SAVE THE CHILDREN: NATION, CHILDREARING, AND THE MODERN SELF IN REPUBLICAN-ERA CHINESE LITERATURE 1911-1949

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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My dissertation examines the modern ideological concept of children and individualism in Republican Chinese literature. It draws upon eugenics discourse, ideological essays and fictional stories to examine the emergence of the modern individual amid the tensions within the ideological call to revolutionize the traditional Confucian family in order to build a modern Chinese nation. Linking Chinese nation building with evolutionary thinking and eugenics discourse, my research explores how parenthood was inevitable for modern Chinese men and women and how the experience of raising children revealed conflicts between self, family, and nation in Chinese modernity.

In response to the perception that China was the "Sick Man of Asia," intellectuals developed what I call a developmental eugenics narrative about the need to produce a generation of children who are biologically and spiritually advanced so that China could defend itself against both imperialist and colonialist encroachment. This developmental eugenic thinking, I argue, permeated Republican fictional stories in which children organically arrive in a modern conjugal relationship between a man and a woman.

Contradicting the notion of the modern family as both the building block of the modern Chinese nation and the producer of future Chinese citizens, the fictional modern family often struggles to meld its two functions. These fictional men and women face their new parental responsibilities as they also struggle to uphold their recently acquired modern personhood. Despite their focus on "saving the children," a famous slogan coined in Lu Xun's "A Madman's Diary," Republican writers often depict the act of parenting as a sacrifice that modern individuals do not want to make. In consequence, the fictional modern family fails to transform into the imagined nation-building modern family.

My research reinforces and advances current ideas about the convoluted and paradoxical nature of individualism in Chinese modernity. It points out the reproductive imperative within the family revolution discourse coinciding with Chinese nation building. Analyzing the fictional stories written by Republican radicals through the lens of the developmental eugenics narrative suggests that Republican radicals struggled to surrender their individualism for the sake of Chinese nation building when it came to parenting the next generation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On August 15, 1926, *The Young Companion* (*Liangyou* 良友, 1926-1941; 1945), a popular pictorial of Republican China (1911-1949), launched a three-month promotional campaign: "Read *Liangyou* to win the total grand prize of 400 *yuan* (元)—Baby Competition" (figure 1). Managers at *The Young Companion* clearly adopted this sales strategy to increase subscriptions and broaden readership while securing existing subscribers and frequent buyers with an appealing limited-time bi-weekly pictorial. Yet this particular sales campaign in issue No. 7 did not catch my attention when I first encountered it. I only noticed the promotional campaign in the following issue, No. 8. What actually caught my attention was not the sales campaign itself, but rather a photograph of two wrestling toddlers (figure 2) and the five large, bold Chinese characters, 嬰兒競賽會 (ying'er jingsaihui), "baby/infant competition." To be clear, this was not a toddler wrestling competition, but a competition of photographic portraits of infants and toddlers.[1] Although I was drawn by the combination of the visual and word

[1] In order to become candidates for the 400 yuan grand prize, entrants were required to mail in headshots of their infants or toddlers (under two years of age). To be clear, the language of the competition rules did not specify that only the parents of the infants or toddlers could mail in the photos, so it is very possible that some entrants could submit headshots of their relatives', neighbors' or colleagues' children.
There were three first-rounds and one final round. The result of each round was established based on the total votes for each photo. For each of the first rounds, readers of *The Young Companion* voted on entries and the ten headshots that received the most votes moved onto the final round, for a total of 30 headshots in the final round. The final round was also based on the same voting procedure and all the 30 headshots would be ranked from 1st to 30th based on the ballots that they received. However, the competition advertisement was rather misleading because the winner would actually only receive 50 yuan instead of 400 yuan; 400 yuan was the

play, what really intrigued me about this "Baby [Headshot] Competition" was its specific search for the strongest, healthiest, and most vigorous (强健 qiangjian) infant or toddler; there was no interest in acknowledging the prettiest or cutest (可愛 ke'ai) child, as is customary in most of today's competitions. The call for entries reads as follows:

> Today, "national strengthening" (*qiangguo*) is a trendy topic among "modern and fashionable" (*shimao*) people. They begin their sentences with *qiangguo* and end their sentences with *qiangguo*. They are right! [Our] nation is definitely needing to be strengthened, but how? People of the ancient time had a saying: "*min wei bang ben!*" That is to say "people are the foundation of a state." In that sense, in order to strengthen a nation, begin with strengthening its people (this is the only solution). "To strengthen a nation, one must first strengthen its people" should be regarded as the basic principle. But even the basic principle was established on certain fundamentals. What should a nation do in order to strengthen its people? For example, a hunched, silver-white haired, eighty-year-old man will never become strong again. This also applies to those middle-aged people who did not take care of their bodies when they were young. Although it is not impossible, it would be difficult for them to be strengthened to develop stronger bodies. Therefore, in order

total amount that would be distributed to the top 30 entrants. 2nd place would receive 30 yuan, 3rd place 20 yuan, and 4th to 30th 10 yuan each. The total distributed amount was 370 yuan, 30 yuan short of the advertised 400 yuan.

> to strengthen the people, the only way is to begin strengthening the infants.
>
> But people share a general defect that is that they are overly confident in themselves. For example, parents always insist that their babies are strong even though the babies are not strong at all. However, if we could make all the parents bring out their babies into public and compare all the babies then it would be easy to figure out the strong and weak ones. Indeed, the parents of weak babies would want their babies to become stronger and the parents of the already strong babies would want their babies to become much stronger. This how competition leads to progress.

It is noticeable that vocabulary words such as strengthening/strong (強 qiang), comparing/competition (競爭 jingzheng) and progress (進步 jinbu) are actively woven into the "reasons" (旨趣 zhiqu) of the campaign. Such terms, easily regarded as common Chinese vocabulary today, were neologisms that transposed early 20th century western thoughts on evolution, social Darwinism, and eugenics. Today, generally, evolution and social Darwinism are frequently-discussed concepts, but eugenics is less accepted. This is not surprising because the term eugenics has been permanently tainted by its association with Nazism, the disturbing involuntary sterilization of thousands of people, and socio-political racism that led to brutal religious and ethnic genocide. Many people currently avoid discussion of topics that could be related to

eugenics for moral and historical reasons. Because of this general public apprehension and even revulsion toward eugenics today, it is critical to recognize that in the late 19th and early 20th century context, eugenic thinking had not yet developed a negative reputation and was welcomed by both the political right and left.[2]

Figure 1. "Baby Competition" (Ying'er jingsaihui 嬰兒競賽會) *Lingyou* 7 (August, 1926)

Figure 2. "Baby Competition" (Ying'er jingsaihui 嬰兒競賽會) *Liangyou* 8 (September 1926)

From the outset, eugenics was both a scientific movement as well as a social movement. As a mode of scientific investigation, it was a process of discovering and

[2] See Nancy Leys Stepan, *"The Hour of Eugenics": Race, Gender, And Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 1-3.

understanding human heredity. As a social movement, it was meant to incorporate the knowledge of human heredity to attain the goal of "better breeding."[3] Despite what is today interpreted as ominous wording, "better breeding" did not initially refer to biomedical sterilization and religion-ethnic cleansing. Rather, eugenics was once a popular global discourse among intellectuals that encompassed a constellation of issues related to "race, gender, nationalism and scientific technology in the domains of national character, national body and national survival."[4] In this sense, "better breeding" was not merely about how to enhance future generations through intentional procreation, but also how to enhance and acclimatize these future generations through manifold social reforms to prevent the nation from falling behind.

Eugenics: A Gateway to Natural Evolutionary Elimination

In 1898, three years after China's defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War, Yan Fu (嚴復 1854-1921) published his *Tianyan lun* 天演論 (*On Evolution*),[5] an abridged, adapted translation based on T.H. Huxley's (1825-1895) *Evolution and Ethics* (1893) with

[3] The definition here is based on how Charles B. Davenport, a U.S. eugenicist, defined eugenics. Charles B. Davenport, *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* (New York: Henry Holt, 1911), 1. Stepan, *"The Hour of Eugenics,"* 1.

[4] Yuehtsen Juliette Chung, *Struggle for National Survival: Chinese Eugenics in a Transnational Context, 1896-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 8.

[5] Yan Fu, *Tianyan lun* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1933-4).

Herbert Spencer's (1820-1903) views mixed in.[6] His phrases such as tianyanjinhua 天演進化 (natural evolution), wujing tianze 物競天擇 (competition leads to natural selection), shizheshengcun 適者生存 (survival of the fittest), and taifan 汰蕃 (desuetude) "transposed the vocabulary and the organicist assumptions of Victorian science into idiomatic literary Chinese."[7] In addition, Yan Fu's *On Evolution* compelled the late-Qing reformers and intellectuals to parallel Chinese national history with evolutionary natural history and predict the probable desuetude and extinction of the Chinese nation at the hands of the colonial powers. Although Yan Fu's work suggested the predestined extinction of the Chinese nation via the theory of natural evolution, it concurrently put forward the practice and notion of artificial/human selection (renze 人

[6] In Yu Zheng's *Yan Fu zhuyiyanjiu* 嚴復著譯研究 (Suzhou: Suzhou daxue, 2003), Yu points out that Yan Fu sometime inserted his opinions or altered the meaning of the original work in his translated works including *Tianyan lun*. Thus, it is fair to categorize *Tianyan lun* as Yan Fu's adaptation (yizhu 譯著) instead of a plain translation of *Evolution and Ethics*. In *Chinese Vision of Family and State, 1915-1953* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), Susan Glosser points out that *Tianyan lun* is a "combination of translation and commentary" (2). Also see Theodore Huters's "Appropriations: Another look at Yan Fu and Western Ideas" in his *Bring the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 43-73; Wang Daohuan, "*Tianyan lun* yuanzhuwenben de laili ji wenhuafanyi wenti" 《天演論》原著文本的來歷及文化翻譯問題 in *Wenhuafanyi yu wenbenmailuo: Wan Ming yijiang de Zhongguo, Riben yu Xifang* 文化翻譯與本文脈絡：晚明以降的中國、日本與西方, ed. Peng Xiaoyan (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo, 2013), 337-66; Wang Wenren, "Yan Fu yu *Tianyan lun* de jiashou, fanyi yu zhuanhua" 嚴復與《天演論》的接受與轉化, *Chengda zhongwen xuebao*, no. 21 (2008): 135-166.

[7] Andrew F. Jones, *Developmental Fairy Tales: Evolutionary Thinking and Modern Chinese Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 7. Yan Fu used the word *taifan* 汰蕃 to translate the concept of desuetude. (Yan Fu, *Tianyan lun*, 16-18.) Based on my research, the more commonly used term *taotai* 淘汰 was later mentioned in Hu Shi's 胡適 "Zai Shanghai (1)" 在上海 (1). (Hu Shi, "Zai Shanghai (1)," in *Sishi zishu* 四十自述 (Taipei: Yuanliu chubanshe, 1997), 54.

擇), which offered Chinese nationals the hope that there was a possible gateway to evolutionary progress. Artificial/human selection emphasized how the acts of humans could interrupt predestined natural progression. More importantly, it provided a much-needed sense of agency to Chinese nationals, encouraging them to work to alter their preordained future.[8] Therefore, the late-Qing and later Republican reformers and intellectuals aimed to stimulate Chinese children's physical and intellectual growth and encourage desirable future progeny through various social and societal reforms. Children, in the eyes of the reformers, were no longer the bearers of familial ancestral legacies, but a forward-moving ideological force that would lead China to its salvation and promising future.[9] Yet the Chinese reformers and intellectuals' belief that planned reproduction and its accompanying social and societal configurations could produce better progeny was not uniquely Chinese. These ideas tapped into a popular global intellectual discourse of eugenics that strove to cultivate superior national subjects with the ultimate goal of becoming a superior nation.[10]

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[8] So far, I have not encountered scholarship in the Chinese field that explores the *renze* (artificial/human selection) section in Yan Fu's work. However, Yuehtsen Juliette Chung has elaborated on how the notion of the Human alternative in Lamarckian ideas had a greater impact on China's eugenics movement in "Lamarckism Versus Mendelism——The Politics of Body and Heredity" in her *Struggle for National Survival*. (Chung, *Struggle for National Survival*, 61-98).

[9] This idea of subverting traditional Confucian familial relationships was much stronger in the Republican era, especially among the May Fourth radicals, as I will discuss in the following chapter.

[10] Bent Sigurd Hansen, in his "Something Rotten in the State of Denmark: Eugenics and the Ascent of the Welfare State," traces the history of eugenics in Denmark and the early international eugenics discourse among European nations in the year 1881. Gunnar Broberg and Nils Roll-Hansen edited. *Eugenics and The Welfare State*: *Sterilization Policy in Denmark,*

The teacher and disciple pair of prominent late-Qing reformers, Kang Youwei 康有為 (1857-1927) and Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929), were the commencing and leading voices of the nationwide reforms after the First Sino-Japanese War (甲午戰爭 jiawu zhanzheng, 1894-1895). Kang and Liang's advocacy concentrated on rectifying causes of social stratification such as traditional marital conventions, reinventing the family structure, and reforming the education system. All these aimed to rebuild and transform China into a modern nation state. Based on their ideological essays and political propositions, it is not difficult to discern why their vision of the new China had to be established by more evolved generations of Chinese.[11] Their various reform proposals centered on how to create enhanced Chinese infants and how to secure these children's physical and intellectual development from any undesirable outcomes. Their children-oriented reforms seemed to suggest that Kang and Liang not only accepted the

Sweden, Norway, and Finland (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1996). The term eugenics was coined in 1883 from the Greek word eugenēs which means well-born. (Stepan, *"The Hour of Eugenics*,*"* 1.) In her *Struggle for National Survival,* Yuehtsen Juliette Chung establishes the intellectual conversations on eugenics between China and Japan in the late 19th century and Japan's eugenics development. (Chung, *Struggle for National Survival*, 3-18; 61-69.)

[11] The notion of new China is close to the idea of Chinese nationhood. Liang elaborated that China was never a nation because it never had citizens (guomin 國民), only countrymen (bumin 部民). He defined a citizen as a person who had awareness of 1. Themselves; 2. The imperial court (chaoting 朝廷); 3. The people of foreign nations; and 4. The world. A countryman was a person who only had awareness of social customs and regulations. Liang Qichao, "Lun guojia sixiang" 論國家思想 in *Discourse on the New Citizen* (*Xinmin shuo* 新民說) in *Yingbing shi weji* (Taipei: Xinxing shuju, 1964), 15. To be clear, Liang defined and redefined "citizen" multiple times in his *Discourse on the New Citizen*. *Xinmin shuo* 新民說 (1902-1906) was a collection of essays on the topic of citizens, nations, and nationalism which Liang published in *Xinmin congbao* 新民叢報 (1902-1907). *Xinmin congbao* was founded by Liang Qichao when he was an exile in Japan. It was a bi-monthly journal published in Yokohama, Japan. Also see Lydia Liu's *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 48-49.

modern concept of children as the vehicle of forward-moving changes, but also recognized it as the indisputable principle for Chinese nation building. Although their reforms actively engaged this modern forward-moving concept of children, their rationales and philosophical principles of how these newly enhanced Chinese children could form a new Chinese nation were, as a matter of fact, in alignment with Neo-Confucian worldview, especially in the sense of the family-state relationship.[12] The strong evocation of Neo-Confucianism in their reform agenda was generally recognized by scholars of Chinese studies as a sign that both Kang and Liang were staunch Confucian scholars. Not to dispute their Confucian scholastic credentials, I, however, would suggest considering that the Confucian way of thinking was both the instrument for most Chinese literati and intellectuals to digest the rhetoric of evolutionary thought and the language they could deploy in any ideological or intellectual engagements. That

[12] One of the Confucian classics, *Daxue* 大學 (*The Great Learning*) describes the ultimate goal of self-cultivation: "The extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things. For only when things are investigated is knowledge extended; only when knowledge is extended are thoughts sincere; only when thoughts are sincere are minds rectified; only when minds are rectified are our person cultivated; only when our persons are cultivated are our families regulated; only when families are regulated are states well governed; and only when states are well governed is there peace in the realm." William Theodore de Bary et al., eds., Sources of Chinese Tradition, vol. I (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 115. Susan Glosser makes the point that "although few twentieth-century reformers explicitly cited *The Great Learning* in their arguments for family reform, they drew on this familiar and central formulation when they explored critiques of the family, and women's role in it, as a means of strengthening the state." (Glosser, *Chinese Vision of Family and State, 1915-1953*, 5). Chinese text of *Daxue*: 古之欲明明德於天下者，先治其國；欲治其國者，先齊其家；欲齊其家者，先修其身；欲修其身者，先正其心；欲正其心者，先誠其意；欲誠其意者，先致其知，致知在格物。物格而後知至，知至而後意誠，意誠而後心正，心正而後身修，身修而後家齊，家齊而後國治，國治而後天下平。自天子以至於庶人，壹是皆以修身為本。其本亂而末治者否矣，其所厚者薄，而其所薄者厚，未之有也！此謂知本，此謂知之至也。(https://ctext.org/liji/da-xue/zh#n10383)

is to say, whether or not Kang and Liang were pious followers of Confucianism, their political advocacy became much more accessible and acceptable to late-Qing scholar-officials and literati because of its Confucian tinge.[13]

Evolutionary Theory, Developmental Eugenics Thinking, and Neo-Confucianism

Yan Fu contributed a great corpus of neologisms in his translation-adaptation of *On Evolution* which allowed the Chinese literati and intellectuals to exchange ideas on topics of evolutionary theory. Because of this, Yan Fu was generally credited and recognized for introducing evolutionary theory to China by his compatriots.[14] Yet Yan Fu's work still did not address how the educated Chinese comprehended and internalized evolutionary theory, and later fully absorbed the eugenic reform movement

[13] I do not argue against Pankaj Mishra's depiction of Liang Qichao as one who "did not cease to see himself as an embodiment of a unique repository of the cultural ideals and beliefs – [Confucianism] that defined China." However, I suggest that Liang's writing contains echoes of Confucian epistemology so that it would have better chance to convince other Confucian orthodox ministers. (Pankaj Mishar, *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous, 2012), 141-145.) Kung-Chuan Hsiao has pointed out that Kang Youwei reinterpreted Confucianism and employed it as the foundation of his political reform proposals. (Kung-Chuan Hsiao, *A Modern China and a New World: K'ang Yu-wei, Reformer and Uptopian, 1858-1927* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975). Also see Vera Schwarcz's *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 29-33; Hao Chang, "K'ang Yu-wei" in their *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis: Search for Order and Meaning (1890-1911)* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 21-65.

[14] Hu Shi described how evolutionary thinking and its related vocabulary became popular after Yan Fu's *Tianyan lun* was published. (Hu Shi, "Zai Shanghai (1)" in *Sishi zishu* 四十自述, 54.)

into their Confucian learning and worldview. In his "Bianfa tongyi" 變法通議 ("Comprehensive Proposal for Institutional Reforms," 1896-1897), Liang Qichao renders an example of how a Confucian scholar simultaneously incorporated foreign evolutionary theory into the Neo-Confucian way of thinking.[15]

"Comprehensive Proposal for Institutional Reforms," published in *Shiwubao* 時務報 (The Chinese Progress 1896-1898),[16] was a series of political essays in which Liang urgently advocated for reform in both bureaucracy and society to give Qing China a chance to avert the fall of the state, especially after its defeat in the Sino-Japanese war. It is not difficult to fathom why Liang chose to publish a series of essays on institutional reforms in 1896, yet the timing of Liang's essays became important because it predated Yan Fu's *On Evolution* by two years. Even without the convenience of Yan Fu's neologisms, Liang found a way to merge the notion of forward-moving evolutionary changes into his first essay, "Zixu" 自序 ("Preface" 1896), of "Comprehensive Proposal for Governmental Reforms." He began the essay by raising the question of why institutional reform was necessary and then answering this question with a fascinating analogy that drew a parallel between the progression of the natural world and institutional reform:

[15] Liang Qichao, "Bianfa tongyi" 變法通議 (https://zh.wikisource.org/zh-hant/變法通議.)

[16] *Shiwu bao* (1896-1898) was founded by Liang Qichao, Wang Kangnian 王康年 (1860-1911), Huang Zunxian 黃遵憲 (????-????) and two other people in Shanghai in 1896. Liang Qichao was the chief editor (*zhubi* 主筆) of the newspaper from 1896 to 1898. For more information about *Shiwu bao*, please see Ding Wenjiang and Zhao Fengtian ed., *Liang Qichao nianpu changbian* 梁啟超年譜長編 (Shanghai: Renmin, 1983), 128-132.

