other *others* which could be physical objects known to the subject, the big Other is determined by language and is therefore always uncertain to the subject due to language's spontaneous equivocity or contextuality. The Other hence provides a plurality in speech and language. To illustrate this point, Lacan refers to the Hegelian master-slave metaphor:

*You are my woman or You are my master, which means – You are what is still within my speech, and this I can only affirm by speaking in your place. This comes from you to find the certainty of what I pledge. This speech is speech that commits you. [...] Precisely what constitutes the foundational value of this speech is that what is aimed at in the message... is that the other is there as absolute Other. [...] It's essentially this unknown in the otherness of the Other that characterizes the speech relation at the level at which speech is spoken to the other*¹².

This unknown in the absolute Other between the addressor and the addressee (or the analyst and the analysand) is determined by language whose signification can never be absolutely univocal. When speaking 'you are my woman', for example, the subject

¹⁰ Ibid., p.59. Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter, 'Introduction', in Daniel Paul Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, trans & eds. Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter (London: WM. Dawson & Sons Ltd. 1955), p.10.

¹¹ Jacques Lacan, *Seminar III: The Psychoses 1955-1956*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: W. W. Norton 1993), p.37, 38.

¹² Ibid.; original italics.

cannot be so sure if the ‘you’ (the known, physical other) really is or wants to be his woman. In this sense, the interlocutors have to always speak *of* the other, in addition to speaking *to* the other, because they are aware of the unknown or the Other. For Lacan, it is the lack of the ability to be aware of the Other, or ‘the exclusion of the big Other’, that characterizes a psychotic¹³. As a result of not being able to be aware of the Other, the speech of a psychotic is singular, without any signs of referring to the unknown.

Clinically, as Dany Nobus assesses, interpreting Lacan, ‘For a psychotic person, nothing is unsure within what is being transmitted; sentences are unidimensional, a word does not carry any other meaning than that which is presented by the word itself’¹⁴. Later in drawing on the Schreber case in terms of a patriarchal tension against his father, the exclusion of the big Other is in Lacan more technically and systematically replaced by the conception of the *foreclosure* of the Name-of-the-Father, with the concept of *foreclosure* (developed from the Freudian term *Verwerfung*) referring to a barred access to the Name-of-the-Father, that is, the absolute Other in the form of the culturally ordered regulations. For Lacan, however, not all forms of madness can be deemed to be paranoia, although he reminds us that ‘[e]verything we call psychosis or madness *was* paranoia’ in German psychiatry ever since the 18th century¹⁵. In its modern description, according to him, a diagnosis of paranoia is more related to delusion characterized by a mechanism of defense. Defense which ‘is said to be at the origin of paranoia...is in the case of psychosis said to cause a signal, intended as a warning, to appear in the external world in the form of a hallucination’¹⁶. Discussing paralysis in relation to paranoia among characters in *Outcry* reveals how Chinese modernity is determined by a national paranoid fear and consequently, a defense.

The most widely known mad figure in *Outcry* is the younger brother in ‘Diary of a Madman’, as indicated by the narrator’s note that he ‘suffered from what is known as a “persecution complex”’¹⁷. The diary entries written by him during the days he suffered

¹³ Ibid., p.52.

¹⁴ Dany Nobus, *Jacques Lacan and the Freudian Practice of Psychoanalysis* (London & Philadelphia: Routledge 2000), p.12.

¹⁵ Jacques Lacan, *Seminar III: The Psychoses 1955-1956*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: W. W. Norton 1993), p.4; my italics.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.144.

¹⁷ Lu Xun, ‘Diary of a Madman’, *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*, trans. Julia Lovell (London: Penguin Classics 2009), p.21.

from the delusional disease reveal clear signs of his fear of others, particularly that of being eaten by others. This fear, in light of Lacanian psychoanalysis, is characterized by his failure to recognize the *Other* in his comprehending the external world, producing hence a defense mechanism. Among other evidences indicating his persecution complex, one of the conspicuous signs is that he cannot distinguish between words and what they really mean contextually. For example, he mixes up metaphorical utterances such as ‘I could eat you’ – which a mother speaks scolding her son, with an ancient (mythological) cannibalism and a recent case of assassination against the Manchu rule:

*Thousands of years ago, the royal cook Yi Ya steamed his own son for his king to eat. We all know it's been going on – since the creation of the earth itself. That revolutionary, Xu Xilin, a few years back – didn't they eat his heart and liver?*¹⁸

He hence thinks that the mother will eat her son, and fears his being eaten by his elder brother who he believes has eaten their younger sister. This symptomatic paranoid fear of the other is characterized, in his comprehension of what others say, by a lack of anchoring points between words and their plural and contextual meanings: the signifiers (e.g. eat) are floating, not being connected to what they (momentarily) signify. For Lacan, anchoring, or quilting, points (*points de capiton*) are ‘fundamental points of insertion between the signifier and the signified necessary for a human being to be called normal, and which, when they are not established, or when they give way, make a psychotic’¹⁹. It is the lack of anchoring points that deprives the psychotic (or the paranoiac, as in the current case) of the possibility to recognize the Other. As the paranoiac is oblivious of certain anchoring points necessary for signification but sticks solely to a single and fixed ‘perception’, he cannot recognize contextual meanings in communication. Linguistically, for the paranoiac, ‘the signifier itself (and not that which it signifies)...is the object of the communication’²⁰.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp.28-29. Note that the translator here adds, in the main text, some annotative information of Xu Xilin, i.e. ‘That revolutionary...a few years back – didn't they eat his heart and liver?’, which is not included in the original where even the first name Xilin is just a homophone of the revolutionary who assassinated the Manchurian governor of Anhui province, and whose heart and liver were subsequently taken, cooked, and eaten by the governor's aides-de-camp. See also Lu Xun's mentioning of the assassination in a reminiscence entitled ‘Fan Ainong’ (1926).

¹⁹ Jacques Lacan, *Seminar III: The Psychoses 1955-1956*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: W. W. Norton 1993), pp.268-69.

²⁰ Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company 2002), p.184.