> All objects between heaven and earth cannot avoid change (bian 變). Daytime and nighttime change into a day, cold days and hot days change into a year. When the sphere was in its inchoate stage, molten fluid was blazing. The heat melted metal and ice down which continuously changed the sphere into the Earth. Aquatic plants and ammonites, gigantic trees and great birds, flying fish and flying reptiles, and marsupials-and-vertebrates grew and became extinct. These generations of continuous changes created the world today. […] If there were no changes, then the heaven and earth and humans would go extinct side-by-side in time. Therefore, change has been the universal principle since the ancient day.[17]

Liang did not simply delineate the progression of natural history but rather focused on establishing the notion of change (*bian*), the vehicle that carried natural history forward. It is safe to suggest that Liang acquired the idea of *bian* from his classical Chinese training to translate the western scientific concept of evolution in natural history because he recognized certain similarities between the two.[18] In addition, I argue that

[17] Original text: 凡在天地之間者，莫不變。晝夜變而成日，寒暑變而成歲。大地肇起，流質炎炎，熱鎔冰遷，累變而成地球。海草螺蛤、大木大鳥、飛魚飛鼉、袋獸脊獸，彼生此滅，更代迭變而成世界。[…] 故夫變者，古今之公理也。貢助之法變為租庸調，租庸調變為兩稅，兩稅變為一條鞭。井乘之法變為府兵，府兵變為廣騎，廣騎變為禁軍。學校升造之法變為薦辟，薦辟變為九品中正，九品變為科目。Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Liang Qichao's "Bianfa tongyi" are my own.

[18] *Lü Shi Chun Qiu*'s 吕氏春秋 "Chajin 察今" also states that reformists should change the state's regulations and rules based on the situation of the time. Original text: 變法者因時而化。Stable URL: https://ctext.org/lv-shi-chun-qiu/cha-jin. Xiaobing Tang has translated Liang Qichao's *bian*

Liang broke from the traditional Confucian philosophical mode of seeking a return to the past, the golden age, and was instead ready to anticipate changes in the future. His ready attitude towards change is further disclosed in his prolonged portrayals of developments in land tax regulations, the military system, the administrative recruiting system, and bureaucratic structure following his description of the progression of natural history. This rhetorical transition from natural progression to developments in manmade regulations strongly suggests that Liang deemed socio-political reform and the evolution of the natural world as parallel concepts that both follow the universal principle of change.

Throughout his series of essays, Liang continued to theorize and expand on the notion of change based on the bureaucratic and social reforms instituted throughout various national histories. Liang states that changes are natural phenomena, as all things naturally change or will be changed through time. Yet when Liang pairs the changes in the natural world with changes to manmade regulations, the change, in Liang's definition, incorporates and emphasizes human agency.[19] Furthermore, Liang suggests that this intentional socio-political change develops towards a more advanced state, as shown in his examples of land tax regulations and bureaucratic systems. This idea of

into "making new" and argued that Liang saw "making new" as preexisting within Confucian tradition. My argument here echoes what Tang already has discussed but emphasizes the concept of evolution. Xiaobing Tang, *Global Space and the Nationalist Discourse of Modernity: The Historical Thinking of Liang Qichao* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 16-18.

[19] The statement here came from Liang's "[we] hold the authority of change". Original text: "變之權操諸己." Also see Tang, *Global Space and the Nationalist Discourse of Modernity*, 18.

institutional improvement combined with evolutionary progression forms the philosophical foundation of Liang's notion of change. In other words, Liang's concept of change intertwines national histories with natural evolutionary history, echoing the idea of survival of the fittest that was especially compelling in that era.[20]

Liang's idea of institutional change as parallel with natural evolution deliberately conveys the urgent concern that Qing China would soon be eliminated by other nations if it did not take any immediate reformative actions. Yet China experienced the shock of total defeat when its military forces, after nearly thirty years of modernization, were annihilated in the Sino-Japanese war. It was a total defeat not simply because China was bested in a military engagement but specifically because China was defeated by Japan, once a state in the Chinese tributary system.[21] Many late-Qing intellectuals linked this failure with the principal philosophy of "acquiring the western strength for the purpose of subduing the western powers" that emphasized grafting the western modern technologies onto Chinese military forces.[22] They believed that China should adopt total

[20] The statement here is based on Liang's claim that *change* "could secure the state/nation, could secure the race, and could secure the philosophical doctrine (Confucianism)." Original text: "可以保國, 可以保種, 可以保教."

[21] When China was engaged in the Yangwu yundong (洋務運動 the Self-Strengthening movement 1861-1895) to modernize its military forces and acquire western scientific technologies, Japan was also going through its statewide modernization period, the Meiji restoration (明治維新 Meiji ishin 1868-1912). Based on the outcome of the Sino-Japanese war, Japan was much more successful in its modernization movement. Furthermore, the outcome of the war "denied or erased, at least at the ideological and psychological levels, any possible scientific and technological achievement prior to 1894." Meng Yue, *Shanghai and the Edges of Empires* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 29.

[22]"Shiyizhichangji yizhiyi" 師夷之長技以製夷. The origin of this idea was from 魏源 Wei Yuan's (1794-1857) "Chouhai pian 1" 籌海篇一 in his *Haiguotu zhi* 海國圖志 (*Illustrated Treatises on*

westernization immersion initiatives, like those Japan had accomplished. Liang was completely on board with this approach but argued for the importance of acquiring the fundamental knowledge that germinated modern technological developments in the Western sphere.[23] Therefore, Liang advocated that change, or maybe more appropriately, the *right* change, should be initiated through educational reform.

Liang, in his essay of "On the Education System/School System," clearly argues that the success of the western nations and Japan's meteoric rise were built upon advanced education systems, while criticizing the Chinese imperial examination system.[24] However, I would suggest that Liang did not simply advocate for education

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the Maritime Kingdoms,) 1841 (https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=201.) This particular ideology of acquiring western strength was part of the foundation of Zhang Zhidong's 張之洞 (1837-1909) philosophical approach to modernization, "Chinese learning as the core, Western learning as the function (Zhongxue wei ti, Xixue wei yong 中學為體，西學為用)." Although Zhang's argument focused on learning western technologies, it argued that the essence of Chinese and the Western learning were compatible or at least rather similar. Zhang's view followed a pattern in how Chinese literati comprehended and rationalized their interest in Western knowledge. See Meng Yue, *Shanghai and the Edges of Empires* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 3-28.

[23] In the essay "Lun bianfa bushi benyuan zhi hai" 論變法不知本原之害 [On the pitfall of reform without understanding the fundamentals.] (https://zh.wikisource.org/zh-hant/變法通議#論變法不知本原之害.)

[24] In China, the imperial examination became the primary means for recruiting governmental officials after the mid-Tang dynasty. As time went on, the imperial examination increasingly focused on memorization and formal issues. Exam candidates were expected to arduously memorize the Neo-Confucian canon from a young age. Schools, therefore, designed their curriculum to focus on reading the canon and perfecting the writing of abstruse eight-legged essays for the examination. Late-Qing reformers criticized this form of education for its impractical content when compared to Western scientific study. Maram Epstein, *Competing Discourses: Orthodoxy, Authenticity and Engendered Meanings in Late Imperial Chinese Fiction* (Cambridge: The Harvard University Asian Center, 2001), 70-71.

reform in China because of successful results in modern nations, but also because education was traditionally held in high esteem in Chinese Confucian society.

In Confucianism, studying and formal education were for the purpose of self-cultivation in order to be in closer alignment with ritual (li 禮), the cosmic pattern, and appropriate action according to situations or environments. The concepts of self-improvement and appropriateness at the right moment were the key features in which Liang, I would argue, found connections between Confucian epistemology and evolutionary theory; both frameworks emphasize the idea of improvement or development.[25] In addition to self-cultivation, education was also the gateway to the imperial examination for men. Passing the imperial examination and becoming an official not only granted educated men access to political power but also allowed them to bring honor to their parents and ancestors. Furthermore, self-cultivation would presumably lead the state to prosperity.[26] And since Liang's proposal validated and preserved the essence of Confucianism and corresponded to Chinese social-culture formation, he had a greater chance of persuading his conservative compatriots to support education reform.[27]

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[25] My argument is based on Liang's explanation of how the notion of change encapsulates both natural and cultural evolutionary progress. "[T]here are gradual changes that occur between the two kinds of changes that can use the species to develop from monkeys to human beings, from a savage and backward species to a civilized and noble one." (Liang Qichao, "Lun nüxue" 論女學, 1897. Translated by Robert Cole and Wei Peng, edited by Dorothy Ko in Lydia Liu, Rebecca Karl and Dorothy Ko, *The Birth of Chinese Feminism: Essential Texts in Transnational Theory*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 195.)

[26] See footnote no. 11 and 12.

[27] See footnote no. 13 and 20.

A Eugenics Initiative: Reinventing Chinese Reproductive Bodies

In Liang's vision, education reform was the foundation for transforming China into a modern power. He put forward multiple measures in his education reform proposal.[28] Yet of all these measures, he most strongly emphasized women's education (nüxue 女學) because its outcomes would determine the success of overall education reform and the future prosperity of the Chinese state.[29] As he argued:

> There are two fundamental principles of governance: the first is to instill an upright heart, and the second is to recruit talented people from far and wide. Children's education establishes the foundation of both principles. Children's education begins with the mother's teaching, which is itself rooted in women's education. Therefore women's education fundamentally determines whether a nation will survive or be destroyed and whether it will prosper or languish in weakness.[30]

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[28] In "Lun bianfa buzhi benyuanzhihai" 論變法不知本原之害, Liang stated that "the essence of reform is to cultivate people of talent. To increase the population of people of talent, more schools are needed. To establish a school system is to change the civil servant entrance examination. Once all these goals are accomplished then [we] can change the governmental system." Liang's education initiative included abolishing the civil entrance exam, and establishing professional associations on various subjects, teacher training (normal) schools, women's education and children's education.

[29] See Liang Qicaho, "Lun nüxue" 論女學, 1897. (https://zh.wikisource.org/zh-hant/變法通議#論女學.)

[30] Original text: 故治天下之大本二，曰正人心，廣人才。而二者之本，必自蒙養始；蒙養之本，必自母教始；母教之本，必自婦學始。故婦學實天下存亡强弱之大原也。English translation is from Robert Cole and Wei Peng in Dorothy Ko edited, "Lun nüxue," 194.

It is quite clear that Liang placed women's education front and center in the fight for the survival of the Chinese state. Yet by connecting women's education and children's education (mengyang 蒙養), he discloses that the goal of women's education is to ensure that women can provide quality "motherly teaching (mujiao 母教)" to their children. That is to say that the justification for implementing women's education was not for the sake of women themselves, and certainly not to encourage women to establish careers outside of the domestic sphere. Rather, the goal was to produce cultivated, qualified mothers. The seemingly progressive initiative advocating for women's education actually was more about maintaining traditional gender conventions and upholding the notion that women belonged to the domestic sphere.[31]

According to Liang, women's education should focus on moral indoctrination, general education, physical education, household management (home economics), and childhood development.[32] All of this was meant to train women to better perform tasks

[31] He-Yin Zhen 何殷震 (ca. 1884-1920?), a Chinese anarchist, also promoted women's education but not for the purpose of training women to become qualified mothers. Her advocacy for women's education was for the purpose of promoting family revolution to liberate not only women but also men being entrapped by domestic responsibilities, because family was the origin of gender inequality. She even rephrased Liang's slogan promoting women's education (see footnote no.30) to "family revolution is the foundation of all revolutions. In order to begin family revolution, it must begin with the women's education." Original text: 家庭革命為一切革命之基。欲興家庭革命，必自興女學. He-Yin Zhen, "Nüzi jiaoyu wenti" 女子教育問題, *Tianyi* 天義 (1907-1908) 13&14 (December 30, 1907): 1-8, reprinted in Wan Shiguo and Lydia H. Liu eds., *Tianyi · Hengbao* 天義 · 衡報 (Beijing: Zhonguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2016), 197.

[32] Liang adopted Japanese women's education as the blueprint for his women's education proposal. The general education introduced reading, writing, history, geography, mathematics, science, painting/drawing (art) and music. Childhood development was listed as *jiaoyu* 教育, a term usually translated as "education" in English. I avoid this common translation because Liang provides two examples of the topics of learning in this course which are how to raise children and how to educate children. Based on Liang's examples, I then prefer to translate the term

of motherhood and wifehood such as caring for a home and its occupants, instructing children, and serving as children's moral role models. The idea was that through modernized, intentional training for women, Chinese children could grow up in much-improved home environments where they would receive good care and nourishment, moral instruction, as well as some basic fact-based knowledge.[33] Thus women's education, in Liang's vision, aimed to prepare Chinese women for their predestined motherhood, methodically developing their intellectual abilities as well as their mindsets so that they could best perform motherly functions.

As I have pointed out earlier, the eugenics movement of the late 19th century aimed to create enhanced citizens of tomorrow through social reform. Under the influence of evolutionary theory and social Darwinism, many modern nations pushed for eugenics for the purposes of competing against other nations and securing national survival. As a movement based on scientific discoveries and understanding of human heredity, it aimed to enhance human subjects through both learning and inherent modification. Although improved education for mothers could affect the quality of future Chinese citizens, it could not affect the inherent traits of new generations. Thus,

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jiaoyu more specifically as "childhood development" to express the emphasis on learning how to raise and educate children. Also see Juliette Yuehtsen Chung, *Struggle for National Survival*, 105-106.

[33] Liang's comment about the lack of education among Chinese women was partially true. Yet many women who were born in educated elite families would receive general education from either their parents or private tutors. See Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 54-58 and the chapter of "Writing" (76-120).

in order to produce healthy and robust Chinese children, Liang turned to the examination and vitalization of the reproductive bodies of the citizenry. He writes:

> [Western] scholars who study the subject (science) of race have taken prenatal care (taijiao 胎教) as a top priority.[34] They have given much thought to the various ways of improving their own species. Countries intending to strengthen their military power also order their women to practice physical exercises (to take physical education classes). They recognize that only in this way will their children have plush skin and strong, powerful tendons and muscles. This is also a fundamental concern in girls' schools.[35]

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[34] *Taijiao* 胎教, prenatal care with focus on the wellness of the mother's body, was not a neologism but rather a term that Liang repurposed. *Taijiao* traditionally referred to fetal education, a situation in which the fetus would be able to acquire knowledge or morality via maternal bodily experiences. In other words, the belief was that the pregnant woman was able to educate the fetus through her perceptive organs while it was in her uterus:
"In ancient times, a woman with child did not lie on her side as she slept; nor would she sit sideways or stand on one foot. She would not eat food with odd flavors; if the food was cut awry, she would not eat it; if the mat was not placed straight, she would not sit on it. She did not let her eyes gaze on lewd sights or let her ears listen to depraved sounds. At night she ordered blind musicians to chant the *Odes*. She spoke only of proper things. In this way she gave birth to children of correct physical form who exceeded others in talent and virtue. Thus, during pregnancy, one must always be cautious about [external] stimuli. If one is stimulated by something good, then [the child] will be good. If one is stimulated by something evil, then [the child] will be evil. People's resemblance to various things at birth is in every case due to the mother's being stimulated by external things, so that in form and voice they come to resemble these things." ("Zhoushi sanmu" 周室三母 "The Three Matriarchs of The House of Zhou" in Liu Xiang 劉向 (79-8 BCE), *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳 (ca. 17 BCE) (https://ctext.org/lie-nv-zhuan/zhou-shi-san-mu/zh.) The English translation here is from Anne Behnke Kinney edited and translated, *Exemplary Women of Early China: The Lienü zhuan of Liu Xiang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 7.

[35] Original text: 故西人言種族之學，以胎教為第一義。其思所以自進其種者，不一而足。而各國之以强兵為意者，亦令國中婦人一律習體操，以爲必如是，然後所生之子膚革充

Liang's words disclosed that the true motivation for implementing physical education in women's curriculum was to develop the future reproductive potential of female bodies.[36] Women, in this outlook, were incubators whose primary purpose was producing robust children. Notably, here, Liang exposes his rather limited understanding of the science behind reproduction when he associates the qualities of children's physiques with only the mothers' physical condition before and during pregnancy without factoring in genetic predisposition or the fathers' traits.[37]

Following this way of thinking, it is not surprising that Liang couples the weakness of the Chinese race/state with Chinese women's feeble physiques, especially their bound feet.[38] He claimed that the physical mutilation (hui renzhiti 毀人肢體) of

盈，筋力强壯也。此亦女學堂中一大義也。English translation is from Liang Qichao, "Lun nüxue". Translated by Robert Cole and Wei Peng in Lydia Liu, Rebecca Karl and Dorothy Ko edited, *The Birth of Chinese Feminism: Essential Texts in Transnational Theory*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 195.

[36] This advocacy of physical education for women that emphasized reshaping Chinese women's physique continued into the Republican era. For example, the popular *Liangyou* periodical had a photographic section about women and sports to showcase the modern physical ideal. See Maura Elizabeth Cunningham, "The Modern Girl in Motion: Women and Sports in *Liangyou*," and Lei Jun, "Producing Norms, Defining Beauty: The Role of Science in the Regulation of the Female body and Sexuality in Liangyou and *Furen Huabao*," in Paul G. Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen, and Yingjin Zhang eds., *Liangyou: Kaeidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945* (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2013). 95-109; 111-31.

[37] It is possible that Liang only had partial understanding of reproduction rather than deliberately omitting the male role. However, Liang's emphasis on women's bodies reflected the discipline of eugenics of that period. See Alice Ravenhill, "Eugenic Education for Women and Girls" (1908), Deborah Cohler, *Citizen, Inert, Queer: Lesbianism and War in Early Twentieth-Century Britain* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 2 and 75-78.

[38] This association of women's bound feet with China's national weakness was also discussed among Chinese women. For example, in *A Letter from Ch'en Shu-Hsien to Ch'en Pan-Hsien*, Ms. Ch'en goes to several lectures by female activists and has a revelation about her body and autonomy:

footbinding had set the Chinese race and civilization back. Although Liang delivers a sympathetic message regarding Chinese women and the physical pain they had to endure, the deformation of women's feet, in his writing, both literarily and figuratively crippled Qing China's development and that of future citizens. [39] Whether or not Liang deliberately omitted the genetic connection between men and the children they fathered, it is fair to suggest that Liang was out of tune with the science behind heredity.[40] Because bound feet were not inherent physical traits but an artificial/human manipulation of the body, the result of footbinding could make women appear feeble and frail, but their children would never genetically inherit fragile bodies because their mothers had bound feet. Nevertheless, Chinese women and their mutilated bodies took

"We now have our own newspaper, and women's schools are being established one after another. I believe if we all work hard together, we will get our rights and enjoy freedom and equality. However, I was also ashamed of myself because all these years I have failed to acquire any knowledge and I am powerless to educate and influence illiterate and other unfortunate women. I have decided to unbind my own feet because I would be ashamed to go to meet anyone with these ugly bound feet. I discussed this matter with Eighth Sister, and we decided to unbind our feet now and in the fall to enroll in the Literary Society School." Patricia Buckley Ebrey ed., *Chinese Civilization and Society* (New York: Free Press, 1981), 246-247.
For scholarly discussion on this topic, see Ono Kazuko, and Joshua A. Fogel ed., *Chinese Women in a Century of Revolution, 1850-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989) 23-33, and Dorothy Ko's *Cinderella's Sisters: A revisionist History of Footbinding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 9-23 and 67-68.

[39] "Women suffer in plain sight from the bitterness of this terrible poison (footbinding), but in truth it is our entire race that is left with the greatest injury." (Robert Cole and Wei Peng trans, "On Women's Education," 203). Original text: "顯罹楚毒之苦，陰貽種族之傷。" (Liang Qichao, "Lun nüxue.")

[40] Although I understand that foot binding, which hindered women's natural growth and physical development, could affect the health of a fetus during a woman's pregnancy, my argument here is based on my general observation that Liang's writing does not link the smoking of opium with the quality of unborn children; opium smoking and its associated physical inactivity could also diminish the quality of the sperm produced by male users.

the blame for the degeneration of the Chinese race and civilization. [41] And women's education, in this case, was designed to rectify Chinese women's flaws and cultivate them as they march toward motherhood.

Family Revolution: Halting the Dysgenic Breeding Cycle

When eugenic thought arrived in China, it led Chinese intellectuals to pay attention to studies of heredity and reproduction that focused on female subjects. Because of these ideas, advocacy for women's education and the natural feet movement concentrated on conditioning women's physical attributes, their reproductive bodies. Women's education prioritized improving the overall qualities of Chinese women so they could become better wives as well as mothers who would give birth to robust future citizens, provide up-to-date care, and deliver earlier education to their children at home. These imagined newly educated women, however, did not actually take on any new functions. They, like their female predecessors, abided by traditional Chinese gender conventions and were fixed within the inner space (nei 內), especially within the home (jia 家).[42] The Chinese word *jia* refers to both the physical

[41] A few months after "On Women's Education" was published, Liang and his compatriots founded the "No Footbinding Association" (*Buchanzu* hui 不纏足會, June 1897) to both continue advocating for natural feet (tianzu 天足) and assist women with natural feet with getting married (or seeking marriages). In Ding Wenjiang and Zhao Fengtian ed., *Liang Qichao nianpu changbian* 梁啟超年譜長編, 69-71. Also see footnote no. 36 and 37.

[42] In *Zhou yi*'s 周易 *Jiaren* 家人: "In Jia Ren the wife has her correct place in the inner (trigram), and the man his correct place in the outer. That man and woman occupy their correct places is the great righteousness shown (in the relation and positions of) heaven and earth. In Jia Ren we have the idea of an authoritative ruler; - that, namely, represented by the parental authority. Let

location of one's home and the conceptual notion of one's family. Therefore, Chinese wives were not only responsible for managing their homes but also managing representations of their family. In this light, women's education not only reconditioned female subjects but also indirectly prompted modifications to the Chinese home and family. In the following decades, the Chinese eugenics discourse gradually moved onto subjects related to the concept of family, such as marital practices and family formation. I have employed the term family revolution to reflect the remaking of the ideological family at the dawn of the twentieth century in China.

It is critical to understand that the term "family revolution" here is not a direct translation of the Chinese term *jiating geming* 家庭革命 (family revolution). Rather it is a broader approach to the discourses of reinventing the family through family reform (jiating gaige 家庭改革) and eliminating family through family revolution. Although these discourses seemed to present polarizing ideological positions on family, they both aimed to produce and secure better Chinese progeny for the purpose of Chinese national salvation. Another reason for employing the term family revolution to capture both discourses is to take the advantage of the notion of revolution, thereby signifying the radical changes to the concept of family.

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the father be indeed father, and the son son; let the elder brother be indeed elder brother, and the younger brother younger brother, let the husband be indeed husband, and the wife wife: - then will the family be in its normal state. Bring the family to that state, and all under heaven will be established." (Trans. James Legge) Original text: "家人，女正位乎内，男正位乎外，男女正，天地之大義也。家人有嚴君焉，父母之谓也。父父，子子，兄兄，弟弟，夫夫，婦婦，而家道正；正家而天下定矣。" (https://ctext.org/book-of-changes/jia-ren/zhs?en=on)

Reinventing Family

In 1902, Liang published "Jin zaohun yi" 禁早婚議 ("On Prohibition of Early Marriage") to discuss the role of marriage in relation to the development and prosperity of the Chinese state.[43] He listed the following five reasons why the tradition of marriage at an early age would damage the Chinese state: 1. It would harm the physical health of the youth and defile their minds because young married couples would become addicted to the sexual relations and deplete their energy; 2. It would fail in either creating or nurturing "good offspring" (jiazhong 佳種) because young married couples were too physically immature to create good embryos and lacked the abilities to nurture their infants; 3. It would harm the children's moral and intellectual development because young married couples did not have the experience or the education to provide good parenting to their children; 4. It would harm the national education because young married couples would not be able to complete their education; 5. It would harm the

[43] "When speaking of people, it has to begin with family clans. When speaking of family clans, it has to begin with marriages. Thus marriage is truly the first step toward the government of the people. The Chinese marriage customs need to be rectified in several ways but the most important one is to prohibit pre-adulthood marriage. In general, the more barbaric the people are, the earlier (younger) they will get married; the more civilized the people are, the later they will get married." Original text: "言群者必托始于家族，言家族者必托始于婚姻，婚姻實群治之第一位也。中國婚姻之俗，宜改良者不一端，而最重要者厥为早婚。凡愈野蠻之人，其婚姻愈早；愈文明之人，其婚嫁愈遲。" (Liang Qichao, "Jin zaohun yi" 禁早婚議, in *Yingbingshi wenji*, 120-6.) Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Liang Qichao's "Jin zaohun yi" are my own.

national economy because young married couples would still depend on financial supports from their parents instead of becoming independent (ziying 自營).[44]

Liang's advocacy for outlawing Chinese early marriage customs shared a similar goal with his earlier campaign on the women's education. That goal was to first procure and then secure enhanced Chinese progeny for the benefit of the Chinese state. Yet his phrasing in the later piece such as "procuring good offspring for the state/nation" (wei yiguo de jiazhong 爲一國得佳種), and "our children are not for our self-interests but rather make up the citizenry, and the future masters of the state/nation"[45] forthrightly and radically aimed at altering the traditional structure of the Chinese family and values surrounding children. Children, in the Chinese cultural tradition, were born to memorialize and carry on the familial past. They were responsible for paying tribute to their ancestors by performing ceremonial rituals, and extend their ancestral legacies by continuing the family bloodline. In addition, they were expected to be filial to their parents.[46] Under such a system, children were at the very bottom of the family structure.

[44] Liang Qichao, "Jin zaohun yi," 124. Liang's notion of becoming independent only encourages Chinese adults to become financial independent instead of encouraging them to exercise their agency to pursue their desires. The goal of *ziying* is for all Chinese citizens to be part of the national work force and contribute to the national economy.

[45] Original text: "吾兒者，非吾所能獨私也，彼實為國民一份子，而為一國將來之主人翁。" Ibid. 123.

[46] In the Confucian mindset, sexual intercourse for the purpose of pleasure was morally corrupting, and it should only be undertaken to produce descendants for the family.

However, when Liang aligned children with the nation's future, he not only appropriated children for the sake of the collective but also inevitably reshaped the family structure. As Chinese citizens and the future masters of China, children became the most valuable members and assets of the state. Thus, parents were required to recognize that their children's wellbeing outweighed the familial past. Furthermore, Liang did not simply ask parents to be responsible for their children's physical and intellectual development. He demanded that future parents complete their education so they would be qualified to nurture and educate their children in the home.[47] Even fathers were now tasked with sharing the responsibilities of childrearing. All of these new recommendations suggested that children were born for the sake of the nation, and because of that, they should supersede their parents and ancestors in representing the apex of the family structure.

Beyond training more knowledgeable parents, the public education Liang advocated would also allow citizens to secure meaningful jobs after graduation. Being able to work would allow young adults to secure their financial independence and contribute to national economic growth. Since the parents of these educated couples no longer needed to provide any financial supports to their children, they could contribute to the national economic growth as well. Combining these ideas, Liang's proposal suggested that educated couples would have the ability to raise their children and manage their own family finances without asking for any support from their parents.

[47] The proposed required education was as follows: primary school 7-8 years, secondary school 5-6 years, college 3-4 years; total 15-17 years. (Liang Qichao, "Jin zaohun yi," 123-124.

This represented a rejection of the traditional extended family living arrangement and a promotion of the western-style nuclear family as the future of the Chinese family.

Eliminating Family

Also aiming for the goal of national salvation, Kang Youwei shared the same belief that the future was in the hands of children. In his *Datong shu* 大同書 (*The Great Unity*, 1935), Kang offered his personal vision of a Chinese utopia, in which he proposed a rather comprehensive eugenics approach to creating an enhanced hybrid race and maintaining their superiority.[48] His resolutions included increasing the population of mixed race (specifically Eurasian) individuals, and performing conscripted sterilizations on disabled people, criminals and unwanted populations.[49] Beyond these ideas, Kang's philosophy was quite similar to that of his disciple Liang Qichao. His eugenics proposals concentrated on improving female bodies to enhance their reproductive function. Thus, his proposed that women's education should focus on physical, moral, and childcare

[48] Kang Youwei's stated goal in his *Datong Shu* was to create one unified world, one homogenous superior race and a world with no more national divisions. However, the primarily social and governmental structures he discussed were based on a Confucian philosophical approach. Kang Youwei, *Datong Shu* (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1935).

[49] Ono Kazuko argues that Kang's great unity is designed for bourgeois individuals for "an advanced material civilization and a system of public ownership," but his details about the great unity lacks information on how to make the society actually move toward his goal. (Ono Kazuko, *Chinese Women in a Century of Revolution, 1850-1950*, 45-6). Hao Chang presents a similar argument, that Kang's great unity "embodies the twin values of moral perfection and material abundance." (Chang, *Intellectuals in Crisis*, 63). My argument in this section is focused on the dissolving of family units in order to engender better "qualities" in children and ensure the ideal development of these future citizens. Yet I am fully aware of Kang's ideas about dissolving marital practices and implanting marital contracts in his utopian framework.

education with the intention of preparing female subjects for their reproductive obligations and their later mandatory service in a type of communal nursery.[50] As in Liang's proposal for women's education, the proposed moral education would allow women to positively shape their children's moral development. However, an additional purpose of female moral education was fetal education. The belief was that a woman's education would develop and cultivate the moral energy (*qi* 氣) circling within her bodies so that the fetus would be able to absorb this moral energy in the womb.

Because of his strong belief in prenatal influences, Kang further imagined setting up the "Human Roots Institution" (renben yuan 人本院), a series of maternity group homes for expectant mothers. This was to be a mandatory program where women would check into the facility as soon as their pregnancy began and stay there until their children were weaned. The expectant mothers would receive prenatal and postpartum care, pregnancy and health-related education, and other daily life needs onsite. The women's living quarters, in Kang's fanciful descriptions, would be relaxing and comfortable with soothing music and pleasant fragrance in the air, adorable baby photos and illustrations on the wall, and a selection of proper books on the shelves. These mothers would wear specially designed garments which would generate soft "rhythmical and pleasing" sounds only when the mothers had positive thoughts and emotions to regulate their mind. Although all these features appeared to center on the mothers' welfare, they were really oriented toward cultivating the fetus through the

[50] Although it would be mandatory, not all women would be qualified. The women's moral quality was the factor determining whether they could have the honor to serve in the nurseries.

mothers' sensory faculties.[51] Women, in the eyes of Kang, were no just surrogate mothers or incubators of future generations; they simply could not be trusted with the task of bearing improved progeny at all. Why else would expectant mothers be confined to a highly regulated and monitored facility from the beginning of their child's existence?

In Kang's imagined system, after childbirth, women would continue their residency at the maternal group homes for another half a year, or until their children were weaned. However, these postpartum women remained under pre-natal regulations during their remaining stay. Kang argued that this was necessary because maternal behaviors would influence children through their daily breastfeeding. Kang suggested that whenever mothers exhibited unprincipled conduct or thought, their breastmilk would become contaminated. Once children consumed the contaminated breastmilk, they would be intrinsically polluted, a state extremely difficult to amend in the future. Kang seemingly argues that mothers could determine the outcomes for their biological children, even though they would hardly have any in-person contact with their children after they checked out the facility. Mothers, in his imagined society, were potential liabilities to their children's future conduct. In this context, birth mothers would probably be blamed if their children exhibited any socially unacceptable conduct or poor habits in their lifespan. Yet presumably women would not receive any accolades

[51] Kang Youwei, *Datong shu*, 301-6.

for their children's achievements, especially since they would have little influence after their offspring's infanthood.[52]

The lack of any mention of fathers, marriages, families, or parent-child relationships, as in the example of the "Human Roots Institution," characterized Kang's ideological approach to his imagined "great unity." His imagined world was one where the concepts and practices of family life were nowhere to be found. Kang explains that this was because family was at the epicenter of his disastrous contemporary world where nations constantly waged wars against one and another to either establish their supremacy or strive for their survival. Kang, an ardent Confucian scholar, viewed the state as both a colossal family and the macrocosm of the natal family. Despite sharing a similar worldview with his disciple, Kang did not seek to reinvent the family for Chinese national salvation but instead spoke in hyperbolic terms of abolishing it.

In the Neo-Confucian paradigm, the correlation of self, family, and state could be illustrated as concentric circles wherein self is the inner circle, family is the middle one, and state is the outer one. Because of interrelationships, the self often faces the challenge of being simultaneously filial to the family and loyal to the state. In his writing, Kang argues the family is the original source of all world conflicts because it is natural for people to put their families before the interests of the state.[53] Thus, by abolishing

[52] Women would receive the title of *zhongmu* 眾母, the mother of the people, for their contribution to delivering future citizens. (Kang, *Datong Shu*, 300 and 302.)

[53] Kang believed that individuals without family obligations would naturally put the benefits of society and the state before their individual interests. He viewed family as an institution that established a selfish mindset.

the family system, people would be able to devote themselves and make contributions to society freely without worrying about familial obligations. Under this imagined system, every individual would be born to serve the greater good instead of pursuing individual or family-related interests. Among the reasons why the concept of family was harmful to the human race, Kang's first three reasons were:

> 1. Customs and teachings were not unified. If a family was unrefined, their offspring would mostly be bad, and their human nature (renxing 人性) could not be corrected.
>
> 2. The nurturing of children was not unified. If a family had many ailing members, their offspring would be mostly weak and their bodies would not be robust.
>
> 3. Not every family could live in a good location (liangdi 良地). Their offspring's temperament would be bigoted and narrow, and unable to advance to broad and lofty intelligence.[54]

These reasons disclosed Kang's concerns that the traditional family would either produce dysgenic offspring or sabotage the development of their posterity. Since children and the future had become an inseparably paired concept at that time, abolishing the family was a radical suggestion for how to secure the wellbeing of children in the hope of rescuing the future.

[54] Kang Youwei, *Datong shu*, 286-287. The English translation is from Laurence G. Thompson translated, *The One-World Philosophy of K'ang Yu-wei* (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1958), 181.

The Prototype of The Developmental Eugenics Narrative

After the First Sino-Japanese War, the emergence of the eugenics discourse developed organically out of the search for salvation for China. Whether it was through implementing women's education or reinventing family, the peremptory directive was to save China through "better breeding." That oriented on splicing various eugenics measures together to produce enhanced future citizens for China. The new generation of Chinese would presumably be able to establish a new China with the strength to compete with other countries. While it was difficult to define what this "new China" would be, it was certain that the new China would be better than the old one. This attitude of looking towards the future and believing that the best China was yet to come was actually a radical break from Confucian epistemology, which assumed that the best period of Chinese civilization had already occurred and that the goal was to reminisce about and reclaim a glorious past. Instead of seeking a return to the time of the sages, most late-Qing intellectuals like Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei began moving forward and contemplating the distant future.

This awareness of the future was the essence of Chinese modernity and it found a voice in the evolutionary and eugenic discourses. The notion of "survival of the fittest" perfectly portrayed the competition among species to produce stronger offspring and increase their survival rate in the future. Since the late Qing was obviously losing in almost every competition, from military engagements to technological developments, its future was clear. In order to alter what looked like a gloomy future, Chinese reformist intellectuals aimed to improve the Chinese posterity through eugenics. The study of

eugenics, although based on natural selection, gave people the belief that they could modify the development of their children in order to change the course of the future. In this sense, the future was never set and there was always hope for the future. In the eyes of Chinese reformist intellectuals, children represented the forward-moving ideology because they were the hope for the Chinese state.

The developmental eugenics narrative captures snapshots of the competing yet compatible narrative of the evolutionary and the eugenic discourses at that particular point of time. The evolutionary discourse emphasizes utilizing the knowledge and language of natural history to shape the understanding and depiction of the rises and falls of civilizations through human history. The eugenic discourse was oriented toward utilizing the understanding of evolution to orchestrate desired development in children to alter the course of the expected future progression. In essence, the developmental eugenics narrative began with recounting the occurrences and progression of intellectual discourses based on the science of natural selection that appeared on the stage of history. It was a narrative of that intellectual history before it prevailed in other genres. It is not surprising to see that the crucial correlation between the future of the Chinese nation and the development of Chinese children became an underlying trope in ideological writing, especially for the purpose of Chinese salvation, from the late 19th century to the beginning of 20th century.

Literary Evolution: Fiction for Social Functions

In his "Preface on the Translation and Publication of Political Fiction" ("Yi yin zhengzhi xiaoshuo xu" 譯印政治小說序, 1989), Liang Qichao argues that the prevalence of "political fiction" in Japan and Western countries is the main reason why these countries could amend themselves through national reforms and become modern nations.[55] Yet without providing a clear definition of the term "political fiction," Liang's essay is simply contemplating fiction and its social and political ramifications in general, focusing on its popularity across social demographics and its power to spiritually engage and influence the reader. Political fiction, based on Liang's general approach, could be loosely defined as fiction that can reshape or inculcate political and social beliefs in its readers. In his later essay, "On the Relationship between Fiction and the Government of the People" ("Xiaoshuo yu qunzhi zhi guanxi" 小說與群治之關係, 1902), Liang simply calls this kind of literary writing "fiction" without the qualifier *zhengzhi* (politics/political).[56] Yet the fiction that Liang advocated in both his essays was a new form of fiction that China did not yet have. Thus Liang called for a revolution in fiction.

[55] Liang Qichao, "Preface on the Translation and Publication of Political Fiction" ("Yi yin zhengzhi xiaoshuo xu" 譯印政治小說序, 1989) in *Qingyi bao* 清議報 (*The China Discussion*, 1898-1901), vol. 1 (Yokohama: November 11, 1898). *The China Discussion* was founded by Liang Qichao in Yokohama Japan after the fall of the Hundred Days Reform (bairi weiyin 百日維新, 1898; also known as Wuxu bianfa 戊戌變法).

[56] Liang Qichao, "On the Relationship between Fiction and the Government of the People" ("Xiaoshuo yu qunzhi zhi guanxi" 小說與群治之關係) in *Xin xiaoshuo* 新小說 (Nov. 14, 1902): 1-8. Reprinted in A Ying, *Wan Qing wenxue congchao: Xiaoshuo xiqu yanjiu juan* 晚清文學叢鈔：小說戲曲研究卷 (Shanghai: Zhounghua shuju, 1960), 14-19. Also see Huters, *Bringing the World Home*, 103-112; Catherine Vance Yeh, *The Chinese Political Novel: Migration of a World Genre* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asian Center, 2015), 2-4.

This new fiction would employ fiction's unique power to influence the reader's mind for the goal of reinventing China's social environment. Given Liang's earlier advocacy of change through institutional reform, his call for literary revolution in fiction was indeed a *change* in Chinese history of fiction.

Liang's call for new fiction was answered by the May Fourth generation. While experimenting with vernacular writing and incorporating modern ideals into their fictional writing, these May Fourth intellectuals actively engaged in and exchanged their ideals about modern Chinese literature. For example, in his "The Concept of Literary Evolution and Theatrical Improvement" ("Wenxue jinhua guannian yu xiju gailiang" 文學進化觀念與戲劇改良, 1918), Hu Shi (胡適, 1891-1962) incorporates evolutionary thinking to explain how developments in literature and theater were in correlation with their historical time and environment and how each development is building from previous developments.[57] He further argues that, from time to time, both literature and theater need stimuli from other cultures to continue their development. Although Hu Shi never suggests that the newer literature is better than the old, his modern developmental way of thinking reveals his bias. Furthermore, Hu Shi claims that fiction is the proper literature for modern China. This developmental mode of thought also appears in Zhou Zuoren's (周作人, 1885-1967) "Literature for Humans" ("Ren de

[57] Hu Shi, "The Concept of Literary Evolution and Theatric Improvement" ("Wenxue jinhua guannian yu xiju gailiang" 文學進化觀念與戲劇改良) in *Xin Qingnian* (新青年, 1916-1925) (Shanghai: Qunyi shudian, 1918), vol. 5, no. 3, 4-17. For other work on employing evolutionary theory in literary reform, see Zhu Xizu 朱希祖 translated Kuniyagawa Hakuson's 厨川白村 (1880-1923) essay under the Chinese title "Wenyi de jinhua lun" 文藝的進化 (1919), *Xin qingnian* 6, no. 6 (November 1, 1919) 581-4.

wenxue" 人的文學, 1918).[58] Zhou separates himself from Hu Shi and other intellectuals on the topic of literary revolution in his essay through the concepts of *ren* (人) which encapsulates all things human, an animal of natural evolution; individual, a self-aware being of cognitive evolution; and people, a collective of individuals who are also humans.[59] And thus, Zhou states, new literature should have the intrinsic elements of humanity and individuality; he emphasized the normative role of literary realism in depicting an achievable ideal life to guide *ren* upward (*xiangshang* 向上).[60] Yet could these lofty intellectual aspirations actually be achieved in fictional writing?[61]

May Fourth writers quickly answered the call for new fiction. They wrote stories that celebrated individualism, selfhood, and gender equality through the protagonists' quests for free love or autonomy. They wrote these stories in vernacular to establish a

[58] Zhou Zuoren, "Literature for Humans" ("Ren de wenxue" 人的文學) in *Xin Qingnian* (Shanghai: Qunyi shudian, 1918), vol. 5, no. 6, 30-39. Zhou's essay was published two months after Hu Shi's essay.

[59] My understanding of Zhou Zuoren's *ren* echoes Lydia H. Liu's argument that "the translingual supersign *ren/human* has left the old Confucian signified or *ren* behind as it picks up a new signified in the evolutionary theory of life." (Lydia H Liu, "Life as Form: How Biomimesis Encountered Buddhism in Lu Xun" in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Feb, 2009), 21-54.