The story is indeed filled with conspicuous evidences or symptoms of paranoia. Nevertheless, while investigating a case of paranoia based on the text the narrator (no matter who he, or she, is) provides or establishes, we can also discover his alleged superiority as being normal and capable of defining people as mad – ‘in the hope that they [the diary entries] may be of use to medical research’, as he claims in the ‘Preface’²¹. This superiority presents a self-contained ‘normal’ mentality that is endorsed by the established conventions in areas including language, feudal bureaucracy, and the belief in the power of medicine, and so on. These conventions, ironically, are critiqued and ridiculed (though in the manner of delusion) by the diarist. The diarist, for example, detests a ‘Records of the Past’ and stamps on it, because ‘it has been [his] enemy since’²². Lovell’s translation omits the point that this Record belongs to someone called Mr. Gu Jiu, an unusual name which could mean ‘ancient times’. Thus this is supposed to be an old style ledger written in traditional Chinese which, however, is exactly what the narrator uses to write the preface preceding the diary entries, which are written in the vernacular. As discussed earlier, the diarist’s foremost fear of other people is their cannibalism which, according to him, has been established ever ‘since ancient times’, and his detestation against ancient or conventional values is central at Confucianism:

When I flick through the history books, I find no dates, only those fine Confucian principles ‘benevolence, righteousness, morality’ snaking their way across each page. As I studied them again, through one of my more implacably sleepless nights, I finally glimpsed what lay between every line, of every book: ‘Eat people!’²³

In addition to Confucian principles, the power of medicine, which is supposed to form an authority to define people as abnormal or mad, is also critiqued by the diarist because of the medical practitioners’ cannibalism: ‘In his *Book of...what is it? Herbs?...Li Shizhen* openly observes that boiled human flesh is perfectly edible. He must have tried it himself’²⁴. Of course, as the translator also points out in the ‘Notes’, Li Shizhen’s (1518-1593) classic herbal compendium contains no such observation about the eating of human flesh. But the diarist’s delusional account enables us to have a sub-text, while being

²¹ Lu Xun, ‘Diary of a Madman’, *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*, trans. Julia Lovell (London: Penguin Classics 2009), p.21.

²² *Ibid.*, p.22.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.24.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.25.

exposed to a main text sustained by a mainstream ideology which, as discussed above, possesses the power to define people. Such a sub-text provides us with an understanding of the diarist's paranoia, which is not just a fear of the others, but a detestation against the main ideologies.

Apart from 'Diary of a Madman', there is another story in *Outcry* depicting the paranoiac. Chen Shicheng in 'The White Light' (1922) suffers from delusional hallucination and finally drowns himself. After sixteen consecutive times of failure in the county-level civil service examinations, Chen becomes increasingly paranoid. His mode of paranoia is identified with a hallucination first in the form of hearing an unidentifiable voice:

'Failed again!'
Who said that? He jumped to his feet, the words ringing in his ears, and looked around him: no one in sight.
*'Failed again!' the voice repeated, his ears still buzzing*²⁵.

Cheng's delusional hallucination is not uncommon to people, even at the moments when they are not experiencing any mishaps at all; this kind of delusion, in fact, may be called 'telepathy'. Freud, for example, recalls a similar hallucination in his own experience, in his discussion of chance and superstition: 'During the days when I was living alone in a foreign city – I was a young man at the time – I quite often heard my name suddenly called by an unmistakable and beloved voice; I then noted down the exact moment of the hallucination and made anxious enquiries of those at home about what had happened at that time. Nothing had happened'²⁶. This is a Freudian disavowal which indicates a determinism of knowing *not to know* a delusion which he hence regards as occultism:

*I must confess that I am one of those unworthy people in whose presence spirits suspend their activity and the supernatural vanishes away, so that I have never been in a position to experience anything myself which might arouse a belief in the miraculous. Like every human being, I have had presentiments and experienced trouble, but the two failed to coincide with one another, so that nothing followed the presentiments, and the trouble came upon me unannounced.*²⁷

²⁵ Lu Xun, 'The White Light', *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*, trans. Julia Lovell (London: Penguin Classics 2009), p.134.

²⁶ Sigmund Freud, 'Determinism, Belief in Chance and Superstition', in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. & trans. James Strachey *et al* (London: Hogarth 1953-74), Vol.6, p.261. The reference is to his stay in Paris in 1885-6.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

One may say that Freud, as a normal person, manages to ‘suspend [the supernatural] activity and the supernatural vanishes away’, so that he avoids being ‘in a position to experience anything...which might arouse a belief in the miraculous’²⁸. But Chen in the story is not able to exercise such a disavowal. The supernatural evidences become in him more and more ‘real’: even ‘the light shone uncomfortably in his eyes...and a flock of chickens cackled with laughter’²⁹. As the hallucination grows, he finds that a jawbone, which he digs up when trying to unearth the ground under the desk to seek the treasure rumored to be buried by his ancestors, ‘began to twitch into a ghoulis smile’ saying ‘Failed again!’³⁰. This leads to a complete mental breakdown after his being driven by the white light and the unknown voice: ‘There is nothing for you here... To the mountains...’³¹. He shouts, “‘Open the gates!’” Over by the town’s western wall, a fearful wail of hope pierced the dawn light’³².

Driven by a paralysis deriving from life mishaps, some protagonists in *Outcry* go mad or start ‘praying to the gods and worshipping Buddha’, ‘lead[ing] to a longer period of befuddlement’ and ‘developing “self-deception”’, embodying the current reality of Chinese people at that moment, as Lu Xun later argues in an essay entitled ‘Have the Chinese Lost Their Self-Confidence?’ (1934)³³. In *Outcry*, the theme of befuddlement and self-deception is prevalent, more conspicuously found in ‘Medicine’ and ‘Tomorrow’, written respectively in 1919 and 1920, right after the uprising of the students on 4 May, 1919. In ‘Medicine’, the parents believe that a bun dipped in human blood (*renxie mantou*) can cure their son’s illness which is supposed to be tuberculosis. They bought such a *mantou* from an executioner, which seems to have been soaked up with blood from a jailor whose name is Xia and who was killed simply because ‘he said the great Qing empire belongs to us!’ – which is apparently a rebellious, or revolutionary, statement against the Qing government. Younger Shuan, the son, ate the *mantou*, which of course cannot cure his illness, and he finally died. The story of ‘Tomorrow’ is similar,

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Lu Xun, ‘The White Light’, *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*, trans. Julia Lovell (London: Penguin Classics 2009), p.134.

³⁰ Ibid., pp.136-7.

³¹ Ibid., p.137.

³² Ibid.

³³ Lu Xun, ‘Have the Chinese Lost Their Self-Confidence?’ in *Silent China: Selected Writings of Lu Xun*, ed & trans. Gladys Yang (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1973), p.183.

indicating that superstition, as an ultimate hope for people with their helpless paralysis in facing the cruel reality, cannot save them. Bao'er, Mrs Shan's three-year-old son, was seriously sick. In order to cure her son,

*She had drawn lots, she had beseeched the gods, she was thinking to herself; she had even given him medicine. What else was there left for her to do? The only person she hadn't yet tried was Dr Ho Xiaoxian.*³⁴

She went to see Dr Ho who is apparently a quack and the 'Baby Life-Saver Wonder Pill' he prescribed could not cure the illness and save the baby's life. As depicted in these two stories, superstition which characterized many common practices among Chinese people shows another kind of paranoia caused by people's mental paralysis. As Freud sees, superstition or occultism is a paranoia, for '[i]n paranoia many sorts of [unexplainable] things force their way through to consciousness whose presence [is] in the unconscious of normal and neurotic people'³⁵. Superstition is in fact for him an attempt to rationalize chance, which is divided into two levels, external and internal. He says, 'I believe in external (real) chance, it is true, but not in internal (psychical) accidental events... the superstitious person...is the other way round'³⁶. Superstition, however, seems to be the only way out for Chinese people who were paralyzed by the stagnation of feudalism.

By warning his compatriots of their madness, paralysis, and befuddlement, Lu Xun's patriotic discourses also represent a paranoid fear of the other prevalent in the so-called May Fourth literature. The other here refers to the language and literature which hinder the achievement of a strong and prosperous nation. As Jeremy Tambling suggests in his monograph on Lu Xun's stories, '[p]aranoia in the community works by creating paranoia in the other, in the person it deems mad'³⁷. Paranoia, in addition, Tambling continues, 'is an image for the national fears that drive nations to war'³⁸. Here Tambling is allegorizing the paranoid national psychology among countries involved in the First World War, of which the consequential events were exactly the spark that set off the May

³⁴ Lu Xun, 'Tomorrow', *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*, trans. Julia Lovell (London: Penguin Classics 2009), pp.46-7.

³⁵ Sigmund Freud, 'Determinism, Belief in Chance and Superstition', in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. & trans. James Strachey *et al* (London: Hogarth 1953-74), Vol.6, p.255.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 257.

³⁷ Jeremy Tambling, *Madmen and Other Survivors: Reading Lu Xun's Fiction* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press 2007), p.28.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Fourth Movement, prompting subsequently a new literary revolution. The so-called May Fourth literature can be seen as the representation of a national fear having been produced ever since the late Qing dynasty. This paranoid fear is doomed to create paranoia or perversity in the other. On the one hand, for example, May Fourth literature introduced a new language and fresh ideas into Chinese modernity. On the other, this newness was at the cost of restricting and suppressing other varieties of culture and arts, in the name of both *jiuguo* (national salvation) and *qimeng* (enlightenment). Overthrowing traditional Chinese language (*wenyan*) is one, criticizing popular literature, such as the ‘Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School’ (*Yuan-yang hu-die pai*)³⁹, is another. Although Lu Xun was not the first to initiate the language reform or ‘linguistic turn’ – it was Hu Shi (1891-1962) who touched on the issue in an article written in 1918 for *New Youth* entitled ‘The Literature of National Language and the Literary National Language’ (*guoyu de wenxue – wensue de guoyu*)⁴⁰ – he was among the most prominent May Fourth intellectuals who advocated the vernacular (*baihua*)⁴¹, against those who currently called for a ‘*wenyan* renaissance’⁴². He says, for example,

*One of the differences between civilized men and savages is that civilized men have writing to convey their thoughts and feelings to the rest of the world and to posterity. China also has writing, but a writing quite divorced from the mass of the people. Couched in crabbed, archaic language, it describes outmoded, archaic sentiments. All its utterances belong to the past, and therefore amount to nothing. Hence our people, unable to understand each other, are like a great dish of loose sand.*⁴³

³⁹ The term, as Leo Lee writes, ‘has been traced to one of the best sellers of this type, Hsu Chen-ya’s *Yu-li hun* (Jade pear spririt), first published in 1912 – a sentimental novel padded with poems comparing lovers to pairs of butterflies and mandarin ducks – Leo Ou-Fan Lee, ‘Literary Trends: The Quest for Modernity, 1895-1927’, in *An Intellectual History of Modern China*, eds. Merle Goldman and Leo Ou-Fan Lee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002), p.153.

⁴⁰ Hu Shi, ‘Jianshe de wenxue geming lun’ (On the constructive literary revolution), in *New Youth* 4, no.4 (April 1918), pp.289-303.

⁴¹ *Baihua* is the vernacular language understandable to everyone including ordinary people, as opposed to the privileged classical language known as *wenyan*.

⁴² Lin Shu (1852-1924) and editors of the magazine *Xue Heng* (*Critical Review*, first published in 1921), such as Mei Guangdi, Wu Mi, and Hu Xiansu, were among those who argued that ‘As the major vehicle of China’s classical heritage, *wen-yen* could not be replaced entirely by *pai-hua* [*baihua*]...[that] without comprehensive knowledge of *wen-yen* writings, writers could never create a vernacular literature’ – Leo Ou-Fan Lee, ‘Literary Trends: The Quest for Modernity, 1895-1927’, in *An Intellectual History of Modern China*, eds. Merle Goldman and Leo Ou-Fan Lee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002), p.162. As a famous translator of Western literature, Lin insisted to use only *wen-yen* in his translations.

⁴³ Lu Xun, ‘Silent China’, in *Silent China: Selected Writings of Lu Xun*, ed & trans. Gladys Yang (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1973), pp.163-64.