[60] Ibid. In addition, Zhou's comment about the "idealistic life" (lixiang shenghuo 理想生活) and "regular life" (pingchang shenghuo 平常生活) seemingly echoes Liang's comment about how fiction is either about "idealism" (lixiang 理想) or "realism" (xieshi 寫實) in his "On the Relationship between Fiction and the Government of the People."

[61] I am still researching whether Chinese fictional writing have achieved this goal. But it worth to mention that Mingwei Song has argued that by about ten years later the Chinese modern novelists such as Ye Shengtao 葉聖陶 (1894-1988), Mao Dun 茅盾 (1896-1981) and others had achieved this goal by adopting the modern Westernized narrative mode to "present the formative experience of new youth in the context of an emerging modern world." Weiming Song, *Young China: National Rejuvenation and the Bildungsroman, 1900-1959* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asian Center, 2015), 122.

national language in order to foreground the sense of a Chinese nation state. Naturally, they wrote about modern conjugal relationships and the modern family not simply as the building blocks for a new Chinese nation but also as bastions of both intimacy and self-determination. Fiction seemed, as Zhou argued, able to push *ren* upward when there was no clash between individual and human progress. Yet in order for humans to continue their natural evolutionary development in the real world, they needed to produce the next generation. Therefore, whether it was consciously or subconsciously adopted by Chinese fiction writers, the developmental eugenics narrative became prevalent in May Fourth Chinese fiction. However, once discussions on eugenics morphed into a narrative mode, children were not always the forward-moving force leading to a better future. They were quite often the burdens and limitations imposed on other characters, especially their parents.

In the following chapters, my research centers on expressions of the developmental eugenics narrative during the period of Republican China in cultural productions, including but not limited to fictional writing, ideological essays, illustrated texts that were published in journals, and pictorials from both commercial and governmental publishers. My research engages in multiple discursive fields including eugenics, individualism, nationalism, family revolution, parenthood, and childhood to problematize the already convoluted scholarly discussions on Chinese modernity. Therefore, the developmental eugenics narrative that I employ through this dissertation should be regarded as an excursive narrative of change in Republican China. In this case, the materials do not always suture together perfectly.

This dissertation contains two parts. The first part continues to lay out the connections between the developmental eugenics narrative and family revolution discourse during Republican China. Chapter 2 sets the stage for family revolution by investigating the Nora phenomenon, the conditions under which Henrik Ibsen's character from *A Doll's House* became the premier anti-patriarchal role model for both female and male May Fourth radicals. While revolting against parental authority, the radicals also looked to the future family they would build and disavowed their traditionally sanctioned authority over their children. In doing so, they denounced the "unnatural" and anti-evolutionary practice of filial piety in their household. This restructuring of the family system, I argue, was centered on children at least in part because they were the hope and future of the Chinese nation.

The second part of my dissertation investigates how the developmental eugenics narrative morphed into Chinese fictional writing and how, in these stories, the ideal modern family structure ironically causes the dissolution of the autonomy, agency, and selfhood of the protagonists once children appear. As the developmental eugenics narrative pursues the illusory children who will lead China to a promising future, the children in the stories that I examine in my research are never the main characters and are rarely very visible as individuals. They could be toddlers, infants, or even fetuses, a concrete image of a child or an imagined one. Their parents are actually the focal points in these stories but their lives are often ruined by the children seemingly hiding in the background. By critically scrutinizing these fictional texts, I show how they expose the incongruencies between the discourses on children, modern individuals, and the

modern family in what would otherwise be a harmonious whole within the developmental eugenics narrative. Even while being written in the context of Chinese national salvation during the Republican era, these ostensibly congruous discourses often reveal themselves to be in direct opposition to each other.

Chapter 3 begins by challenging the prevailing view of "good wife, wise mother" (liangqi xianmu 良妻賢母), a term which I argue should be treated as a relation between two separate concepts rather than as a seamless unified one. Both fiction and reality suggested that being a good wife did not necessarily equate to being a wise mother. The three stories I analyze in this chapter, Ling Shuhua's (凌叔華 1900-1990) "Little Liu" (Xiao Liu 小劉, 1929), Chen Ying's (沉櫻 1907-1986) "Woman" (Nüxing 女性, 1929), and Xie Bingying's (謝冰瑩, 1906-2000) "Abandonment" (Paoqi 拋棄, 1932), are all written by women. In Ling Shuhua's story, children are linked with filth instead of hope for the future, and their filth eventually contaminates the modern family. Both Chen Ying and Xie Bingying's stories explore the complexities and ambiguities that arise when women characters become pregnant: while they display intrinsic motherly love towards the fetus growing inside, they are simultaneously overcome with great repulsion at the thought of becoming mothers.

Chapter 4 examines stories written by men and focuses on how their male characters are overwhelmed financial hardships after becoming family men. In Hu Shi's "One Question" (Yige wenti 一個問題, 1919), I explore the narrative change of temporality, i.e., how the arrival of children reorients the family onto a pace of time which is much faster than when the family only consisted of a husband and a wife. I

then explore the home space in Lu Xun's (魯迅 1881-1936) "Regret for the Past — Juansheng's Notes" (Shangshi—Juansheng de shouji 傷逝—涓生的手記, 1925), and how this domestic space is reshaped through a man's perception of his romantic relationship. Both men in these stories attempt to walk out the door to seek their personal freedom in the guise of seeking a purpose for life. Their intentions uncannily echo Henrik Ibsen's popular Nora story, but neither character actually manages to escape the home. The last story in this chapter, "A Happy Family—After the style of Xu Qinwen" (Xingfu de jiating—ni Xu Qinwen 幸福的家庭—擬許欽文, 1924), is also written by Lu Xun. The story explores the ambiguous attitudes of a modern family man towards his family.

In the Epilogue, I present a brief discussion on "anti-Japan resistance literature" (*kangzhan wenxue* 抗戰文學) written during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and how it propelled Chinese literature to undergo another evolution in its role in promoting ideologies, particularly nationalism. Starting in this time period, literature no longer just served the educated but also peasants, workers, and soldiers. Resistance literature, I suggest, was an antecedent to the dominant form of "people's literature" introduced (*renmin wenxue* 人民文學) after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. I briefly discuss how people's literature resolved the tension between individual aspirations and national reproductive mandates within the developmental eugenics narrative introduced in the Republican period by uniting family and nation, thus allowing the nation to integrate children into the national system before they even became family members. In historical hindsight, though their upbringing may have been

less burdensome for their parents, these nation's children were essentially national property, soldiers who later became members of the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). And in many cases, these children were willing to turn against their parents for the sake of the country. Obviously ordinary people did not have much choice in the matter, but ultimately, for families, this was something of a devil's bargain; relinquishing control over children's upbringing meant that parents faced less domestic drudgery, but they also missed out on the opportunity to instill family loyalty and values. This research of using the developmental eugenics narrative to sift through Chinese fictional writing from the May Fourth generation hence shows the paradox within the ideological family revolution for China's national building. And children, in the midst of all, the illusory image of China's promising future, are perhaps a political fantasy when in reality, children threaten the future that depends on them.

CHAPTER II

SAVE THE CHILDREN, SAVE THE FUTURE:

THE DISCOURSE OF FAMILY REVOLUTION IN THE REPUBLICAN ERA

In the previous chapter, I delineated the influential late-Qing reformists Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao's eugenics proposals for the purpose of Chinese national salvation, which involve education reform and social restructuring. According to Kang and Liang's arguments, these eugenics proposals would lead China to produce a new generation of Chinese children who would be physically, intellectually, and spiritually superior to their parents. Once these children entered their adulthood, they would lead China to a promising future. Under this presumption, the concept of children had evolved into a forward-moving ideology that connoted an imagined triumphant future. Since *jia*, family and home, is the first social and physical environment that a child experiences, the late-Qing reformists advocated for family revolution to reinvent *jia* in order to secure the wellbeing of the child, the future of the nation.

This sense of disquietude about the future generation's wellbeing continued into the Republican period (1911-1949). It influenced the May Fourth (1919-1921)[62] radicals/intellectuals and how they envisioned and reinvented *jia* to answer the call for

[62] This time frame of the May Fourth Movement is from Peter Zarrow's *China in War and Revolution, 1895-1949* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 151-169. Alternatively, Vera Schwarcz defines the May Fourth Movement according to its cultural, social, and intellectual influences which occurred between 1919 and 1938. (Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment*, 1983.)

national salvation. In 1918, Lu Xun (魯迅 1881-1936), one of preeminent icons and the father of modern Chinese literature, published his iconoclastic "A Madman's Diary" (Kuangren riji 狂人日記, 1918), a story that boldly likens the traditional Confucian learning and family systems to cannibalism.[63] The story, which ends with the protagonist's dire plea to "*Jiujiu haizi* 救救孩子 (*save the children*)," sent a shock wave through the educated public. There is no doubt that the phrase closely resonated with the notion of children and China's future. Yet the protagonist's inability to discern the differences between the flesh eating and the uncontaminated children renders uncertain his lament about saving the children. This uncertainty about whom should be saved plus the elusive timeline of the story and the unstable mental state of the madman narrator cast additional doubt on whether saving the children would be possible or could actually improve the future. Lu Xun's story vividly dramatizes the precarious state of Chinese children and the correlated national future.

Lu Xun's ingenious portrayal of the madman's imagined cannibalism within the Chinese Confucian learning and family system greatly captured the popular assumption of China's weakness which circulated in intellectual and radical groups. They believed that obsolete cultural formations and beliefs had hindered China's attempts to advance its civilization for the past eon and would continue thwarting China's efforts to develop into a modern nation. Straight away, numerous politically and ideologically charged essays that recapitulated the notion of a "cannibalistic (Confucian) ritual ethic" (*chiren*

[63] Lu Xun 魯迅, "Kuangren riji" 狂人日記, in Lu Xun, comp., *Lu Xun quanji* 魯迅全集 (*LXQJ*), 18 vols. (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2005), 1:455.

de lijiao 吃人的禮教), appeared in major newspapers and journals.[64] For example, Wu Yu (吳虞 1872-1949) in his "Cannibalism and Ritual Ethical Codes" (Chiren yu lijiao 吃人與禮教, 1919) unraveled several historical events that were recorded in *The Commentary of Zuo* (*Zuo zhuan* 左傳, ca. 300 BCE), the *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shi ji* 史記, ca. 94 BCE), and the *Book of Han* (*Han shu* 漢書, 111) to prove that there was a long history of cannibalism embedded in Chinese Confucian cultural values. Yet in these essays, children were not the only members of the society who needed to be saved; every member who was exposed to the ritual ethical codes needed to be unburdened. This urge to save everyone seemingly drew attention away from children and their innocence, making everyone into unwitting victims of Confucian cultural beliefs and family structures. The generalization and democratization of hardship and cultural malaise became critical features of May Fourth iconoclastic writing, paving the way for new types of suffering literary heroes.

[64] Other essays on the topic of "cannibalistic Confucian ethics"include: Wu Yu 吳虞, "Chiren yu lijiao" 吃人與禮教 reprinted in *Xin qingnian* 6, no. 6 (November 1, 1919) (原刊本影印新青年 Genkapon ēin shinsēnen (Tokyo: Kyūko syoin, 1971), Vol. 6); Zao Ru 藻如 "Chiren de lijiao shi zhuan yabo nüzide" 吃人的禮教是專壓迫女子的 in *Funüz zhoukan* 婦女週刊 (1924-1925) 38 (September 2, 1925): 7-8; Shang Lin 上林 "Chiren lijiao xia zhi shazi lunli" 吃人禮教下之殺子倫理 in *Wuxi pinglun* 無錫評論 (1924-1926) 22 (October 15, 1925): 20-24; Xi Ming 奚明 "Lijiao chiren le"禮教喫人了 in *Xin nüxing* 新女性 (1926-1929) 1, no. 5 (May 10, 1926): 326-328.

More than Feminism:

Nora, the Anti-patriarchal Heroine in the Context of Chinese Family Revolution

In June 1918, *New Youth* (*Xin qingnian* 新青年) published a special edition, the *Henrik Ibsen Edition* (易卜生號 *Yibusheng hao*), which featured the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) and his work.[65] In this special edition, Ibsen's 1879 *Et dukkehjem* (English: *A Doll's House*; Chinese: *Na La* 娜拉, *Kuilei jiating* 傀儡家庭, Wanwu zhi jia 玩物之家 or *Wan'ou zhi jia* 玩偶之家) was translated and introduced to Chinese readers for the first time.[66] The play portrays Nora, a victim of a patriarchal society, who eventually undauntedly chooses to leave her husband and children behind to seek her independent personhood. The play had a huge impact on May Fourth radicals and Nora, the fictional character, quickly became the paragon against which many young women as well as young men measured themselves.

[65] The statement here does not try to make an argument regarding why this special edition is less frequently mentioned in surveys of Chinese modern literature. This situation is understandable given that the special edition featured a Norwegian playwright and his work, which are not within the scope of Chinese literature. It is noteworthy that *Xin qingnian* was not the first publication to introduce Henrik Ibsen. The first Chinese publication to mention Ibsen and his play *En Folkefiende* (English: *An Enemy of the People*; Chinese: *Shehui zhi di* 社會之敵, *Gongdi* 公敵 or *Guomin gongdi* 國民公敵) was Lu Xun's "On the Power of Romantic Poems (1908)" ("Moluo shili shuo" 摩羅詩力說, 1908) in *He'nan Monthly* (河南月刊). In *LXQJ*, 1: 65-120). See Zhang Zhongliang, "Yipusheng re" 易卜生熱 in his *Wusi shiqi de fanyi wenxue* 五四時期的翻譯文學 (Taipei: Xiuwei zixun keji, 2005), 175-215.

[66] Henrik Ibsen, *Et dukkehjem* [*A Doll's House=Na La* 娜拉], Trans. Luo Jialun 羅家倫 (1897-1969) and Hu Shi 胡適. *Xin qingnian* 4, no. 6 (June 15, 1918): 508-572.

It is quite interesting that Nora's popularity cut across genders, and she was especially renowned for her refusal to submit to her gender role as defined by her husband, the man. The play unmistakably called attention to the issues of female subjugation and gender inequity. However, the new cultural and later May Fourth radicals paralleled Nora's controlling husband with their own parents, especially the father figure. They recognized Nora's suffering as a universal hardship known to anyone who has lived in a patriarchal household before perceiving Nora's problems and misfortunes through the lens of gender. These radicals, in projecting their own concerns and objectives onto Nora's plight, treated her story as a general quest for individualism.[67] One illustrative example would be Hu Shi's (胡適 1891-1962) introductory essay, "Ibsenism" (易卜生主義 Yibusheng zhuyi, 1918), which appeared in the Ibsen *New Youth* issue.[68] In this essay, Hu Shi defines Ibsenism as a theatrical realism that is dedicated to "creating realistic illusions on stage as at the exposition of truth against falsehood in life."[69] Throughout the essay, he attacks Confucian traditions and argues that Nora's story underlines the importance of autonomy when it comes to developing one's independent personhood (獨立的人格 duli de renge).[70] Hu Shi points out that Nora's decision to leave her family behind is incited by her husband who

[67] Also see Ono Kazuko, Joshua A. Fogel, ed., *Chinese Women in a Century of Revolution, 1850-1950*, 99-100. Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment*, 112-114.

[68] Hu Shi, "Ibsenism" ("Yibusheng zhuyi" 易卜生主義), in *HSWC* 1: 629-647.

[69] Kwok-kan Tam, "Ibsenism and the Modern Chinese Self" in *Monumenta Serica* 54 (Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), 287-298. (https://www. Jstor.org/stable/40727545.)

[70] Hu Shi, "Ibsenism," in *HSWC* 1: 645.

constantly neglects her need for autonomy and prevents her from developing her independent personhood. He interprets Nora's urge for independent personhood as a broad reaction against an authoritarian family system by a suppressed family member rather than examining the particular lack of gender equality between Nora and her husband.

It is impossible to know whether Hu Shi purposely ignores or simply fails to recognize the issue of gender inequality in *A Doll's House*. However, his generalization and appropriation of Nora's female sufferings in a male-dominated family structure allows him to criticize the demoralizing authoritarian family, and specifically the Confucian patriarchal family, in a way that suits his political needs. It is fair to suggest that Hu Shi's reading of Nora echoes the prevalent victimhood shared by young radical men and women because they, like Nora, were all oppressed by the family structure in some way.[71] Despite his antagonism toward Confucianism, Hu Shi relies on the Neo-

[71] Hu Shi argues that if a family restricts its members from demonstrating their autonomy then the society and nation will most likely deny its people's autonomy as well. When the society and nation act in such a manner, they will sabotage themselves, preventing any future progress due to a lack of people with independent personhood who can steer the society and nation to their betterment. (Hu Shi, "Ibsenism," 645-6.)
Zhang Chuntian has also pointed out that Hu Shi's "Yibusheng zhuyi" has created the "double effects of 'degenderizing' (qu xingbiehua 去性别化) and 'depoliticizing' (qu zhengzhihua 去政治化)." I agree with Zhang's argument regarding a "degendered" Nora; however, I do not agree with the "depoliticized" argument because Hu Shi, as I discuss above, clearly explains individualism as an ideal trait for future Chinese citizens in the process of Chinese nation building. Zhang Chuntian, *Sixiangshi shiyezhong de 'Na La'* 思想史視野中的「娜拉」 (Taipei: Xinrui wenchuang, 2013), 74-78. Also see Susan Glosser, "The Patriarch Problem" in *Chinese Vision of Family and State, 1915-1953*, 38-44; Wang Guimei, "Bei shuxie de pan'ni: zhiyi 'Na La jingshen'" 被書寫的叛逆：質疑"娜拉精神," *Xinan shifan daxue xuebao* 32, no. 3 (May, 2006): 166-70. Although my reading of Hu Shi's "Yibusheng zhuyi" emphasizes the impact of a genderless Nora on Chinese society during the May Fourth era, I do not disregard the fact that

Confucian family-state parallel relationship to explain why authoritarian family structure is detrimental to society and nation.[72] Following this logic, family revolution, which challenged patriarchal authority and sought to leave traditional Confucian strictures behind, was the national imperative for building a strong Chinese nation.

Eliminating Filial Piety: Free the Children, Save the Nation

This section will focus on Lu Xun's and Hu Shi's ideological essays on the topic of family revolution, especially on the issue of eliminating the practice and concept of filial piety in the modern family. In the previous chapter, I pointed out that the late-Qing reformists began linking Chinese children's development and future success with the future prosperity of the Chinese nation. Although they vehemently advocated for family reform that focused on producing and raising a modern generation of Chinese, they neglected the incongruity between children's roles in the Confucian family system and their roles in the modern nation. That is to say that children would soon be facing a dilemma: whether to devote themselves to the nation or fulfill their moral requirements of Confucian filial piety to their parents. This was the historical environment in which Lu

Nora had great impacts on Chinese feminist development, gender equality, and other gender related issues of that time.

[72] Kwok-kan Tam argues that Hu Shi's "Yibusheng zhuyi" is Hu Shi's revolutionary manifesto of anti-Confucian moral order. However, I do not fully agree such a view because, as I have pointed out, Hu Shi still follows the Neo-Confucian family-state paradigm to build a new Chinese nation. Kwok-kan Tam, "Ibsenism and Ideological Construction of the 'New Woman' in Modern Chinese Fiction" in Peng-hsiang Chen and Whitney Crothers Dilley, eds., *Feminism/Feminity in Chinese Literature*, in *Critical Studies 18* (Amsterdam – New York: Rodopi, 2002), 179-86.

Xun and Hu Shi wrote their essays on modern fatherhood and how to save the future generations from encountering this difficult choice between filial devotion and patriotic duty. [73] Their essays, although different in approach, share a similar ideology centered on eliminating the practice of filial piety so future generations could fully and freely form so-called modern families and devote themselves to the Chinese nation.

Filial Piety As An Affective Structure

Filial piety, a particularly salient virtue in Confucianism, is the most unquestionable principle of personal conduct for many adhering to Chinese cultural beliefs. Filial piety does not simply require people to be respectful to their parents, elders, and ancestors but also asks them to glorify their parents and family through their success, as stated in *The Classic of Filial Piety* (Xiao jing 孝經):

> The Master said, "[F]ilial piety is the root of virtue, and out of which grows (all moral) teaching. … Our bodies - to every hair and bit of skin - are received by us from our parents, and we must not presume to injure or wound them. This is the beginning of filial piety. When we have

[73] My argument here emphasizes the notion that children are the future of the nation. However, both Hu Shi's and Lu Xun's engagements with eliminating the practice of filial piety could be deemed filial because their shared ultimate goal was for the Chinese nation when being loyal to the nation is an epitome of the practice of filial piety. A. T. Nuyen has argued that being filial does not mean mindlessly following the parent because "[t]o reason with, or deviate from, an authoritarian father, who is a source of disharmony in the family or the community, is not unfilial. On the contrary, it is to uphold the tradition of harmonious existence, *and* to do so in the name of the fathers." A. T. Nuyen, "Filial Piety as Respect for Tradition," in Alan K. L. Chan and Sor-hoon Tan eds., *Filial Piety in Chinese Thought and History*, (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 203-14.