Apart from language reform, the social values or the educational potential of literature is another goal which Lu Xun and his fellow May Fourth intellectuals aim to achieve. New Chinese literature at the turn of 19th and 20th centuries can arguably be divided into three types, namely, the ‘new fiction’ promoted by the pre-May Fourth social Darwinist scholars, such as Liang Qichao (1873-1929), which was expected to ‘exert a decisive influence in all spheres of a nation’s life...and served an ulterior purpose: the enlightenment of the Chinese people’⁴⁴, the ‘new literature’ of the May Fourth era, and the ‘Butterfly School’. As notes Jianhua Chen, Lu Xun regarded the Butterfly fiction as ‘low taste, helplessly outmoded, and morally decadent, exemplifying what he called the diabolical *yangchang* (foreign concession) culture of Shanghai’ – this despite his ‘limited knowledge of Butterfly fiction’ and his frequent ‘amus[ing] his mother by sending her novels by Zhang Henshui (1867-1959)’⁴⁵. The label Lu Xun gave to the Butterfly fiction was ‘*caizi jia liumang*’, which literally means ‘talented scholars plus hooligans’. In such a type of fiction, he says, ‘there is a great deal of criticism of society but little genuine; the majority of these novels were hastily written and unfinished...Gradually this type of literature degenerated into mere material for gossip-columns’⁴⁶. His criticism of the Butterfly fiction, which can be found mainly in his *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction* (1923-1924) and ‘The Historical Development of Chinese Fiction’ (1924), has been ‘canonized as [some of the] major writings of the May Fourth New Literature’⁴⁷.

The politics behind May Fourth intellectuals’ commitment to a strong and independent China suggests a radical replacement of the classical language as well as the ‘*caizi jia ren*’ (talent-beauty) literary values prevalent among the late Qing novels. Among others, these two elements are deemed to have paralyzed people making them not aware of the exigency of national salvation. The paranoid fear of such ‘detering’ elements leads eventually to raising the power and significance of madness in pushing society forward.

⁴⁴ Leo Ou-Fan Lee, ‘Literary Trends: The Quest for Modernity, 1895-1927’, in *An Intellectual History of Modern China*, eds. Merle Goldman and Leo Ou-Fan Lee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002), p.146, p.147.

⁴⁵ Jianhua Chen, ‘Canon Formation and Linguistic Turn: Literary Debates in Republican China, 1919-1949’, in *Beyond the May Fourth Paradigm: In Search of Chinese Modernity*, eds. Kai-Wing Chow, Tze-ki Hon, Hung-yok Ip, and Don C. Price (Plymouth: Lexington Books 2008), p.57.

⁴⁶ Lu Xun, *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction*, trans. Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press 2009), pp.366-67.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

There was an argument among May Fourth activists that it was the lack of madness that prevented China from developing. Fu Sinian (1896-1950), one of the activists and student leaders during the May Fourth demonstration, proclaims in an essay written in April 1919, immediately before the incident, entitled ‘Some Crazy Words’ (*Yi duan fenghua*):

Lunatics! Lunatics! Christ was mad, Socrates was mad, Trotsky and Nietzsche are mad. How could their contemporaries not think of them as madmen? But, after a while, didn't thousands of sane people follow in the footsteps of these madmen?

...

*China is nearly dead today precisely because we have too few madmen.... I myself am too sane and thus cannot contribute much.... Madmen are our most lovable, most cherished people. Apart from madmen, only children are worthy of love.... We should therefore follow madmen and love children: the madmen will be our teachers, the children our friends.*⁴⁸

This is a Nietzschean way of seeing madness as a propeller necessary for innovations and intellects. In fact, as Nietzsche allegedly articulates in section 14 of *Daybreak* (1881), entitled ‘Significance of madness in the history of morality’, madness is always situated at every progressive moment in which law or morality should be condemned:

*‘It is through madness that the greatest good things have come to Greece’, Plato said, in concert with all ancient mankind. Let us go a step further: all superior men who were irresistibly drawn to throw off the yoke of any kind of morality and to frame new laws had, if they were not actually mad, no alternative but to make themselves or pretend to be mad – and this indeed applies to innovators in every domain and not only in the domain of priestly and political dogma: – even the innovator of poetical metre had to establish his credentials by madness.*⁴⁹

Lu Xun, like Fu and other early Chinese ‘Nietzscheans’ such as Liang Qichao, Wang Guowei (1877-1927), and the young Guo Moruo (1892-1978), was influenced by Nietzsche’s idea of the will to power over intellect and objective conditions⁵⁰. ‘Diary of a

⁴⁸ Retold by Vera Schwarz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1986), p.127. The original text, in Chinese, was published by *Xinchao (New Tide)*, 1:4 (April 1919), pp.684-85.

⁴⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1982), p.14.

⁵⁰ The comparison made between Lu Xun and Nietzsche, or the influence of Nietzsche on Lu Xun, has been one of the most discussed topics in Lu Xun studies both inside and outside Mainland China, much more popular after the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. Chiu-yee Cheung, who works on the topic extensively, for example, explains in detail the intellectual kinship between the two in a monograph entitled *Lu Xun: The Chinese “Gentle” Nietzsche* (2001). He says,

The comparison [between Lu Xun and Nietzsche] will certainly illustrate that Lu Xun deserves the title “Chinese Nietzsche”, however, Lu Xun’s kinship to Nietzsche’s philosophy or Nietzsche the philosopher himself is no less closer than his kinship to an ideal and intellectual tradition which engendered Nietzsche and his philosophy. The title “Chinese Nietzsche”, therefore, refers to Lu Xun not so much as a disciple of Nietzsche but rather a Nietzschean equal in the Chinese context. – Chiu-yee Cheung, *The Chinese “Gentle” Nietzsche* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang 2001), p.6.

Madman’ can therefore be read as symbolizing the will to intellectual revolution, an aspiration for modernity, through a radical break of traditional constraints – given that ‘madman’, or *kuangren*, in Chinese can also mean ‘a wildly unrestrained person’. Echoing Fu who proposes to value two kinds of human being, that is, madmen and children, Lu Xun’s proposed solution to China can well be summarized as ‘be a madman’, and ‘save the children’ – as he states at the end of the story. Chinese people who were paralyzed have to be mad enough to rupture from ‘cannibalistic’ feudalist values in search of modernity. ‘On May 4, 1919’, as Vera Schwarcz metaphorically refers to, ‘the “children” Lu Xun had hoped to save entered history on their own terms’.⁵¹

Chinese modernism, embodied in Lu Xun for example, may be seen as following the Enlightenment in Europe, as Vera Schwarcz argues. ‘Enlightenment’, Kant says, ‘is man’s emergence from his self-inflicted immaturity. Immaturity is the incapacity to use one’s own understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is self-inflicted if its cause is not a lack of understanding but a lack of courage to use understanding without the guidance of another. *Sapere aude!* Dare to know! Be guided by your own understanding! This is the watchword of enlightenment!’⁵². Also shaped by such ideals, the ultimate goal of a Chinese enlightenment (*qimeng*) is to achieve a modernity in which, after the abolishment of a feudal, imperial empire and the establishment of a modern democratic nation, individual bourgeoisies can secure their self-assurance by establishing and sustaining a liberalism as an ultimate, unquestionable public value. Zhu Ziqing (1898-1948), also a well-known figure of the May Fourth literati – although he did not participate in the 1919 student demonstration in person, addresses the significance of the movement and gives a conclusive comment on the epoch-making event:

The May Fourth movement marks the beginning of a totally new era. Liberalism became firmly established upon the foundation of autonomous employment for intellectuals. Those of us in the world of education were pursuing independent careers, not serving as officials or waiting to become officials. As students, we were able to choose among many different careers, and were

⁵¹ Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1986), p.14.