> established our character by the practice of the (filial) course, so as to make our name famous in future ages and thereby glorify our parents, this is the end of filial piety. It commences with the service of parents; it proceeds to the service of the ruler; it is completed by the establishment of character.
>
> It is said in the Major Odes of the Kingdom: Ever think of your ancestor, Cultivating your virtue."[74]

Filial conduct (based on the text) applies beyond the family scope to society and state; it is the fundamental principle people must follow in order to exhibit proper behaviors in various relationships. Since it regulates when and how to act in certain situations, filial piety is closely related to the Confucian concept of ritual.

Yet for most practitioners, filial piety not only guides appropriate external behavior but also conveys the innate biological and spiritual sentiment of a child towards his or her parents. Interestingly, this understanding of filial piety came from selected observations of animal behaviors in the natural world. The most commonly used examples were those of a matured crow finding food to feed its aged parents and of a young goat kneeling when it drinks milk from its mother.[75] The Confucian scholars of the past argued that these kinds of animal behaviors indicated that filial piety was a

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[74] James Legge translated, "The Scope and Meaning of the Treatise" ("Kaizong mingyi" 開宗明義.) (https://ctext.org/xiao-jing/zh?en=on.)

[75] Original text: "且烏以反哺，託體太陽；羔以跪乳，為贄國卿。禽鳥之微，猶以孝寵。" Cai Yong (蔡邕 132-192), "Wei Chen Liu taishou shang xiaozi Zhuang" 為陳留太守上孝子狀 in *Cai Zhonglang ji* 蔡中郎集, vol. 8. (https://ctext.org/text.pl?node=648557&if=gb.)

universal trait shared by all living things. In addition, these animals' filial behaviors, in the eyes of the Confucian scholars, express the genuine spiritual sentiment and filial emotion of a youngling toward its parent. Filial piety, therefore, was accepted by the Chinese general public as a natural form of emotional and behavioral devotion of a child to his or her parents.

This comprehension of filial piety, I argue, closely aligns with the concept of affect. In Sivan Tomkins's *Affect Imagery Consciousness*, Tomkins defines affect as "hard-wired, preprogrammed, genetically transmitted mechanisms that exist in each of us," which, when triggered, lead to a "known pattern of biological events."[76] For Confucians, filial piety is an affective structure of feeling because it is the emotional drive, a preprogrammed biological emotion that leads people to devote themselves to their parents. This affective structure, thus, constructs a worldview in which one's parents are valued more highly than the self, society, or state. The aforementioned quote from *The Classic of Filial Piety* shows that the ultimate filial act is to bring honor to one's parents. However, this worldview was challenged and problematized once May Fourth radicals concluded that the superiority of the West was the outcome of individualism, in which self is valued more highly than others.[77] There are many in-depth

[76] Donald L. Nathanson, *Shame and Pride: Affect, Sex, and the Birth of the Self* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), 49.

[77] My argument here is based on my observations of the essays written by May Fourth radicals on the topic of individualism, or why Western nations were superior to China. For example, Hu Shi and Zhou Zuoren all deemed western novels and short stories better than Chinese literary productions. See "Introduction" chapter. Jon Saari argues that the prevalence of school systems and new learning after 1904 greatly reduced the parents' and elders' influence and control over their children. The "intergenerational tension," thus, became less regulated by the parents and

and wonderful scholarly works and discussions on the topic of individualism in the field of Republican China.[78] My research here does not argue against the existing scholarship but instead focuses on the specific ways in which May Fourth radicals arraigned Confucian filial piety for halting Chinese progress through literary defamiliarization and the lenses of evolution and eugenics.

Defamiliarizing Filial Piety

On August 3rd 1919, Hu Shi published a new style poem (*xin shi* 新詩) entitled "My Son" (Wode erzi 我的兒子) in the column entitled "new literature and art" (xin wenyi 新文藝) in a weekly Beijing newspaper, *The Weekly Review* (*Meizhou pinglun* 每週評論 1918-1919).[79] The poem features first-person narration and "I" (*wo* 我) is understood to be Hu Shi himself. In the poem, Hu Shi expresses the feelings of a new father and expectations for his newborn son:

I really don't want to have a son, 我實在不要兒子、

elders. In this sense, Jon Saari argues that the new learning system might in some way have created a countercultural force such as the May Fourth radicals. Jon L. Saari, *Legacies of Childhood: Growing up Chinese in a Time of Crisis 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies at Harvard University, 1990), 60-9.

[78] See Leo Ou-fan Lee, *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973). Lydia H. Liu has pointed out the complexities between individualism and nationalism in her *Translingual Practice*, 77-99.

[79] Hu Shi, "My Son" ("Wo de erzi, 我的兒子) in *Meizhou pinglun* 每週評論 (*The Weekly Review*, 1918-1919), no. 33 (August 3, 1919). *The Weekly Review* was regarded as a radical newspaper that promoted May Fourth radical thought (or new wave thought, *xin sichao* 新思潮) between 1918 and 1919 in Beijing. Xin shi is also known as baihua shi 白話詩 (vernacular style poetry). See Hu Shi, "Talk about New Style Poetry," ("Tan Xin Shi" 談新詩, 1919) in *HSWC* 1:164-86 and "Preface of *Changshi ji*," ("Changshi ji Zixu" 嘗試集自序, 1919) in *HSWC* 1: 187-204.

The son himself comes.	兒子自己來了。
The “No-child-ism” signboard,	「無後主義」的招牌、
From now, it cannot be hung!	于今掛不起來了！
Like the flowers blossoming on a tree,	譬如樹上開花、
The flower falls then fruit naturally grows.	花落天然結果。
That fruit is you,	那果便是你、
That tree is me.	那樹便是我。
The tree has no intention to grow fruit,	樹本無心結子、
I also do not give any favors to you.	我也無恩於你。
But since you come,	但是你既來了、
I cannot not raise you, teach you,	我不能不養你教你、
That is my humanistic obligation,	那是我對人道的義務、
Not a favor to you.	並不是待你的恩誼。
In the future when you grow up,	將來你長大時、
This is my expectation of you:	這是我所期望於你：
I want you to be an independent person,	我要你做一個堂堂的人、
I do not want you to be my filial son.	不要你做我的孝順兒子

Aside from the fairly straightforward and colloquial writing style, the poem is a fruitful text that muddles Buddhist allusions with ideas of eugenics, individualism and filial piety. Yet in the end, Shi’s intention of writing this poem becomes clear: he hopes his son will be an independent individual instead of a filial son. On the surface, Hu Shi’s poem reads like a personal message to his son, as throughout the poem, Hu Shi is “I”

who directly speaks to his son, "you" (*ni* 你). However, Hu Shi's intended audience is much broader than simply his son, based on the simple fact that he chose to publish his seemingly personal feelings and expectations in a newspaper.[80] Furthermore, throughout Chinese intellectual history, poetry writing was associated with the concept of "*shi yan zhi* 詩言志" that "poetry is the expression of [one's] earnest thought."[81] Following this tradition in his own iconoclastic way, Hu Shi discloses parts of his interiority to the public speaking directly to his son while also speaking to a broader audience of parents and potential parents, expressing that they should demand independence instead of filial devotion from their own children.

Although Hu Shi does not state exactly why parents should ask their children to become independent individuals, it is safe to suggest that Hu Shi's poem responds to the rising individualism and the nullification of Chinese traditional culture that took place against the backdrop of the iconoclastic May Fourth movement. It is important to point out that Republican Chinese intellectuals and radicals understood the idea of individualism in the context of Chinese national salvation. In this case, Hu Shi's evocation of "being an independent individual" may imply that adult children should

[80] Bryna Goodman in her "Appealing to the Public: Newspaper Presentation and Adjudication of Emotion" (*Twenty-Century China* 31:2 (April, 2006): 33-69) suggests that the newspaper was a space that allowed diverse voices to be heard.

[81] The notion of "*shi yan zhi*" is usually associated with "The Great Preface" (*Maoshi* xu 毛詩序) to *Shijing* (詩經). Original text: "詩者，志之所之也。在心為志，發言為詩，情動於衷而形於言，言之不足，故嗟歎之，嗟歎之不足，故咏歌之，咏歌之不足，不知手之舞之，足之蹈之也。" (https://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=gb&id=416148)

devote themselves directly to society and the nation before fulfilling filial obligations towards their parents.

It is not surprising that Hu Shi's radical poem attracted criticism from some intellectuals who continued to hold onto Confucian virtues. Soon after Hu Shi's poem was published in *The Weekly Review*, a reader named Wang Changlu 汪長祿 quickly criticized Hu Shi's simplification of filial piety in a letter addressed to Hu Shi himself.[82] Wang Changlu's personal note came to public attention when his letter to Hu Shi was published along with Hu Shi's response in *The Weekly Review*.[83] To be clear, it is difficult to confirm whether the newspaper had acquired Wang Changlu's consent before publishing his letter, or whether Wang Changlu's letter was sent directly to the newspaper as a reader's opinion. However, the published letters obviously became something of a public spectacle to the extent that they were later frequently used as examples to show the clash between radical and traditional values in the Republican era.[84]

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[82] Hu Shi and Wang Changlu could have been acquainted or at least had met each other and had some conversations, based on Wang Changlu's letter to Hu Shi. Wang Changlu, (A letter to Hu Shi), *Meizhou pinglun* 34 (August 10, 1919.

[83] This information is located in a second letter, "Zai lun 'Wo de erzi'" 再論「我的兒子」("Again on 'My Son'") to Hu Shi by Wang Changlu. In the letter, Wang Changlu stated that he received a response from Hu Shi directly and another response through the newspaper. ("Zai lun 'Wo de erzi'," *Meizhou pinglun* 35 (August 17, 1919).

[84] For example, Hu Shi's poems and the back-and-forth responses between him and Wang Changlu formed a unit in *Kaiming zhongxue jiangyi* 開明中學講義 (1932-1933), a popular textbook series in secondary schools during the Republican period.
Kaiming Zhongxue jiangyi was a self-learning textbook series, designed for people who could not afford the cost of education or did not have opportunities to have education but desired to learn. The textbook series covers subjects such as Chinese, mathematics, English, economics,

In his response to Hu Shi's poem, Wang Changlu first points out that Hu Shi's argument on the relationship of parents and children is nothing new, but rather a reiteration of Kong Rong's 孔融 (153-208) and Wang Chong's 王充 (ca. 27-100?) notion that children are the consequences of sexual desires.[85] Then he criticized Hu Shi's portrayal of the parent-child relationship as a "crippled" (boxing 跛形) relationship in which parents were obligated to raise their children and children were destined to receive care from their parents.[86] Finally, he questions why Hu Shi treats filial piety as an outdated moral shackle from the past that hinders Chinese nationals from developing into proper beings by asserting the urges to honor one's parents and to become a complete person do not necessarily oppose each other.[87]

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medicine, chemistry, biology, history, geography, arts and others. It also explored contemporary social issues such as women's movements, labor issues, and student movements. Many well-known scholars such as Lin Yutang 林語堂 (1895-1976), Ye Shengtao 葉聖陶 (1894-1988), Zhou Jianren 周建人 (1888-1984), Mao Dun 茅盾 (1896-1981), and Tao Xisheng (陶希聖 1899-1988) were all contributors to the textbook series and Xia Mianzhun 夏丏尊, (1886-1946) was the editor. Although it was originally designed for self-learning, the textbook was soon adopted by many secondary schools as their main curriculum. Xia Mengzun ed., *Kaiming Zhongxue jianyi* (Shanghai: Kaiming zhongxue jianyi she, 1932-1933), total 18 volumes.

[85] For Kong Rong's text, see "Zheng Kongxun liezhuan" 鄭孔荀列傳 no. 23 in *Hou hanshu* 後漢書 (420-445) "父之於子，當有何親？論其本意，實為情慾發耳！子之於母，亦復奚為？譬如寄物瓶中，出則離矣！" (https://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=gb&id=76614).
And for Wang Chong's text, see "Wu Shi" 物勢 no.2 in *Lun heng* 論衡 (80 CE) "夫天地合氣，人偶自生也。猶夫婦合氣，子則自生也。夫婦合氣，非當時欲得生子，情慾動而合，合而生子矣！且夫婦不故生子，以知天地不故生人也。" (https://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=gb&id=280404).

[86] Wang Changlu, (A letter to Hu Shi), in Hu Shi's *HSWC*, 1:687.

[87] Ibid., *HSWC*, 1:688.

Wang Changlu does have a point regarding Hu Shi's portrayal of the parent-child relationship. Throughout Hu Shi's poem, it is quite clear that Hu Shi regards childrearing as an obligation (yiwu 義務), specifically an obligation from one human to another instead of a parental affective desire to take care of a child. With this in mind, Hu Shi's botanical portrayal of parent-child relationship as tree (parent) and fruit (child) seemingly hints that it is natural for a parent to *not* want to take care his child, as a tree never actively cares for its fruit once it falls from the tree. His lack of affection towards his son aligns with his desire to become a childfree individual, or a "No-child-ist." [88] However, Wang Changlu does not recognize this lack of affection within the parent-child relationship in Hu Shi's poem. Instead, he supplies an illustrative hypothetical situation in which a friend allows him to live in his house, supplying him with daily meals, covering his school tuition, and providing all kinds of assistance until he can live independently. Wang Changlu argues that it would be unconscionable for him not to return this friend's kindness (*en* 恩) even if the friend does not want anything in return. Although Wang Changlu acknowledges the facts that the parent-child relationship is much more complex than a friendship, his example underlines and defines human relationship in terms of materialistic assistance. Thus, it is not really surprising that Wang Changlu describes children who do not fulfill their filial obligations as "eating without paying" (baichi buhui zhang 白吃不回帳),[89] underlining his understanding of filial piety as a form

[88] My argument here does not consider whether Hu Shi likes children or not. It simply suggests that Hu Shi has doubled and tripled down on the affectionless parent-child relationship.

[89] Ibid., *HSWC* 1:688.

of repayment for the material assistance that children receive from their parents. Ultimately, neither Hu Shi's poem nor Wang Changlu's criticism defines the parent-child relationship as a relationship of affection of spiritual bonding but rather a relationship that mandates obligations from each participating party.[90]

Wang Changlu and Hu Shi define and perceive the parent-child relationship in somewhat similar fashions. The key issue that separates them is that Wang Changlu does not perceive being a filial child and being a fully-realized person as contradictory while Hu Shi does. Wang Changlu thus questions Hu Shi about how these two roles contradict each other. This proves to be a legitimate but tricky question for Hu Shi to answer, especially because when Wang Changlu criticizes Hu Shi on this particular issue, his definition of "*tangtang de ren* 堂堂的人" constantly vacillates between "an independent person" and "a good person." It is a problem because these two approaches to "*tangtang de ren*" lead to two very different questions: one asking how filial piety would prohibit a person from becoming independent, and the other asking how filial piety would prohibit a person from becoming an upright person. In his response, Hu Shi chose to answer the former question.

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[90] The debate on whether the essence of filial piety is material or spiritual has a long history. For example: 子游問孝。子曰：「今之孝者，是謂能養。至於犬馬，皆能有養；不敬，何以別乎？」 English translation: Zi You asked what filial piety was. The Master said, "The filial piety nowadays means the support of one's parents. But dogs and horses likewise are able to do something in the way of support; - without reverence, what is there to distinguish the one support given from the other?" *Lunyu* 論語 "Weizheng" 爲政 no. 7, translated by James Legge. (https://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=en&id=1124#s10034974). See Keith N. Knapp's "The Parent-Son Relationship in Early Medieval Tales of Filial Offspring," and Philip J. Ivanhoe's "Filial Piety as a Virtue" in *Filial Piety in Chinese Thought and History*, eds. Alan Kam-leung Chan and Sor-hoon Tan eds., 44-70; 189-202.

In his response to Wang Changlu's question, Hu Shi provides intriguing explanations to justify his radical depictions of the parent-child relationship in his poem.[91] In order to answer why filial obligations would prohibit a person from becoming an independent individual, Hu Shi applies the modern concept of the individual to children even before their birth. That is to say, Hu Shi regards children and fetuses as individuals with autonomy and agency. He argues that parents never acquire their children's consent before bringing them into the world. This suggests that parents have already violated their children's autonomy and agency from the very beginning of their relationship. The idea of violation of children's autonomy contrasts sharply with the common Chinese belief that children should be grateful for their parents' initial kindness in giving them life and bringing them into the world.[92] Also, by recognizing children as individuals, Hu Shi raises children's status to equal their parents'. In this radical view, children would theoretically no longer be powerless members within the Confucian family structure and the patriarch would be dethroned.[93] In this sense, in his poem, Hu

[91] Hu Shi's response to Wang Changlu is collected in *HSWC* under the title "Wo da Wang xiansheng de xin" 我答汪先生的信 (Hu Shi, *HSWC*, 1:690-2).

[92] Interestingly a man in Mumbai sued his parents for violating his agency by giving birth to him (2019). See Geeta Pandey's "Indian man to sue parents for giving birth to him," *BBC News*, February 7, 2019. (https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-47154287.)

[93] Although Hu Shi did not use the term individualism, his explanation touched on certain connotations of it. And because the term individualism was never mentioned in the article, Hu Shi never further defined "individual (*geren* 個人)" and applied it rather loosely. It is sometimes difficult to discern his usage of individual, whether it carries the meaning of individualism or simply refers to a person. Hu Shi's words in depicting the child as an individual are fascinating but it is possible that he might also be mimicking the common practice of perceiving a child as a miniature adult in Chinese tradition while incorporating certain notions of individual agency. See

Shi not only abdicates his patriarchal authority over his son but also suggests a new family structure.

In his response to Wang Changlu, Hu Shi further points out the problems of filial piety and questions the true meaning of filial piety. In doing so, he points his finger at those people who earned the title of "filial children" (*xiaozi* 孝子) simply because they followed the funeral ritual of wearing mourning garments (*mayi* 麻衣) and weeping throughout the ceremony, and yet were absolutely unfilial toward their parents when they were alive.[94] His criticism underscores that filial piety has simply become a ritual performance to showcase pretentious emotions toward their deceased parents. Yet Hu Shi's criticism, I argue, does not just take aim at these fake filial children but also at members of the general public who blindly award the filial title to these con artists and celebrate their insincere public performances. In a way, his criticism is a wake-up call to the public to rethink the concept of filial piety and what it means to be filial.

It is rather intriguing that when Hu Shi attempts to elucidate whether children should be filial to their parents, he cites Henrik Ibsen's play, *Gengangere* (English:

Kenneth J. Dewoskin's "Famous Chinese Childhood" in Anne Behnke Kinney ed., *Chinese Views of Childhood* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i press, 1995), 57-78; Ping-chen Hsiung, *A Tender Voyage: Children and Childhood in Late Imperial China*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 19-27.

[94] Hu Shi, "Wo da Wang xiansheng de laixin," *HSWC,* 1:691. For Chinese mourning rituals, see Keith Knappp, *Selfless Offspring: Filial Children and Social Order in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 137-63.

Ghosts; Chinese: *Qungui* 群鬼) to illustrate his ideas.[95] In the example, Hu Shi points out that the character Oswald's life and future were ruined at birth because of his father's libertinism.[96] By pointing out Oswald's suffering, Hu Shi ponders how his son could love and respect him if he similarly sabotages his son's life. Although Hu Shi did not translate the quoted conversation from the play, it is quite fascinating that he applies the translated wording "love and revere (*ai'jing* 愛敬)" in response to the question of whether children should be "filial and compliant (*xiaoshun* 孝順)."[97] On the surface, it seems like Hu Shi followed the general cultural understanding of filial piety as children loving and revering their parents, which emphasizes affective bonding and spiritual connection between children and their parents. Yet the phrase "love and revere" in fact recognizes the agency that children possess in their action of choosing to love and respect their parents. In this sense, children, like their parents, actively participate in their relationship instead of passively receiving kindness from their parents as expected in the traditional model. In fact, Hu Shi defamiliarizes the concept of filial piety in his reconstructed/reinvented parent-child relationship. Filial piety, in this approach,

[95] Hu Shi in his "*Ibsenism*" argues that Ibsen's plays expose social corruption through realism (xieshi zhuyi 寫實主義); therefore, he treats these fictional plays as real social events. Tang Tao 唐弢(1913-1992) in his *Brief Edited History of Modern Chinese Literature* (*Zhongguo xiandai wenxueshi jianbian* 中國現代文學史簡編) (Beijing: Renminwenxue chubanshe, 1984) argues that the fictional writing from the May Fourth generation serves as a reflection of social issues and is designed to broadcast their ideological calls for social changes. Also see the "Introduction" chapter of this disseration.