⁵² Immanuel Kant, ‘What Is Enlightenment?’, in *Kant’s Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1970), p.54.

*thus freed from having to take the one path of becoming a bureaucrat. Thus we became emancipated from the ruling elites.*⁵³

The liberalism which May Fourth intellectuals longed for is that which necessarily produces the bourgeois. ‘One of the principal “ideas” of liberalism’, says Pierre Manent, ‘is that of the “individual”’⁵⁴. ‘The individual’, he continues, ‘is that being who, because he is human, is naturally entitled to “rights” that can be enumerated, rights that are attributed to him independently of his function or place in society and that make him the equal of any other man’⁵⁵. This idea, however, is asocial and apolitical – as Manent questions: ‘How can rights be attributed to the individual as individual if rights govern relationships between several individuals, if the very idea of a right presupposes an already instituted community or society?’⁵⁶. The consequence of liberalism, as such, has to generate a bourgeois ideology which determines ‘the man who by withdrawing into himself distinguished his own good from the common good...[b]ut to find his own good, he needed others, on whom he was dependent while seeking to exploit them’⁵⁷. Rousseau, from whom part of Manent’s points derives, gives an overall description of the characteristics of the bourgeois man of modern society:

*[I]nequality of credit and authority becomes inevitable between individuals as soon as...they are forced to make comparisons between themselves and to take into account differences they find in the continual use they have to make of one another. These differences are of several kinds; but in general wealth, nobility, or rank, power, and personal merit being the principal distinctions by which one is measured in society, I would prove that the agreement or conflict or these various forces is the surest indication of a well- or ill-constituted state.... I would point out how much that universal desire for reputation, honors, and preferences, which devours us all, trains and compares talents and strengths; how much it stimulates and multiplies passions; and making all men competitors, rivals, or rather enemies, how many reverses, successes, and catastrophes of all kinds it causes daily by making so many contenders race the same course.*⁵⁸

According to Rousseau, modernity which is characterized by the bourgeois ideology can only reveal its contemptible nature. Marxist critics – such as those associated with the

⁵³ Retold by Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1986), pp.20-22.

⁵⁴ Pierre Manent, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*, trans. Rebecca Balinski (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1994), p.xvi.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.67.

⁵⁸ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, ‘Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality among Men’, in *The First and Second Discourses*, trans. Roger D. and Judith R. Masters (New York: St. Martin’s Press 1964), pp. 174-75.

Frankfurt School, e.g. Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Jürgen Habermas – have kept criticizing a modernity rooted in the bourgeois ideology. Interpreting Horkheimer and Adorno’s commentary on the myth of enlightenment, Habermas points out a paradox in modernity shaped by the bourgeois ideals:

[T]he potentiality for reason expressed in “bourgeois ideals” and sedimented in the “objective meaning of institutions” manifests a double face: on the one side, it bestows on the ideologies of the dominant class the deceptive appearance of being convincing theories; on the other, it offers the starting point for an immanent critique of structures that elevate to the status of the general interest what actually only serves the dominant part of society.⁵⁹

In other words, there is necessarily an immanent deceptive nature in the enlightenment ideal to break from the authority and ‘be guided by your own understanding’ as in Kant’s words; or, in the Chinese context, as says Zhu Ziqing, to become ‘emancipated from the ruling elites’. The ideal of enlightenment, or the concept of modernity, is a product of legitimizing and institutionalizing bourgeois ideology. Indeed, by pointing out people’s paralysis, superstition, and madness induced by a feudal society, the May Fourth intellectuals aimed to propel China towards a modernity which could well be regarded as characterized by a bourgeois ideology. This is a key character in Chinese modernism, which is different from or even contrasts with its European counterpart. Joyce, for example, tends to problematize in his work a modernity sustained by bourgeois ideology. While depicting a paranoia resulting from people’s mental paralysis caused by a bourgeois public sphere, Joyce aims to produce an individual, singular mode of paranoia going against the mainstream literature, culture, and ideology.

The notion of paralysis is a central motif in *Dubliners*. Like Lu Xun, Joyce was first interested in and studied medicine, and, as Richard Ellmann points out, tended to use medical terms in writing⁶⁰. In a letter to his brother Stanislaus, Joyce states: ‘I call the series *Dubliners* to betray the soul of that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city’⁶¹. Hence paralysis for Joyce can be regarded as representing a paralyzed mental state of the city and the country – as he told his publisher: ‘[I] was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city

⁵⁹ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press 1987), p.117.

⁶⁰ Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1982), pp.145-46.

⁶¹ James Joyce, *Letters*, ed. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Viking Press 1957), p.55.

seemed to me the center of paralysis'⁶². Literary figures in *Dubliners* demonstrate, to use Harry Levin's words, 'the annals of frustration'.⁶³ In the stories, the mental paralysis among Joyce's fellow Dubliners is discursively presented. Bourgeois values, such as faith, ambition, love, secured vocation, modern commerce, government, art, politics, and, above all, public life, are questioned and presented as paralytic. The word paralysis first appears in 'The Sisters', the first story of the series:

*Every night as I gazed up at the window I said softly to myself the word paralysis. It had always sounded strangely in my ears, like the word gnomon in the Euclid and the word simony in the Catechism. But now it sounded to me like the name of some maleficent and sinful being.*⁶⁴

The term paralysis, which is 'usually assumed to be the result of the three strokes the priest has suffered', could also mean 'general paralysis of the insane, i.e. paresis, syphilis of the central nervous system'⁶⁵. The priest's physical paralysis, however, turns out to cause a mental paralysis in the narrator, the boy, as he finally discovers, from the sisters' talking about the dead priest whom he respects, that priesthood is not as solemn and respectful as it is said to be in a clerically dominated society.

The first three stories, 'The Sisters', 'An Encounter', and 'Araby', depict several young boys' disillusionment with different kinds of bourgeois idealism at the beginning of their lives. The boy in 'The Sisters', as discussed above, realizes that the late priest's physical paralysis is a resolution 'as if to absolve the simoniac of his sin'⁶⁶. His disappointment over the priesthood can be detected in both his declining to eat the crackers and his belated drinking the sherry, which are obviously both communion symbols. In 'An Encounter', the two boys who are embarking on an adventure to escape from the dull school life encounter an elderly man who appears at the beginning so knowledgeable and respectful to the boys turns out to be a lunatic, as he describes to 'me', the narrator, his peculiar interest in whipping and how he would whip boys for different

⁶² Retold by Harry Levin in *James Joyce: A Critical Introduction* (New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation 1960), p.30.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ James Joyce, *Dubliners* (London: Penguin Books 1992), p.1.

⁶⁵ Don Gifford, *Joyce Annotated* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1982), p.29. See also Burton A Waisbren and Florence L. Walzl, 'Paresis and the Priest: James Joyce's Symbolic Use of Syphilis in "The Sisters"', in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 80 (June 1974), pp.758-62.

⁶⁶ James Joyce, *Dubliners* (London: Penguin Books 1992), p.3.

reasons 'as if he were unfolding some elaborate mystery'⁶⁷. This psychologically paralyzed man stops the boys' desire for adventures, physically and symbolically. 'Araby' depicts how a boy, after recalling his earlier emotion for a girl, realizes his illusion about a puppy love. From their childhood, in short, Joyce's fellow Dubliners begin to be paralyzed because of their disillusionments in different ways.

The next four stories, 'Eveline', 'After the Race', 'Two Gallants', and 'The Boarding House', present several young people who get lost right at the beginning of their careers as they can neither make nor properly make decisions. They are paralyzed by the fear of the reality from which they cannot escape, physically or mentally. In 'A Little Cloud', after seeing again his former classmate who has become a successful writer, Little Chandler feels depressed because he was so timid to show his literary interest but made his career as clerkship. Similarly, the life in a business office depicted in 'Counterparts' shows contempt for the sterile commercial world which extinguishes individual initiatives. 'Clay' and 'A Painful Case' are about two paralytic celibates, a spinster who dies of alcoholism, and a bachelor who fails to take the hand of a deceased woman while feeling that 'he was alone'⁶⁸. The following three stories, 'Ivy Day in the Committee Room', 'A Mother', and 'Grace', interrogate bourgeois values by unveiling the phenomenon of paralysis in areas of politics which means only deal and betrayal, art which is ruined by mass vulgarity, religion and public sphere which, after being put off the disguise of a harmonious social life, is full of hypocrisy.

'The Dead', the last and longest story in the collection, serves as a finale central at different forms of people's paralysis towards various social aspects controversial in modern Irish history, including, most notably, colonial rules, legitimate religions, legitimate university education systems, and so on. Under the cloak of a harmonious atmosphere for a social gathering or family reunion, ideological currents collide leading, however, not to any intellectual vitality but psychological paralysis or death. During a traditional group dance known as 'Lancers', Miss Ivors, an Irish revivalist, attacks her partner Gabriel Conroy, the protagonist of the story, for a certain literary review written by him, which she thinks too pro-British. Although her accusation is in the guise of

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.20.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.114.

certain joking, her addressing Gabriel as ‘West Briton’, that is, ‘an Irishman whose allegiance is toward England and who therefore accepts Ireland’s status as a provincial “West of England”’, certainly embarrasses him⁶⁹. As their conversation (which is almost a one-way one without Gabriel’s much input) goes on, Miss Ivors keeps questioning Gabriel for his ignorance about his country in terms of its language and geography. That is why Gabriel, after relentlessly trying to avoid the topic, finally has to ‘confirm’ her accusation by saying, defiantly, ‘O, to tell you the truth...I am sick of my own country, sick of it!’⁷⁰. Gabriel is not oblivious of the issue of Irish revivalism, whereas he has to appear to be morally paralytic with it in order to defeat a collective paranoid fear of not being patriotic, which is an accusation easily imposed by the revivalists on others. The egoistic, or narcissistic, insistence shown in Miss Ivors’s questioning produces a paranoia, and Gabriel’s being paralytic, in this regard, is a byproduct of the attempt to resist a paranoid attack.

Like Gabriel, other members in the gathering have also experienced certain kinds of frustration while pretending (although not deliberately) to be enthusiastically engaged in an Irish way of hospitality. ‘The Dead’, as Florence L. Walzl proposes, shows that ‘people who live meaningless lives of inactivity are the real dead’⁷¹. The dead, according to context of the story, refers to the death of a boy, named Michael Furey, in Gretta Conroy’s recounting. Gretta and the 17-year-old boy were once deeply in love with each other when they were young. The boy died for Gretta right before her being sent off to a convent in Dublin. Gabriel, Gretta’s husband does not know this past event until the end of the party when Gretta is suddenly lost in her memory, being enchanted by a song she is hearing unexpectedly, with which both she and the boy were familiar. After discovering her past frustration and misery, we realize that she is the most paralysed: performing obediently as both a dutiful wife and a daughter-in-law, while hiding her enormous grief. Gretta, while demonstrating a life-long paralytic emotion, can be seen as presenting a final remark of paralysis permeating *Dubliners*.

⁶⁹ Do Gifford, *Joyce Annotated: Notes for Dubliners and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1982), p.116.

⁷⁰ James Joyce, *Dubliners* (London: Penguin Books 1992), p.190.

⁷¹ Florence L. Walzl, ‘Pattern of Paralysis in Joyce’s *Dubliners*’, in *College English*, Vol.22, No.4 (January 1961; pp.221-228), p.228.