[96] In the play, Oswald has congenital syphilis.

[97] Original text: "兒子孝順父母" and "孩子應該愛敬他的父母". Hu Shi quoted the passage from Pan Jiaxun's 潘家洵 (1896-1989) translation of Henrik Ibsen's *Gengangere*. *Xinchao* 新潮 (1919-1922) 1, no. 5 (May 1, 1919), 851.

encourages parents to earn their children's filial affection by raising them properly and being good moral examples instead of asking children to be filial in order to repay their parents for their upbringing.

Interestingly, the notions of how to raise children properly and be children's role models coincided with some key ideas of the popular developmental eugenics narrative in China. On the surface, Hu Shi seemingly contradicts this popular approach of viewing children as the promising future of the Chinese nation when he proclaims his desire to be a childfree individual or "no-child-ist" in his poem. In fact, in his response to Wang Changlu, he again warns that parents should be conscience-stricken over their act of procreation because their children might lead society to destruction. Yet his rather pessimistic outlook on children, I argue, actually reflects developmental eugenics thought. Logically, if children have the capability to lead the nation to a better future, then they are also capable of spoiling the nation's future. Hu Shi argues that, in order to ensure that children will uplift the Chinese nation, parents are obligated to raise and educate their children well.[98] While raising their children for the nation, they alleviate their guilt over the possibility of producing a generation that could destroy the nation. When childrearing is defined as an act of conscientious relief for parents, parents should no longer consider childrearing an act that bestows kindness upon children who are obliged to return that kindness. Nevertheless, when raising children is considered as an act in service of the nation, it highlights not only the well-being of children as a national

[98] In the original text, Hu Shi uses the word "society/community" (*shehui* 社會) instead of the word "nation" that I have applied here.

imperative but also the reversal of the Confucian family hierarchical order. Under this definition of parental kindness, Hu Shi eliminates the children's obligations to perform acts of Confucian filial piety and demands that parents devote themselves to raising better citizens for the nation. His argument also implicitly suggests that children should dedicate themselves to the nation too, since they are raised for this purpose and are free from their once predestined filial obligations.

Throughout the filial piety debate between Hu Shi and Wang Changlu, both sides focus on illustrating the concept of filial piety by comparing it with the concept of material exchange while neglecting the spiritual bond between parents and their children. It is possible that they believe the action of raising children naturally incorporates the spiritual affection between the two parties, but they, nevertheless, do not address it. Furthermore, Hu Shi's poem and his later explanations suggest that Hu Shi brings up filial piety because it violates or meddles with one's autonomy, which hinders the development of one's modern personhood and individualism. Moreover, by abandoning his parental authority over his son, "*tangtang de ren* 堂堂的人" Hu Shi seemingly suggests that if his generation stopped asking their children to comply with practices related to filial piety then their children would have the freedom to set up their small modern families and would probably do the same for their children. Following this logic, China would soon be populated by modern individuals. However, being free from their filial obligations did not mean that Chinese children would be free to do anything they wished with their lives. Hu Shi believed that children should devote themselves and contribute their energy to building the Chinese nation. In this sense,

"*tangtang de ren* 堂堂的人" should be properly translated as "being a useful and independent person for your society and nation."[99]

Filial Piety as Unnatural Behavior

Hu Shi's poem was a ripple of the reception of *A Doll's House* in China, a work that aims to revolutionize the Chinese family system by challenging parental authority in order to establish Chinese modern individuals. Similarly, Lu Xun's essay, "On Conducting Ourselves as Fathers Today" ("Women xianzai zenyang zuo fuqin" 我們現在怎樣做父親, 1919) should be read as a part of this ongoing discourse on family revolution.[100] Lu Xun's essay was published in *New Youth* a couple months after the debate between Hu Shi and Wang Changlu. Although it is impossible to know whether Lu Xun's essay was motivated by this debate, it shows that the discourse on family revolution at that moment zeroed in on the topic of how to reinvent the parent-child relationship in order to construct the ideal modern family for Chinese national salvation.[101]

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[99] In his "Fei geren zhuyi de xin shenghuo" "非個人主義的新生活" ("New Living Style of Non-Individualism," 1920), Hu Shi criticizes people who intend to build a new community outside the already established society for practicing selfish individualism. To Hu Shi, real individualism should involve rebuilding the current corrupted society into a better one. (*HSWC* 1:743-54). Aslo see Kwok-kan Tam, "Ibsenism and The Modern Chinese Self," and "Ibsenism and Ideological Construction of the 'New Woman' in Modern Chinese Fiction."

[100] Lu Xun, "Women xianzai zenyang zuo fuqin," in *LXQJ*, 1:134-44.

[101] This reading is based on the fact that Lu Xun's article was the first essay in this New Youth issue which suggests that parent-child relations was a prevailing topic around that period. It is also possible that Lu Xun wrote the opening essay because of his stature. Even though he published this article under one of his many pen names, Tang Si 唐俟, he was one of the editors of the iconoclastic periodical. In addition, Chen Jianshi's (沈兼士 1887-1947) "Ertong gongyu" 兒

Unlike Hu Shi's elusive approach to the topic of parental authority in his poem and later his response to Wang Changlu, Lu Xun opens his essay with a clear intention of revolutionizing the Chinese family:

> My idea in writing this essay is actually to think about how to [revolutionize] the family. Since [parental] authority (qinquan 親權) in China is powerful, and [patriarchal] authority (fuquan 父權) even more powerful, I particularly want to express an opinion on fathers and sons, a relationship previously considered sacrosanct and inviolable. In short, it is just that revolution is about to revolutionize the old man himself. But why such a grandiose, long-winded title? There are two reasons…[102]

In his statement, Lu Xun points his finger directly at the father, viewing his absolute authority as the main problem with the Chinese family system. Although the best English equivalent for *fuquan* in this particular essay is debatable, I choose to translate it as "patriarchal authority" rather than "fatherly authority" for two reasons. First, based on the quoted passage here, *fuquan* is more closely align with the traditional Confucian

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童公育 ("Public Childrearing," 1919) is also in the same publication. That essay discusses public child care and reiterates Kang Youwei's notion that children belong to the public instead of individual families and the importance of public child welfare services and education systems. These essays suggested that May Fourth radicals were fighting against Confucian filial piety and family structure in order to protect the development of the future generations. It is important to know that the term *ertong gonyu* was used rather fluidly by May Fourth generation and generally refers to public child welfare services and public education, reiterating the relationship between children and the nation's future without broaching the idea of appropriating children from their families.

[102] Lu Xun, *LXQJ*, 1:134. The English translation is modified from Bonnie McDougall translated "On Conducting Ourselves as Fathers Today" in Lu Xun wrote, Eileen J. Cheng and Kirk A. Denton ed., *Jottings under Lamplight* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 127.

role of the father who is the patriarch of his family. Second, when we take the essay title into consideration, the temporal word "now" (*xianzai*) emphasizes the contemporary moment which leads to the notion of being a modern father instead of a traditional patriarchal father. With this comprehensive approach to *fuquan*, I argue that it is important to understand that words such as *fu* and *fuqin* carry the meaning of patriarch when Lu Xun deploys these terms in his essay, unless they are accompanied by specific temporal modifiers.

Though sharing the goal of revolutionizing the Confucian patriarch, Lu Xun entitles his essay "On Conducting Ourselves as Fathers Today" which is vastly different from the title of Hu Shi's poem, "My Son." Although Hu Shi's intention was to persuade his contemporary compatriots to rescind their parental authority and stop demanding filial actions from their children, it is crucial to acknowledge that the title "My Son" should also be treated as Hu Shi delivering his personal opinion on how he will parent in a passive and humble manner. In contrast to Hu Shi's personal approach, Lu Xun deploys the word "ourselves" (or "we") in his essay's title. On the surface, the word choice of "we" (*women* 我們) suggests a collective voice and an exploration of how this group of individuals should behave. But by deploying the word "we," Lu Xun not only directly speaks to his compatriots but also speaks on behalf of them. Speaking on the behalf of a collective of individuals without their consent, Lu Xun consciously or unconsciously wields his authoritative voice as a prominent radical leader to instruct other radical men. It is actually quite fascinating that in order to condemn the absolute power of the Confucian patriarch, Lu Xun has to channel some kind of commanding power within

himself. In some ways, this authoritative voice that Lu Xun wields carries the tone and gravitas of that of a Confucian patriarch.

In addition to speaking for a collective by using "we," Lu Xun's usage of "we" incorporates popular elements of evolutionary theory. For example, one of Lu Xun's arguments about transforming the traditional patriarch into the modern father is as follows:

> Today's sons become tomorrow's fathers and in turn grandfathers. I know that those of my contemporaries and readers who are not already fathers are fathers-to-be, and all of us expect to become ancestors in due course. To save trouble, therefore, we should cast aside all ceremony and seize the high ground at the earliest opportunity to claim the dignity due to fathers and pronounce on matters concerning ourselves and our children. This would not only minimize future difficulties as these matters are put into practice, but it is also an accepted logical progression in China, so the "the disciple of the sage" need not be alarmed: in short, we score two goals with one shot. To that end, my topic is "On Conducting Ourselves as Fathers Today."[103]

Different from Hu Shi's personal goals as a modern father, it is clear that Lu Xun does not simply want to revolutionize a single generation of fathers but also envisions that later generations will carry forward this modern concept of fatherhood when they become fathers. Then this is not intended as a temporary change of behavior for a

[103] Ibid., Chinese original Lu Xun, *LXQJ*, 1:134; McDougall trans., 127-8.

generation, but eventually should be a permanent change for future generations as time progresses. However, the element of time in the quoted passage is quite ambiguous. On one hand, Lu Xun's words suggest that this modern fatherhood could be achieved within a short period of time which conveys the notion of a radical change to the father's role that echoes his opening statement about revolutionizing the patriarch. On the other hand, he also recognizes that this radical transformation of the Confucian patriarch to the modern father would not be noticeable to those people who continue embracing the Confucian concept of patriarchy. While the former suggests that a radical revolutionary change can be achieved quickly, the latter suggests that the development of a modern father will take time or even generations. Considering Lu Xun's logic of "today's sons become tomorrow's fathers" with the latter notion of gradual evolvement, then it is reasonable to comprehend Lu Xun's argument as referring to evolutionary theory, that the Chinese patriarchs, the old species, will gradually adapt and evolve into modern fathers, a new species, along with Chinese nation-building. In comparison to Hu Shi's sole "I/myself," Lu Xun's "we" suggests a sense of evolution for an entire species.

Furthermore, Lu Xun utilizes evolutionary theory to dispute the salient concept of parental kindness (*en'dian* 恩典 or *en* 恩), that a child has to repay through the practice of Confucian filial piety.[104] "What seems to me reasonable today is extremely simple," Lu Xun argues:

[104] Lu Xun uses *en'dian* and *en* interchangeably to represent the idea of parental kindness or favor in this essay.

> According to the phenomena of the biosphere, [any living organism's purpose] is: 1. To preserve its existence; 2. To continue its kind; 3. To develop its kind (which is evolution). If all living organisms follow these principles, then the father also has to do so.[105]

Lu Xun's words reiterate the crucial idea that all living organisms are driven to survive. Following this concept, there is nothing sacred about the life that parents have bestowed upon their child, as life is a natural, recurring event that takes place across species. Much unlike Hu Shi's moral and philosophical approach, Lu Xun argues that reproduction is plainly a result of animal instincts for survival from a scientific, biological point of view.

Interestingly, Lu Xun's seemingly dehumanizing analogy, paralleling humans with other living creatures, as a matter of fact, deploys an evolutionary eugenics discourse against the principle of Confucian filial piety that regards parents and ancestors as more important than children. When the purpose of procreation is for a species to continue existing on earth, then the progeny represents the continuance of the species and should be deemed more important than its producers or other past generations. While presenting his argument in a scientific manner by utilizing examples in biological studies, Lu Xun draws upon science, a fact based study of the natural world, to argue against Confucian filial piety which emphasizes the importance of elders and is a practice

[105] Lu Xun, *LXQJ*, 1:135. The translation here is mine, except the first sentence which is acquired from Bonnie McDougall's translation. Chinese original text: 我現在心以爲然的道理，極其簡單。便是依據生物界的現象一，要保存生命；二，要延續這生命；三，要發展這生命。（就是進化。）生物都這樣做，人也這樣做，父親也就是這樣做。

opposing both survival instinct and natural progression. Continuing to practice Confucian filial piety, in this sense, would lead to the annihilation of the Chinese nation.[106] Thereby, according to Lu Xun, Chinese parents (or more specifically, the patriarchs) should not regard giving birth to a child and the following childrearing as a parental kindness that a child must requite but an inborn imperative in all species.

Lu Xun not only rationalizes the parent and child relationship from a scientific, biological viewpoint, but also elucidates this innate obligation through the act of love (*ai* 愛), a spiritual bond between parents and their children. This particular approach to comprehending the parent-child relationship further separates Lu Xun from some of his late-Qing and Republican compatriots. In the previous chapter, I have discussed how late-Qing reformers regarded children as the pivotal, integral part of Chinese nation-building and advocated for social and societal reforms in order to produce better future generations for the sake of China. Although their intentions were clear, it is undeniable that they viewed children in a utilitarian way, as tools and products that could benefit China. Hu Shi's explanation of his poem, "My Son," also echoes this kind of approach as the author is raising his son to become a useful member of society. To be clear, Lu Xun also agrees that children are the future of the nation, as he explains why children are more important than their parents and ancestors from an evolutionary perspective.

[106] To be clear, this does not mean there will be no Chinese people left but rather that the Chinese nation would be dissolved and the remaining people would be called a different nationality instead of Chinese.

While reflecting on raising children as a biologically innate behavior in all species, Lu Xun further defines this behavior as a form of love.

Love in Lu Xun's interpretation is an innate quality in most living animals and it is the sole reason why most animals naturally take care of their youngsters.[107] Although Lu Xun seemingly completely overturns his earlier argument about animals' survival instincts and replaces it with discussion of animals' sentimental instincts, his interpretation of love works consistently with his earlier explication of the parent-child relationship. He explains that when love is defined as a universal quality of caregiving for most living creatures, then human parents raising their children only can be regarded as performing a general and natural behavior. This echoes his earlier survival analysis, the idea that one should not overstate that childrearing is a favor from parents to their children. In addition to reaffirming his previous statement, love softens the notion of childrearing as a parental obligation. Although it is a natural biological tendency, it emphasizes the parents' drive and willingness to raise their children regardless of any obligation that the latter have to requite. Also because of love, the parents naturally would want their children to become better than they are and to have a better life. In the end, Lu Xun offers a sentimental portrayal of the parent-child relationship that stands in contrast with Hu Shi's portrayal of commercial exchanges between services providers and consumers and the notion of obligation, a forced social behavior.

[107] Not all creatures can love their offspring. For example, Lu Xun points out that fish cannot love their offspring because they produce too many larvae at once. (*LXQJ*, 1:138).

Furthermore, Lu Xun's comprehension of love, I argue, could be understood as a meta-evolutionary approach to the human affective structure. Lu Xun regards love as a preprogrammed biological emotion (per Tomkins's definition of affect), an important drive for evolution. "No matter who you are and where you are from," Lu Xun states, "most people will recognize the justification of loving oneself (*aiji* 愛己). And this is the essence of preserving its kind and the fundamental of continuing its kind".[108] Lu Xun is clear that the core reason that we all want to live or survive is because we love ourselves more than others. Cynical as it may be, it is an interesting understanding of survival. Yet ingeniously, the discussion here is not about providing actual theoretical understanding of evolution and survival, but rather acquiring these ideas as universal knowledge to criticize the overly exaggerated notion of parental kindness in Chinese cultural belief.

But how could this kind of cynical love lead a species, at least humans, to evolve? Here, Lu Xun again turns to Ibsen's *Gengangere* as an example to explain how a cynical act of loving oneself could have a positive outcome.[109] Here is the quoted conversation from Lu Xun's essay:

> Oswald: Mother, you ought to help me now.
>
> Mrs. Alving: I?
>
> Oswald: Who can be better than you?
>
> Mrs. Alving: I! Your mother!

[108] Lu Xun, *LXQJ*, 1:138.

[109] In fact, both Hu Shi and Lu Xun acquired the translation of *Ghosts* from the *Xinchao* journal.

Oswald: For that very reason.

Mrs. Alving: I, the one who birthed you.

Oswald: I never ask you to birth me. And what kind of life have you given me? I don't want it. Take it back.[110]

It is rather fascinating that the quoted conversation by Lu Xun would actually fit quite well with Hu Shi's musings on children's autonomy and the need for parents to earn their children's love and reverence. On the surface, Lu Xun echoes Hu Shi's analysis that Mr. Alving's libertine conduct sabotages his son Oswald's life, but carries out a very different argument. He argues that Mr. Alving is an example of many other parents who pass down their diseases or genetic disabilities to their children. These people, Lu Xun claims, are the ones who don't love themselves (*bu aiji* 不愛己). For example, in Mr. Alving's case, he contracts syphilis not simply because he cannot control his sexual desires but because he does not love himself enough. And because of Mr. Alving's failure to love himself, his son inherits his mistakes and is born with syphilis. Thus Lu Xun argues that Mr. Alving does not have the proper qualities of a father. Oswald's quoted words, "I never asked you to birth me. And what kind of life have you given me? I don't want it. Take it back," disclose a son's resentment toward his birth parents and refusal to regard his birth as some kind of parental kindness that he needs to requite later.

Lu Xun's notion of loving oneself makes sense in condemning parents like Mr. Alving whose libertinism leads to his son's inborn disabilities, but it becomes a problem

[110] The English text here is translated from the Chinese translation in Lu Xun's essay instead of its original text or the translation in *Xinchao*.

when he suggests that that these people's dependents who were born with certain genetic disorders or disabilities will have to face eugenicists (*shanzhongxue zhe* 善種學者) in the future. Even though his words are echoes of the prevalent global intellectual eugenics discourse of the time, he implies that procreation is a privilege to be granted to mentally and physically healthy parents who can produce healthy future citizens for the nation. To be clear, I do not intend to criticize Lu Xun or link Lu Xun with the far more pernicious applications of eugenics that arose later in the 20th century. My intention, here, is simply to point out the somewhat cruel and inhumane notions within the developmental eugenics discourse that surface when a nation fixates upon an idealized future generation.[111]

Evaluating Republican-Born Children and Rethinking Children's Education

At this point in the chapter, I have discussed how the May Fourth radicals deployed Ibsen's play, *A Doll's House*, to encourage the Chinese youth to rebel against their Confucian patriarchal family authorities and later urged new and future fathers to root out the practice of Confucian filial piety in their families. The former allowed the young people to free themselves from their extended families' control, develop their modern individual personhood, and establish modern families. The latter eliminated the practice of Confucian filial piety so the future generations could directly devote themselves to the nation. These two movements, I argue, should be comprehended as

[111] In the "Epilogue," I argue that the rise of the Red Guard was another side effect of a nation actively claiming children as its property.

sequential efforts to reshape or even eliminate Chinese Confucian family structure. Although the ultimate goal of the family revolution was to build a powerful and modern Chinese nation, the immediate goal of the family revolution was to produce a new generation of Chinese children who were not only born with modern individual traits but also biologically and spiritually advanced so that they could both rebuild and lead China to its promising future. In this sense, the actual quality of this new generation of children was the indicator of both the family revolution's success and China's future success.