By constructing these Dubliners in sixteen stories or settings, Joyce provides a depiction of Irish people who are paralyzed resulting from their disillusionments with a life typically encountered in the history of bourgeois society. Joyce himself too encounters such disillusionments and struggles to escape from them, as he proclaims through Stephen Dedalus in *Ulysses* (1922): ‘History...is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake’⁷². While paralysis in Lu Xun’s *Outcry* is a product of a two-thousand-year stagnant feudal system, this mental stroke in *Dubliners* presents a sterility of bourgeois life which, ironically, Chinese intellectuals at the moment were striking for. Lu Xun’s aspiration for a modernized social and cultural system was expected to be fulfilled foremost by adopting modern ways of communications, such as modern novels written in *baihua*, and *zawen* (miscellaneous essays) published in the form of modern journalism, etc. Lu Xun’s attempt was to maximize a communication between a writer and his reader, whereas Joyce was burdened by a modernity marked by the paralytic generations or, to quote the younger Stephen, as in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), by ‘the uncreated conscience of my race’⁷³. If it can be said that Joyce’s modernism is a reaction to modernity, the Chinese is an attempt to become modern. Joyce’s struggle with the bourgeois modernity can be seen as more and more characterized in his later works by an attempt to use an increasingly autonomous language. Hence, ideological implications in his work are equivocal or, to use a Bakhtinian term, ‘polyphonic’. A closer comparison between textual evidences respectively taken from the two writers can explain their different dealings with bourgeois modernity. For example, by comparing the ‘Cyclops’ episode in *Ulysses* to ‘The Real Story of Ah-Q’, two different attitudes towards the issue of masculinity can be revealed. On the one hand, the way Joyce ridicules the allegedly patriotic citizen in the episode parallels Lu Xun’s attempt to make fun of Ah-Q in order to warn his compatriots of their lack of (national) masculinity. Ah-Q, in this regard, can be a Bloomian figure. On the other hand, however, while the allegedly nationalistic voice of the citizen (or any other characters representing different social, political, and intellectual standpoints) is never a privileged one in Joyce’s book, Ah-Q for Lu Xun is constructed as a national paradigm.

⁷² James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler (New York: Vintage Books 1993), 2:377.

⁷³ James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (London: Penguin Books 1992), p.276.

The citizen, who is identified by Richard Ellmann as Michael Cusack⁷⁴ (1847-1907), the founder of the Gaelic Athletic Association, is constructed as a paradigm of patriotic Irish people striving for the revival of Irish pastimes. As Jo Hynes, a Dublin journalist depicted in the episode, refers to it: ‘There’s the man [] that made the Gaelic sports revival. There he is sitting there. The man that got away James Stephens’⁷⁵. In discussing the citizen and the episode, Joseph Valente points out that the cult of sports is intended to align physical fitness with nationalism⁷⁶. Valente in fact argues that overvaluation of masculinity, of physical fitness, or simply of the cult of sports, is a form of (male) fetishism which, in Leopold Bloom’s view, as presented in his debate with the citizen, is a ‘violent exercise’⁷⁷. Bloom’s questioning of the Irish sports revival, as Valente observes, is ‘seen to betray the nationalist cause in and through a failure of personal virility’⁷⁸. Bloom in this regard parallels Ah-Q by exercising a Lu Xunian ‘Ah-Q-ism’. Derived from Lu Xun’s story, ‘Ah-Q-ism’ is meant to be a ‘moral victory’⁷⁹. The term has for years become a very well-known cliché in Chinese society, being applied to indicating an ‘interpretation of [physical] defeats as moral victories’⁸⁰. The meaning is originated from the way in which the character Ah-Q behaves in facing masculine attack. For example, when being physically provoked and beaten up, he would say ‘It’s like a father [i.e. he himself] getting thrashed by his sons’⁸¹. It is this lack of masculinity that Lu Xun was worried about, as presented in his early attempt to study Western medicine in order to eliminate the Ah-Q-like Chinese people who are physically weak. The early Lu Xun may well be the citizen alike, having recourse to masculinity in fulfilling a national revivalism. Of course, the story of Ah-Q also indicates Lu Xun’s later perception that being physically strong still cannot save China. His attempt to achieve a cultural revivalism

⁷⁴ Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1982), p.61n.

⁷⁵ James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler (New York: Vintage Books 1993), 12:880-81.

⁷⁶ Joseph Valente, “Neither Fish nor Flesh”, or how “Cyclops” stages the Double-bind of Irish Manhood’, in *Semicolonial Joyce*, eds. Derek Attridge and Marjorie Howes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000), p.113.

⁷⁷ James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler (New York: Vintage Books 1993), 12:939.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p.114.

⁷⁹ Lu Xun, *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*, trans. Julia Lovell (London: Penguin Classics 2009), p.86. In the Yangs’ translation, the phrase is translated as ‘psychological victory’ (72).

⁸⁰ *The New Chinese-English Dictionary* (Beijing: The Commercial Press International Co., Ltd. 2007).

⁸¹ Lu Xun, *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*, trans. Julia Lovell (London: Penguin Classics 2009), p.86.

through literature also resembles Joycean figures, e.g. the Dublin intellectuals depicted in *Ulysses*. But, as opposed to Lu Xun's discourse, ideologies in Joyce are never articulated. In this novel, for instance, there is never anything more than what 'they say', and it is impossible to say whether there is any suggestive ideological implications in the stories told about anything; everything rejects a reading that is based on a kind of taxonomy. The attempt to disable a commonsensical understanding of his work leads to a disarticulation of language in his last book, *Finnegans Wake*, where we can see that he presents a particular mode of paranoia.

In Lacan's Seminar 23, entitled *Le sinthome* (1975-76), he raises a question 'Was Joyce mad? What was it that inspired his writing?'⁸². Lacan's proposition about Joyce's madness can be realized as making the latter a paradigm of a rational madness, that is, paranoia. For him, in other words, the paranoia in Joyce suggests a rational subversion going against the commonplace, or, to use psychoanalytic terms, an intentional *foreclosure* from the Name-of-the-Father. Lacan argues that Joyce's madness which is marked by the absence of the Name-of-the-Father is transferred to an autonomous creativity to sign himself through literature. Lacan calls this autonomous creativity the *sinthome*.