In this section, I will continue to look into essays by both Hu Shi and Lu Xun that were written nearly a decade after their respective works "My Son" and "How We Should be Fathers Today." The two essays that will be discussed in detail here are Hu Shi's "On the Issues of Child Welfare" ("Ciyou de wenti" 慈幼的問題, 1929)[112] and Lu Xun's "Children of Shanghai" (Shanghai de ertong 上海的兒童, 1933). Both essays attempt to evaluate contemporary Republican children. However, before delving into these essays about the "new" Chinese children, it is important to know that both Hu Shi and Lu Xun, in their previous essays, used most of their words to persuade their readers

[112] According to *HSWC*, the essay was written in October 1929 but its actual publication date is difficult to locate. Based on my research, the article was first published in *Zonghui gongbao* 總會公報, a Christian publication, of December 1929. However, *Zonghui gongbao* stated that this article was acquired from *Ciyou tekan* 慈幼特刊. Here is the interesting part: *Ciyou tekan* was a special issue only for subscribers of Child Welfare Monthly (*Ciyou yuekan* 慈幼月刊) who had subscribed to the monthly for one year and the journal's first issue was April 1930. Thus it is reasonable to question how *Zonghui gongbao* acquired this special edition before the journal's debut and whether *Zonghui gongbao* had asked *Ciyou yuekan* and Hu Shi's permission to publish this article in its monthly publication. *Ciyou yuekan* was the predecessor of *Xiandai fumu* 現代父母 (1933-1937).

to abandon the practice of filial piety and adopt the revolutionized family structure to build their modern families. They hoped that these revolutionized modern families could produce modern Chinese beings to suit the nation's needs. While both Hu Shi and Lu Xun focused on invalidating the age-old practice of filial piety, their previously discussed essays lacked instructions and guidelines concerning how to properly raise children in a modern manner, especially in comparison with Liang Qichao's essays on women's and children's education.[113]

Hu Shi's "On the Issues of Child Welfare" was published by the National Child Welfare Association of China (Zhonghua ciyou xieji hui 中華慈幼協濟會, 1928-?), an organization devoted to improving the welfare of Chinese children.[114] Hu Shi's essay appeared in two of this organization's publications, *Child Welfare Monthly* (Ciyou yuekan 慈幼月刊 1930-1932) and *Child Welfare Special* (Ciyou tekan 慈幼特刊). It also appeared in December 1929's issue of *Zonghui gongbao* 總會公報 (1928-1932, 1945-?), a monthly periodical that was published by the National Branch of the Christian Church in China (Zhonghua jidu jiaohui quanguo zonghui 中華基督教會全國總會, 1927-

[113] For more on Liang Qichao's essays, see chapter 1.

[114] For the missions and goals of the National Child Welfare Association of China, see Wu Weide's 吳維德 "Zhonghua ciyou xiejihui jingguo zhuangkuang yu shiming" 中華慈幼協濟會經過狀況與使命 in *Zonghui gongbao* 2, no. 2 (December 1929), 356-9. In addition, the organization's slogan was "To monitor and secure Chinese children's rights, To seek Children's happiness/wellbeing in every possible way" (weihu baozhang zhongguo ertong de quanli, yi zhongzhong keneng fangfa wei ertong mouqiu xingfu 維護保障中國兒童的權利，以種種可能方法為兒童謀求幸福.)

1950s)[115]. In this December issue, the majority of the articles were on issues related to children, such as children's education and development. These appearances in periodicals with emphasis on children's welfare suggest that Hu Shi's essay was both essential and influential on the topic of child welfare at that time. In the article, Hu Shi covers various topics in children's welfare including physical development, women's education, childrearing, public hygiene and public education.

Figure 3 The cover of *Ciyou yuekan*. A child is building the Chinese nation with building blocks while two supporting hands from the left and right (presumably the hands of the parents) are helping the child build. (May, 1930).

[115] National Branch of the Christian Church in China (Zhonghua Jidu jiaohui quanguo zonghui 中華基督教會全國總會) was later relocated to Hong Kong in the 1950s and became the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (Zhonghua Jidu jiaohui Xianggang quhui 中華基督教會香港區會.)

Lu Xun's "Children of Shanghai" was published in September 1933's *Shenbao Monthly* (Shen bao yuekan 申報月刊 1932-1937; 1943-1945).[116] Although Lu Xun's article was not circulated in other journals like Hu Shi's, the longevity of *Shenbao Monthly* indicates that this monthly periodical had great sales and was popular during the Republican era in China. The strong support for the publication also suggests that Lu Xun's article could have reached a vast readership as well. Similar to Hu Shi's 1929's article, Lu Xun's piece points out that public hygiene, childrearing, and development are all important issues related to children. The one unique concern that stands out in this article is Lu Xun's discussion on Chinese illustrated books for children. In the article, Lu Xun argues that the poor illustrations in the books available to young Chinese readers would negatively affect the development of Chinese children.

Hu Shi's Assessment of the Development of Republican-Born Children

"On the Issues of Child Welfare" can be divided into two parts. The first part of the article focuses on the perilous environment in which Chinese children had grown up. It was an environment where Chinese folk beliefs and practices had significant influence on childbirth, childrearing and education. In place of these beliefs and practices, Hu Shi advocates medical, social and educational reforms to both improve and safeguard the welfare and development of children. Throughout the essay, Hu Shi focuses on

[116] As a matter of fact, Lu Xun also had another article, "Teenage girls of Shanghai" (Shanghai de shaonü 上海的少女), published in this particular issue. (Lu Xun, *LXQJ* 4, 578-9.)

childrearing, early childhood development and elementary education, and while he does not provide a specific definition of the term children (*ertong* 兒童), it is fair to suggest that children here are defined as those between birth and fourteen years old.[117]

The first part of the article outlines the reasons why China needed comprehensive reform to keep its children, the future citizens, from harm, and it should also be regarded as Hu Shi's assessment of the development of the new Chinese generation as well as the progression of the new Chinese nation.[118] Based on Hu Shi's assessment, the new Republican Chinese generation was not much different from the previous ones because children were growing up in a similar environment as the past generations. As he points out, "the way Chinese children reach their adulthood depends on the will of heaven. In other words, those who reach their adulthood do so by mere luck rather than through the efforts of people around them."[119] Strictly speaking, Hu Shi's criticism here is directly ridiculing and attacking the lack of modern medical knowledge among people when it came to pregnancies, childbirth, childhood diseases, and childrearing.[120] Yet the word "people" calls attention to not only the parents but

[117] The age 14 years old is acquired from the Republican China elementary education guideline that children entered elementary at around 7 years old and studied for six years or when they reached 14 years old. See Lei Liangbo 雷良波, Chen Yangfeng 陳陽鳳, and Xiong Xianjun 熊賢軍, *Zhongguo Nüzi Jiaoyushi* 中國女子教育史 (Wuhan: Wuhan chubanshe, 1993), 282.

[118] Hu Shi points out that the progression of a nation could be evaluated by how the nation treats its children. *HSWC*, 3:739.

[119] Chinese original text: "中國小孩的長大全是靠天，只是僥倖長大，全不是人事之功。" (Hu Shi, *HSWC*, 3:739).

[120] Although Anne Behnke Kinney's research period predates the prenatal and postnatal care in early Republican China and is without any judgements on Chinese cultural practices on

also the people that children would encounter before entering their adulthood. These people could be their relatives, traditional Chinese medical care providers, neighbors and teachers. When most of these people failed to possess the correct modern knowledge to provide proper care to the Republican children, then their failures actually underlined the lack of progress of the nation. That is to say the deficiencies in the Republican children's development was caused by the surrounding environment instead of any inherent genetic deficiency.

The environment, Hu Shi argues, encompasses three aspects: the tangible physical environment, the conceptual cultural settings, and human behaviors. Of these three aspects, he deemed the conceptual cultural settings and human behaviors more critical in the construction of an ideal environment. As an example, Hu Shi points out the importance of public environmental health (*gonggong weisheng* 公共衛生), noting that good public health can prevent outbreaks of epidemics that would hinder children's health and growth. He criticizes the unsanitary and filthy environment in China; however, he does not directly address how to amend the unhygienic environment. He focuses instead on how to amend human behaviors through education. Here, education included conventional school education and field education for women. Field education was a gendered form of education that only served women, especially expectant mothers. It took place outside the school system and usually operated in a one-on-one

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childrearing, it provides an angle to look into Chinese childrearing practices and related medical advice and philosophies. Hu Shi's hyperbolic criticism might reflect a modern western educated man's opinion on Chinese traditional views on fetuses, children, and childhood, which he deemed outdated or even barbaric. Anne Behnke Kinney, *Representations of Childhood and Youth in Early China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 151-78.

format at a targeted learner's house. For example, in order to amend the traditional Chinese cultural beliefs about the pollution and contamination that came with childbirth, Hu Shi suggests setting up "visiting nurses" (*zunxing chanke hushi* 巡行產科護士) to educate pregnant women in modern medical knowledge in obstetrics, gynecology, child hygiene (*ertong weisheng* 兒童衛生), and childrearing.[121] Although setting up visiting nurses was for the benefit of women and children, it is crucial to note that Hu Shi's caring and solicitous advocacy reflects the gendered way of thinking that childrearing was an inherently female duty.

In line with his gendered approach, Hu Shi argues that the main problem with child welfare in Republican China was the lack of modern scientific mothers. The scientific mother refers to those women who had received education and training (though again, specific to women and domestic topics) in a school setting. Interestingly, Hu Shi argues that the purpose of women's education is to instruct women in how to become modern individuals, but he also points out that it is important for them to obtain instruction on how to be wives and mothers. His suggested women's education concentrates on the subjects of childrearing, early childhood education, family hygiene, and household financial management. All these family and household-oriented subjects reveal that the goal of Hu Shi's women's education was to ensure that women would become better mothers and wives, not to empower or enlighten women as individuals

[121] The English term "visiting nurses" comes from Hu Shi's essay. (Hu Shi, *HSWC*, 3:741.) For Chinese reproductive philosophy, medicine, and technologies, see Francesca Bary, "Part Three: Meaning of Motherhood: Reproductive Technologies and their uses" in *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

per se. Such an agenda once again exposes Hu Shi's comprehension of Nora's walkout as a genderless attack on the Confucian patriarchy rather than a protest against gender inequity. In the essay, he puts forward the idea that "women should first learn how to raise children, educate them and watch over their health before they can fall in love and choose a companion."[122] This particular statement makes it quite clear that Hu Shi did not understand or did not care about Nora's frustration with her identities as wife and mother, which prevented her from becoming a modern individual.

Another way to improve the development of Chinese children was to amend the Republican elementary education system, as most schools still educated children in an outdated way. In his essay, Hu Shi suggests that the education system had to accommodate children's physical and mental development, and he re-designed its agendas accordingly. For example, he argues that children should neither "study dead books" (nian sishu 念死書) nor learn to write in classical verse because these studies would harm children's physical and mental development.[123] Without providing any concrete reasons why studying classical Chinese texts or writing in classical verse is harmful for children, Hu Shi's argument was the echo of the general consensus on the value of rejecting classical Chinese learning among the May Fourth radicals and other

[122] Hu Shi, *HSWC*, 3: 742.

[123] The original text suggested teaching to read and write classical Chinese in school was an act of child abuse (nüedai ertong 虐待兒童). Hu Shi's antagonistic attitude towards classical Chinese literary training and education and classical writing can be found in his essays: "Wenxue gailiang chuyi" (文學改良芻議, 1917), "Lishi de wenxue guannian lun" (歷史的文學觀念論, 1917), "Jianshe de wenxue gemming lun" (建設的文學革命論, 1918), "Zhongxue guowen de jiaoshou" (中學國文的教授, 1920), "Xinsichao de yiyi" (新思潮的意義, 1920). The above essays are collected in *HSWC* 1.

intellectual circles at the time. He criticized the fact that most schools continued educating their pupils to read and write classical Chinese because many newspapers, periodicals, and governmental documents were still written in Chinese classical verse. Revisiting his strategy of eliminating the practice of filial piety, Hu Shi hereby advocates for the exclusion of learning and using of classical Chinese in any kind of situation and format so that classical Chinese would eventually die out over time. It is important to also recognize that such exclusion of classical Chinese intended to not only reform the educational environment but also reconstruct the societal environment for the future generations.

Overall, Hu Shi emphasizes the idea that children's welfare and development are anchored in the direction and advancement of women's education. His argument is comparable to Liang Qichao's in his 1897's "On Women's Education," that the goal of women's education was to ensure Chinese children would have cutting-edge care and pre-school education at home from their scientific mothers.

Lu Xun's Assessment of the Development of Republican-born Children

Unlike Hu Shi's more subtle reference to the late development among modern born Chinese children, Lu Xun forthrightly argues that Republican Chinese children were still inferior to children of foreign nations. Yet like Hu Shi, Lu Xun also does not define the term children. Considering the fact that Lu Xun published this article alongside another titled "Teenage Girls of Shanghai" ("Shanghai de shaonü" 上海的少女) in the same issue of *Shenbao monthly*, it becomes clear when comparing the two essays that

the term children (ertong) was a gender neutral term and generally applied to both prepubescent males and females.

Lu Xun begins the essay with a short description of lively and modern Shanghai, then sharply overturns this image by pointing out that unhygienic Chinese residential neighborhoods exist just off the shining and clean boulevards, and that Chinese children who grow up in this kind of community are inferior to their international peers:

> If you walk into the narrow residential alleys, you'll see toilets and food vendors' carrying poles, swarms of flies flying through the air and groups of children making mischief, and some of them carrying out dramatic disturbances and some delivering richly developed obscenities. It is truly a chaotic little world unto itself. Yet once you come back out to the boulevard, what projects itself into you vision are the spirited and lively [children of foreign nations] playing and walking down the sidewalk. Somehow it is as if the [children of China] are no longer visible. It is not that they aren't there, just that with their shabby clothes and dispirited manner, they have been reduced to shadows by the others and hardly catch one's eye at all.[124]

The description of the residential alleys quickly exposes the unsanitary living environment. Children, as Lu Xun craftily but scathingly portrays, are like flies swarming

[124] Lu Xun, *LXQJ*, 4:580. The translation here is acquired from Eileen Cheng and Kirk Denton edited *Jottings Under Lamplight* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 273. Translated by Andrew F. Jones. I have modified the wording of "foreign children" and "Chinese children" to "children of foreign nations" and "children of China" to emphasize the children's nationality instead of ethnicity.

all over these unsanitary alleys without doing anything constructive or showing any advanced development, just making noise and nuisance. At first, there are no clues about who these children are and since the unsanitary alleys are labeled a "chaotic little world," these fly-like children could be any children in the world. Yet once the scene redirects back to the boulevard, the images of lively children of foreign nations sharply contrasts with the images of the earlier children. The emphasis on foreign nations naturally leads the readers to suspect that the children of the residential alleys are Chinese. Lu Xun soon confirms such suspicion and further displays the inferiority of Chinese children by juxtaposing the two types of children side by side. This leads readers to re-evaluate the meaning of "little world" (*xiao shijie* 小世界). The term "*xiao shijie*" could be comprehended by readers as a microcosm of the world because of Shanghai's multi-national, multi-cultural and metropolitan features. Yet as Lu Xun discloses at the end of the passage, it is rather a microcosm of the Chinese nation. This suggests that, according to Lu Xun, unsanitary living conditions prevailed in Republican China and Chinese children were innately inferior to children of foreign nations because of their unclean environment.[125] Based on this reading, it also implies that China was not even qualified to be considered a nation or part of the real world.

Yet it is questionable whether China was actually in such an unhygienic condition. Even though the unsanitary winding residential alleys are suggested as a microcosm of China, Shanghai was one of the major modern metropolitan cities in the

[125] See Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meaning of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 225-253.

world at the time, and many Chinese middle-class families (*zhongliu de jiating* 中流的家庭) resided there as well. The Chinese middle-class families were generally established by couples who received modern or western education, had stable incomes, and set up their families in the modern small family structure. Their households and neighborhoods usually would not be associated with an unsanitary environment by any means. However, in the eyes of May Fourth intellectuals, a clean and sanitary household did not mean that it was not hazardous for Chinese children. As the essay continues, Lu Xun shifts his attention from the winding alleys to the middle-class households. It becomes clear that Lu Xun did not associate these middle-class families with unhygienic living conditions, but still took issue with the environment that these families provided to their children through their parenting. Interestingly, here Lu Xun does not equate parenting with the care of the mother, but instead assigns the responsibility to both parents. He strongly disapproves of how the middle-class families raise their children and points out how children from Chinese middle-class families were behaving like little tyrants at home but acting cowardly and helpless in public spaces, or were well behaved but lacked the adventurous spirit to pursue their dreams. If poor sanitation was the key problem with the living environment of the lower social class, then improper guidance was that which failed to provide hospitable conditions for the development of more privileged children.

While Hu Shi criticizes classical Chinese texts that would harm children's bodies and minds, Lu Xun criticizes Chinese illustrated picture books for children:

> The protagonists, naturally, are children, but the figures in the pictures all seem to have a savage and stupid look to them. If they are not mischievous pranksters, with an air of delinquency and even hooliganism about them, then they have the lifeless look of so-called good children, with bent heads and stooped shoulders, downcast eyes and blankly expressionless faces. Although this results in part from the artist's lack of skill, these pictures have used real children as their models and real children, in turn, will model themselves after the pictures.[126]

Lu Xun, here, redeploys a similar strategy and logic to how he rationalizes the emotion of love in the context of evolution. He explains how these illustrated images would influence the development of children through logical reasoning and connects reading these poorly illustrated books with Chinese children's behavioral outcomes.[127] His seemingly scientific approach would be berated as a pseudo-scientific explanation in today's context because Lu Xun did not offer any data or research to back up his claim but purely provided his subjective observation. It is crucial to understand that Lu Xun's explanation actually reflected and followed the general understanding on the concept of

[126] Lu Xun, *LXQJ*, 4:580-581. English translation is from Eileen Cheng and Kirk Denton edited *Jottings Under Lamplight* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 274. Translated by Andrew F. Jones.

[127] See the chapter "The Child as History in Republican China" in Andrew F. Jones's *Developmental Fairy Tales*. Jones has argued that "child" became an epistemological category for Chinese intellectuals during the new cultural movement. People sought to become experts in childhood development, claiming that children's education should be tailored to fit with children's growth. Lu Xun's observations and criticisms about the educational and leisure materials that were designed for Chinese children aligned with Jones's findings. Andrew F. Jones, *Developmental Fairy Tales*, 99-125.

scientific thinking during the Republican period. In other words, it should be considered an attempt at a "scientific" explanation to persuade his compatriots rather than a researched conclusion that meets today's standard of science. Nevertheless, his concerns about picture books for children could be broadened to address the various other publications that were designed for Chinese children. All those years after the debut of his "A Madman's Diary," Lu Xun was still saving the children from vile, contaminated printed materials.

In the end, Lu Xun finally concludes that he focuses on children because "the conditions during childhood will determine the future fate (童年的情形，便是將來的命運)." Since the Chinese syntax allows the omission of the subject, it is unclear whose fate is in jeopardy. Yet based on the essay, it is fair to argue that Lu Xun consistently identifies the failures of the modern modifications that were supposed to improve China's condition. His depictions often equate current Chinese children with upcoming misfortunes. In this case, children would dictate the future fate of the Chinese nation, but the outcome could be grim instead of promising. As for solutions, Lu Xun vaguely suggests that people should put more effort into "how best to educate children at home and in our schools, or of how to reform our society."[128] Meanwhile his proposed solutions also suggest that the earlier attempts at family revolution and other social reforms had failed and his compatriots should seek a different approach to China's salvation.

[128] Lu Xun, *LXQJ*, 4:581. English translation, Andrew F. Jones trans., 274.

Conclusion

This chapter began by surveying the intellectual discourse of Nora. Although Nora's withdrawal from her family is frequently read as an allegory of a woman's agency and autonomy, her character soon became the symbol of many May Fourth radicals' push toward modern personhood. For most May Fourth radicals, the character of Nora from Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* represented the ideal image of a genderless modern person who would leave traditional family obligations and seek personal fulfillment.

In both Lu Xun's and Hu Shi's essays on revamping the parental roles for the modern-day family, the Confucian moral code of filial piety is treated as Chinese children's main adversary. They argue that it would both limit and suppress Chinese children's potential because these children would always have to prioritize their filial duties to their parents before any other matters. Thus by eliminating the practice of filial piety, the future generation would not only be exempted from traditional filial duties but also have opportunities to pursue their own ambitions. While both Lu Xun and Hu Shi further laid out the purpose of ending the practice of filial piety, they actually hoped to inspire the future generations to devote themselves to society and the nation instead of pursuing individual fulfillment. This revealed that, whether appropriating Nora's gendered agony to push for broader social reform or exempting children from their filial obligation, the ultimate goal was to commit future generations to serving the nation rather than celebrating the emergence of individualism.[129] In their later essays,

[129] As a side note, it is interesting that both Hu Shi and Lu Xun write on how they would act as modern fathers in their essays instead of writing about how they would fight for their autonomy

both Hu Shi and Lu Xun continue to argue for broader social reform and ask parents to provide better care and preliminary education to their children. Their emphasis on children's education and its related materials and systems, although echoing some of Ling Qichao's ideas, formed a new epistemological category in Republican era.[130] Their awareness of the children resonated with the developmental eugenics narrative, a historical narrative that placed children and their development front and center as the indicator of China's future.

against their parents, especially since both authors complied with arranged marriages coordinated by their parents.

[130] See footnote 127.