For Lacan, the human subject is split into three psychical states, i.e. the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real. The symbolic order is inscribed in the signifying chain, working with a language characterized by the 'Other' which enables a signifier to signify by differentiating it from other signifiers. Communication or exchange of ideas which underlies social orders (e.g. law and culture) is enabled by the symbolic order. The imaginary order derives from the formation of the ego in the mirror stage which accounts for the subject's self-identification with his own image. As the permanent lure determined by the ego's self-recognition makes the subject constantly caught by his own illusory image, the imaginary order is always associated with illusions in recognizing a body-image wholeness or synthesis, resulting hence always in deceptive and observable effects. The real hence indicates what is not linguistically represented (by the symbolic); the real

⁸² Jacques Lacan, *Seminar 23: Le sinthome*, p.160. The seminar has not yet had an official English translation publicly available. The one I am using is translated by Luke Thurston, as an appendix attached to his PhD thesis (Canterbury: University of Kent 1997). The French version Thurston used in his thesis was the first published text of the seminar, established by J-A Miller, released in the journal *Ornicar?* (6-11, 1976-7).

is beyond the symbolic and cannot be assimilable to symbolization. These three orders are supposed to be interlinked together as a knot (a Borromean knot, to be precise), working to enable a signifying coherence. Lacan thinks that Joyce's later work shows an unraveling of the knot due to the lack of the imaginary, leading to a breakdown of the supposedly balanced psychical system. Joyce has not gone mad, however, because his way of writing makes up the knot. Joyce's way of writing, which is characterized by a self-conscious affirmation in writing a non-representational language allowing him to reclaim his name (or, to sign himself) after the falling away of the imaginary, is termed by Lacan as the *sinthome*, which 'allows the symbolic, the imaginary and the real to be held together'⁸³. Clearly, with an attempt to respond to his rhetorical question 'How am I to sign myself?'⁸⁴, Joyce's careful equivocation in conveying meaning – e.g. to disarticulate language by means of destroying the metaphorical representation of a common language – presents a mode of paranoia.

Respectively looking into Joyce's way to make language extremely equivocal (as in *Finnegans Wake*), and Lu Xun's aspiration towards transforming Chinese language into the vernacular by eventually 'abolish[ing] Chinese characters and us[ing] a romanized alphabet'⁸⁵, we can see two contrasted modes of paranoia at the heart of modern literature. Characterized by the *sinthome*, Joycean texts present what Lacan calls a *jouissance* (enjoyment), and/or *jouisi-sens* (enjoyment-in-meaning)⁸⁶, determined by a paranoid intention to adumbrate or destabilize a commonsensical reading. Like Joyce, Lu Xun also holds a radical viewpoint on language. But instead of making language unapproachable, he argues that the language used in literature should be understandable to all people. He hence advocates the language reform, replacing the classical language with *baihua*, as we discussed earlier. He regards the reform as of utmost exigency for China, as he thus

⁸³ Ibid., p.165.

⁸⁴ Joyce's letter to Nora Barnacle dated 15 August 1904.

⁸⁵ Lu Xun, 'Silent China', in *Silent China: Selected Writings of Lu Xun*, ed. & trans. Gladys Yang (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1973), p.165.

⁸⁶ There are a series of puns Lacan plays on the term '*jouissance*', indicating – echoing the Joycean disarticulating/rearticulating language – different while inter-relating domains of enjoyment. These include, most notably, *jouis sens* ('enjoy meaning') and *j'ouïs sens* ('I hear meaning'). This pair of punning, as Roberto Harari points out, is literally and metaphorically anticipated by Joyce in writing *Finnegans Wake*: 'as he [Joyce] wrote, he allegedly laughed continually, showed unbridled *jouissance*' – Robert Harari, *How James Joyce Made His Name: A Reading of the Final Lacan*, trans. Luke Thurston (New York: Other Press 2002), p.81.

proclaims: ‘There are only two paths open to us. One is to cling to our classical language and die; the other is to cast that language aside and live’⁸⁷. With this obligation, most of Lu Xun’s literary work is written in *baihua*, which maximizes the popularization of both his work and Chinese language. This ideal certainly contrasts with the case we see in Joyce where (e.g. *Finnegans Wake*) the most noticeable concern is to blur a commonsensical meaning instead of presenting it in a univocal way.

These two fundamentally different but equally rational attempts to manipulate language present two contrasted modes of paranoia, hence determining two modes of modernism. It may be argued that the paranoia in Lu Xun is characterized by the predominance of the symbolic order governed by the Name-of-the-Father, while in Joyce the abandonment of a language secured by the Name-of-the-Father results in a ‘[self-]controlled paranoia’, that is, not ‘guided’ or induced by the analyst⁸⁸. If that is so, it can be said that the predominance of the symbolic which forms a paranoia (i.e. the second paranoia) is for Lu Xun to get rid of the fear of becoming the other (i.e. the first paranoia). Therefore, this roundabout paradox (or Lu Xun’s mode of paranoia) may not be addressed by the notion of the *sinthome*, since the *sinthome* is supposed to sustain the symmetrical balance of the symbolic-imaginary-real Borromean knot, functioning simply to prevent madness. On the contrary, Joyce-the-*sinthome*, which is determined by a ‘self-guided’ paranoia and is effective to prevent a *de facto* madness, can be seen as producing a rational otherness – the other of the other – ridiculing the concept of paranoia.

To conclude, a comparison made between Joyce and Lu Xun in relation to paranoia is necessary not only for detecting a paranoia in the heart of modernism as presenting both a resistance to a bourgeois modernity characterized by single and determinate values, and an attempt to dominate and to exclude the other (or the Other). Resisting common social values may necessarily lead to a paranoia. But not only the way to resist (cultural) domination presents madness, the way to dominate is also determined by it. In the case of

⁸⁷ Lu Xun, ‘Silent China’, in *Silent China: Selected Writings of Lu Xun*, ed. & trans. Gladys Yang (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1973), p.167.

⁸⁸ This may be different from what Lacan claims in discussing the hoped-for effect of the analyst’s technique to ‘take[] a detour that amounts, in the end, to inducing in the subject a guided paranoia’ – Jacques Lacan, ‘Aggressiveness in Psychoanalysis’ in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton 2006), p.89. Note that whereas in Fink’s translation the phrase is ‘guided paranoia’, it is ‘controlled paranoia’ in Alan Sheridan’s translation (*Écrits: A Selection*. London: Tavistock 1977), p.15.

Joyce, the opposition to the public and collective paralysis produces a private paranoia which, however, is 'cured' in the process of executing his art, his *sinthome*. In the case of Lu Xun, while accurately addressing the paralytic characteristics among Chinese people who were wandering at the threshold of modernity, the modernity he seeks and promotes can only produce the paranoiac, as he himself: the so-called 'Chinese Nietzsche'.

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