CHAPTER III

THE BIOLOGICAL SHACKLES:

MODERN CHINESE WOMEN'S STRUGGLES TO ACCEPT

REPRODUCTION AND MOTHERHOOD

In response to the perception that China was the "Sick Man of Asia," late-Qing intellectuals and later May Fourth radicals were inspired by the global eugenics discourse and developed what I call a developmental eugenics narrative about the need to produce a generation of children who are biologically and spiritually advanced so that China could defend itself against imperialist encroachment. They believed that family revolution was the path towards achieving the goal of building a new China. The imagined modern family, as I have pointed out in the previous chapters, was conceptualized as a building block of the modern Chinese nation, and this family-centric model of modernization positioned the child as the savior of the nation. Although this model of Chinese nation-building was based on the Neo-Confucian family-state paradigm, it flipped the traditional structure of a Chinese family in which parents and ancestors were valued more highly than children. In this modern version of the Chinese family, parents were to sacrifice themselves for the sake of China's future, embodied in their robust and vigorous children. In the next two chapters, I will explore how writers depicted fictional characters facing the demands of parenthood as they also struggle to uphold their recently acquired modern personhood, with special attention to matters of gender.

My analysis in this chapter begins with a continued discussion on how intellectuals and radicals understood Nora's iconoclastic action as the means of pursuing one's autonomy and independence without identifying the embedded gender inequity in Nora's story. I argue that intellectual and radical women, in particular, initially accepted the prevailing genderless interpretation of Nora's tale and regarded their counterparts, the intellectual and radical men, as their comrades who would fight against the Confucian family system by their side. But they quickly discovered the hypocrisy of these men whose writing began to call on women to put aside modern notions of autonomy to fulfill reproductive and nurturing duties under the slogan "good wife, wise mother" (liangqi xianmu 良妻賢母). Republican women, I argue, did not perceive "good wife, wise mother" as one unified idea but as two separate concepts, and were thus only willing to heed this call in part. They, in general, chose to become good wives but avoided becoming mothers. The last section of the chapter looks into literature that was produced by May Fourth female writers and further explores how their fictional characters deal with tension between the emergence of modern womanhood and the ideological call for "good wives, wise mothers," with special attention to the call for "wise mothers" as a byproduct of the developmental eugenics narrative.

The Problem of a Genderless Nora

In September 1919, about four months after the publication of *New Youth*'s *Ibsen Edition*, Hu Shi delivered a lecture titled "American Women" ("Meiguo de furen"

美國的婦人, 1918) at the Beijing Women's Normal School (*Beijing nüzi shifan xuexia* 北京女子師範學校). During the lecture, Hu Shi encouraged his audience to embrace the "spirit of 'independence'" ("*zili" de jingshen* 「自立」的精神) and become the women who would "surpass the good wife, wise mother" (*chaoyu liangqi xianmu* 超於良妻賢母) ideal.[131] These nonconformist women, whom he called "The New Women" (*xin funü* 新婦女) based their lives on the idea of "independence" (*zili* 自立).[132] In his closing statement he said:

> […] The spirit of "independence" is contagious. The spirit of "independence" from women is even more contagious. In the future, this (women's) "independence" will act like the microorganism in plague that will spread further and further and infect more and more men and women with "independence." These "independent" men and women will see themselves as dignified "individuals" (ren 人) who have their responsibilities to fulfill and their careers to pursue. Once [we] have

[131] Hu Shi, "Meiguo de furen" 美國的婦人 in *Xin qingnian* 5, no. 3 (September 15, 1918), 213-224. Reprinted in *Genkapon ēin shinsēnen*, vol. 5, 241-52, 241. The same essay is published under the title "Meiguo de funü" 美國的婦女 in *HSWC*, 1: 648-64, 648.
Throughout the essay, Hu Shi uses *furen* and *funü* interchangeably. Hu Shi's employment of the two words could be what Tani Barlow has pointed out as the "historical catachresis" of the term of woman in Chinese history. Tani Barlow, *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 15-36.

[132] Hu Shi, *HSWC*, 1:662. Shu Yang, in her dissertation "Grafted Identities: Shrews and The New Woman Narrative in China (1910s-1960s)" (2016), argues that Hu Shi's prototype of "The New Woman" originates from Chinese traditional literary portrayals of shrews but revamped with some favorable modern characteristics. For more detailed information about the new woman, please see Jin Feng, *The New Woman in Early Twentieth-Century Chinese Fiction* (West Lafayette: Perdue University Press, 2004), 1-19.

these “independent” men and women, a good society will naturally emerge.[133]

Through his remark, it is not difficult to notice that Hu Shi repeatedly emphasizes the very notion of independence (or being independent) as a critical personal trait that every Chinese man and woman must develop. His also motions at a sense of gender equality through his use of the word “individuals” (*ren* 人), a term without any gender associations. However, Hu Shi complicates his argument when he especially points out that the independent spirit from women is much more contagious than that of men. Since his talk was delivered a few months after Nora was introduced to the educated Chinese public, Hu Shi’s comment may simply reflect the outsized influence of Nora’s story on both Chinese men and women.[134] Or it is also possible that Hu Shi accidentally revealed his unconscious bias on the issue of gender. Although it is rather difficult to argue whether Hu Shi, a staunch progressive, simply paid lip service to his audience of female students, his speech suggests that both men and women were facing the same social challenges in the process of becoming independent individuals while, in fact, women were still considered socially inferior to men at that time and thus faced a steeper uphill battle. Furthermore, when this speech was later published in *New Youth*, more radical women were exposed to Hu Shi’s viewpoint, perhaps leading them to wrongly believe that women and men were on equal footing in the pursuit of China’s

[133] *HSWC,* 1:663-664.

[134] If this is true, then it is ironic because Hu Shi actually acknowledges Nora’s search for her independence as uniquely feminine even though he interprets her story as reflecting common struggles shared by men and woman in his earlier article, “Ibsenism.”

salvation and modernization. His encouragement of independent New Women actually turned out to be an idle avowal; he later put his male chauvinism on display when he published an essay entitled "On the Issues of Child Welfare" in 1929, in which he instructs young female students to learn about modern childrearing and become scientific mothers who will stay home and raise the nation's children.[135] "Scientific mothers" refers to mothers who are educated, can read, and can obtain accurate information to engage in modern child rearing, and thus can provide basic education to children before they reach school age.[136] Hu Shi's advice to women clearly reiterates Liang Qichao's intent in "On Women's Education."

Beyond Hu Shi, many male radicals and intellectuals also wrote about and campaigned for social and political equality between the sexes as the foundation of the new China. These notions, although ideologically enticing for radical women, were nevertheless hollow sloganeering. The legislative branch, controlled by men, repeatedly failed to pass bills related to women's voting rights and other political entitlements.

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[135] The term "scientific mother" is borrowed from Jung Yoon Ha's "Searching for the 'Modern Wife' in Prewar Shanghai and Seoul Magazines" in Paul Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen and Yingjin Zhang eds., *Liangyou: Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2013), 178-225. For more information and discussion on Hu Shi's "On the Problem of Childrearing (ciyou de wenti 慈幼的問題)," see Chapter II of this dissertation. For the notion of properly raising children and following the modern scientific method, especially in hygiene, see Ruth Rogaski's *Hygienic Modernity*, 165-192. For literary scholastic discussion on the ideal mother, see Sally Lieberman, *The Mother and Narrative Politics in Modern China* (Charlottesville and London, The University Press of Virginia, 1998), 25-30. Also see Zhou Xuqi 周叙琪, 1910-1920 *niandai duhui xinfunü shenghuo fengmao* 1910-1920 年代都會新婦女生活風貌 (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 1996), 24-39.

[136] Yoon Jung Ha, "Searching for the 'Modern Wife' in Prewar Shanghai and Seoul Magazines," 192.

Despite what they sometimes said and wrote, men's political comportment disclosed their true opinions about women and equality in the political realm.[137] But what did this mean for building an ideal modern family in the course of Chinese nation-building?

The modern family, as the May Fourth radicals believed, was "an ideal that promoted free choice in marriage, companionate marriage and economic and emotional independence from the [traditional] family."[138] First, breaking away from the traditional family and enjoying free choice in marriage suggested the refusal to conform to the traditional Confucian patriarchal family establishment. Second, free marriage allowed young radicals to exercise their agency and establish their autonomy which marked them as modern individuals. In addition, a modern family signified an equal relationship and conjugal happiness between a loving husband and wife. Overall, this imagined modern family is characterized by love, gender equity, and other modern values and behaviors. Both reformers and radicals fervently believed in that which I call a developmental eugenics narrative, the notion that the modern family would produce a

[137] See Louise Edwards, *Gender, Politics and Democracy: Women's Suffrage in China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 2-5 and 63-64. Li Ling 李玲, *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue de xingbieyishi* 中國現代文學的性別意識 (Taipei: Xiuwei zixun keji, 2011), 139. Ono Kazuko, "Casting off the Shackles of the Family" in Ono Kazuko, Joshua Fogel, ed., *Chinese Women in a Century of Revolution, 1850-1950*, 93-111.

[138] Susan Glosser, *Chinese Version of Family and State, 1915-1953*, 3. Also see Zhao Yanjie 趙妍杰 "Weile rensheng xingfu: Wusi shiqi jiating geming de geti suqiu 爲了人生幸福：五四時期家庭革命的個體訴求," *Huazhong shifan daxue xuebao* 華中師範大學學報 58, no. 1 (January 2019), 128-141.

generation of children who would be biologically and spiritually advanced and who would rebuild and lead China to a promising future.[139]

However, in the modern family imagined by many radical men like Hu Shi, the educated modern wife would apply her scholarly learning and modern knowledge to traditionally gendered realms such as household chores and childrearing responsibilities. Although the modern wife is purportedly free to pursue her career ambitions, she is also expected to simultaneously perform traditional gendered tasks. For radical men, the modern conjugal family was not meant to topple patriarchy altogether, but rather to allow younger men to establish their own patriarchal dominance beyond the purview of their elders and "exert control over their own lives and the lives of their family."[140] In this sense, Hu Shi's words encouraging young women to surpass the traditional standard of "good wife, wise mother" should be understood differently. He does not encourage women "to surpass" by simply changing their roles altogether, but rather prods them to continue carrying the traditional "good wife, wise mother" burden while also pursuing their careers. Ultimately, radical men asked their female counterparts to do more in order to display their modern credentials.

[139] It is worth noting that intellectual reformers and radicals presented the idea of family revolution and its result of producing a genetically stronger future generation in the name of science during that period of time but might not meet today's scientific standard.

[140] Susan Glosser, *Chinese Version of Family and State, 1915-1953*, 10. Also see footnote 144. Republican radical men's complicated feelings toward their own conjugal families will be examined in the following chapter.

When Nora's agony was repurposed to push for the broader purpose of individualism, the Chinese radicals, both men and women, focused on specific patriarchal oppression from their fathers instead of tackling the long-existing male privilege in a male-dominated society. That is to say, radical men aimed to be exempted from patriarchal control in their imagined modern China but would still retain all the established male privilege from the past. [141] Radical women might have felt the momentary joy of being men's modern equals during instances of social revolt, but they were still designated producers and caretakers for the nation's future generation, which required them to retreat to their traditional female roles when the moment arrived.[142] In this sense, an ideal radical woman should revolt like Nora but also possess the essence of Hua Mulan (花木蘭) who chooses to return to her role as a traditional woman in the end.[143] These conflicting conceptualizations of modern womanhood also appear in governmental and ideological calls for "wise mothers, good wives" (*xianmu liangqi* 賢母良妻) in the context of nation building.

[141] See Susan Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State, 1915*-1953, 10-12.

[142] In her dissertation, "Grafted Identities: Shrews and The New Woman Narrative in China (1910s-1960s)," Shu Yang argues that fictional women appropriate Nora's transgression but instead of shutting the door on their husbands, these fictional women turn their backs and walk away from their fathers.

[143] For more discussion about the fictional character Hua Mulan and her historical meaning, please see Louise Edwards, *Women Warriors and Wartime Spies of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 17-39.

Rethinking the "Wise Mother, Good Wife"

May Fourth radical women, like their male compatriots, also embraced the features of free marriage. These women were especially attracted to the concept of self-determination in the process of forming a modern family and the new possibility of equal relationships between women and their husbands.[144] Yet they were reluctant to take on the role of the modern "wise mother." In her "The Woes of the Modern Woman" ("Xiandai nüzi de kumen wenti" 現代女子的苦悶問題, 1927), Chen Xuezhao (陳學昭, 1906-1991) states:

> When both partners in the so-called "one husband-one wife new family" have careers, the problem of dependency doesn't arise; however, as soon as the woman has a baby, she is no longer able to keep her job and the family's economic burden falls entirely on the man's shoulders. […] Since the woman has to take care of the children and the household, she no longer has time to work in society or make a living. Under an economic situation like this, they are divided into master and slave.[145]

Chen's statement blatantly points to the gloomy situation that arises when a child arrives in a married couple's life. Despite her concerns about raising children in a

[144] See the discussions on this topic in "The Modern Female Reproduction and Childrearing Complex in Republican Woman Writer's Stories" section of this chapter.

[145] Chen Xuezhao 陳學昭, "Xiandai nüzi de kumen wenti" 現代女子的苦悶問題 (The Woes of the Modern Woman), in Chen Xuezhao's *Haitian cunxin* 海天寸心 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1981), 107-110, p. 108-9. The essay was original published in *Xinnüxing* 新女性 2, no. 1 (1927). The English translation is from Amy Dooling and Kristina Torgeson trans. and eds. *Writing Women in Modern China: An Anthology of Women's Literature From the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 170-1.

modern family, she actually recapitulates the importance of childrearing as an inherently female duty against the backdrop of family revolution and its imbedded eugenics narrative oriented towards China's salvation. Nevertheless, Chen's words reveal a woman's attitude toward her roles as a wife and later as a mother in a modern family. Other radical women writers also stated similar opinions in their ideological essays.[146] In order to truly reflect upon these radical women's views on their domestic roles in a modern family, it is necessary to separate the concept of a modern conjugal family as only a husband and a wife (before they procreate) from a modern family which includes children.[147]

It is interesting that Chen, a radical woman, does not suggest that men should shoulder their share of domestic duties even when she displays her frustration about losing her modern womanhood and financial independence because of childrearing responsibilities. On the surface, Chen presents the idea that women are biologically trapped in a traditional gender role when they become mothers. Yet she also suggests and recognizes the indescribable biological and psychological bonds between a mother

[146] Other female writers also discussed similar topics: Shi Pingmei 石評梅 (1903-1928), "Zhi quanguo jiemeimen de di'erfengxin" 致全國姐妹們的第二封信 (1925) in Shi Pingmei, *Shi Pingmei sanwen jingdian* 石評梅散文經典 (Beijing: Yinshua gongye xhuban, 2001), 242-244; Lu Yin's 盧隱 (1898-1934), "Zhongguo funü yundong wenti" 中國的婦女運動問題 (1924) in *Minduo zazhi* 民鐸雜誌 (1916-1931) 5, no. 1 (March 1, 1924), 1-10.

[147] The scholars of Republican China often used "the conjugal family," "the modern family" and "the small family" to present the popular idea of *xiaojiating* 小家庭 (literally "the small family"). The term *xiaojiating* was used rather fluidly and had various meanings during the Republican era. In my dissertation, I choose to differentiate the usages of "the conjugal family" and "the modern family/the small family" to address multiple connotations.

and her children. In this sense, her frustration about losing her modern womanhood is complicated. Chen's words suggest that when a woman actually exercises her agency to become a stay-at-home mother, she voluntarily surrenders her modern womanhood.[148] Nonetheless, Chen's critical essay displays her disdain for the expectations placed on the mother in a modern family. Chen and other radical women's disquietude regarding motherhood suggests that, while becoming a modern wife is a sign of a woman's agency, children interrupt her modern lifestyle. There is a latent disjuncture within the popular concept of the "wise mother, good wife" because, in the eyes of many May Fourth radical women, being a mother is clearly different from being a wife. Their responses and reactions to their domestic roles strongly suggest that the "Wise mother, good wife" should be seen as two separate concepts instead of one.

The nuances between the "wise mother" and the "good wife" can open up other potential modes of analysis when comparing the two in Republican cultural productions, thus enriching scholastic research on the Republican period. In his pioneering research on *Liangyou Huabao* (*The Young Companion* 良友畫報, 1926-1945)[149], Leo Lee points

[148] Although Chen Xuezhao's argument may lead to the conclusion that women exercise agency and choose to become stay at home mothers, their decisions to stay home and disregard their personal fulfillment should also be recognized as the products of societal pressure.

[149] *Liangyou* (*The Young Companion* 良友, 1926-1945) was the longest-lasting Chinese-English bilingual monthly periodical in the Republican era (1912-1949) (Paul Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen, and Yingjin Zhang eds., "*Liangyou*, Popular Print Media and Visual Culture in Republican Shanghai" in *Liangyou: Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945*, 1-13, p1.) Yet based on my own research, the bilingual feature in *Liangyou* was inconsistent throughout its publication. The bilingual feature first appeared in 1926's November special edition of *A Supplementary Issue in Commemoration of Dr. Sun Yat-sen Father of the Chinese Republic* (Sun Zhongshan xiansheng jinian tekan 孫中山先生紀念特刊). Generally speaking, the bilingual feature only occurred in the photojournalism and current events sections. The magazine

out how publications of that period show that a "woman's place is *still* at home … together with her children. In fact, this domestic link—women and their children—is the most frequently repeated image in the advertisements."[150] He examines the periodical's illustrated advertisements through his concept of the "cultural imaginary," suggesting that these advertisements continue to portray women as wise mothers and good wives.[151] A "cultural imaginary" as Lee defines it, is "a contour of collective sensibilities and significations resulting from cultural production … both the social and the institutional context of this cultural production and the forms in which such an imaginary is constructed and communicated."[152] Although Lee argues that the illustrations of women in advertisements do not contradict the May Fourth Nora discourse because they display "women's new roles in a modern conjugal family," I argue that women's roles as scientific mothers had been established as early as Liang Qichao's "On Women's Education" and therefore could not be considered "new" by the

temporary suspended publication after its October 1941 issue due to the Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945) and published its last issue, issue 172, in October 1945. According to a note in issue 100 (December 1934), sales had grown from 7,000 copies of the first issue to 42,000 copies by the end of 1930. It expanded its regional distribution locations from Shanghai to Hong Kong, Macau and then later to Hankou, Beiping, Xiamen, and Nanjing. See Yu Hansheng 余漢生 (????-????), "Looking forward from the last ten years of *Liangyou*" ("Liangyou shinian yilai 良友十年以來), no. 100 (December 15, 1934), 4-5; Chuchu Wang, "*Distributing Liangyou*," in Paul Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen, and Yingjin Zhang eds., appendix of *Liangyou*, 248-258.

[150] Leo Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 69.

[151] Ibid.

[152] Ibid., 63.

May Fourth era.[153] Lee's argument hints at the May Fourth's family revolution discourse that continued promoting the ideal of scientific mothers who would raise better future citizens for China's salvation under the developmental eugenics narrative.[154] His interpretation, in the end, reflects the May Fourth radical men's interpretation of the Nora narrative wherein gender inequity is not emphasized.

However, for radical women, "good wife, wise mother" was not one congruous concept and identity but two very different domestic identities that carry quite contrasting notions of womanhood. Through the lenses of good wife and wise mother, the following images portray two very different interpretations of womanhood, modern and traditional, in the eyes of the Republican radical woman. Figure 4 shows two Quaker Oats advertisements that portray women providing services. The one on the left depicts a married couple with the wife in her apron bringing her husband a bowl of hot oatmeal for breakfast. The one on the right depicts a mother spoon feeding her child Quaker Oats. Although we can argue that both advertisements portray women in their traditional domestic roles, the one on the left could actually invoke an understated concept of modern womanhood for Republican women which emphasizes the notion of conjugal happiness. Furthermore, the modern couple is portrayed alone, with the wife

[153] Ibid. 69.

[154] In his intriguing reading of Quaker Oats's illustrated advertisement series, Leo Lee presents women's "new mother" role in Republican Chinese nation building. Ibid. 70-1.

serving her husband rather than her in-laws. Perhaps this, in itself, might have seemed revolutionary.

Figure 4 (Left) "The ideal breakfast" (Lixiangzhong zhi zaocan 理想中之晨餐) *Liangyou* 32 (November 1928); (right) "Mother's loving child or Mother's way of loving her child" (Muqin zhi aier 母親之愛兒) *Liangyou* 24 (February 1928).

Based on my own research on *Liangyou*, I agree with Lee's observation that mother and child are often portrayed together in advertisements for items related to childrearing such as hygienic products (toothpaste, soap), milk powder, imported breakfast products (cereal, oatmeal), health supplements and medicine. However, Lee's broad claim about "women's new roles in a modern conjugal family" needs to be further examined and refined, as it reveals the convoluted relationship between modern womanhood and the modern family. Furthermore, Lee comes to the conclusion that

"the healthy living of a couple leads to a healthy family, which in turn strengthens the children's body and soul" in his reading of a series of Quaker Oats advertisements.[155] Lee's reading suggests that the modern father and mother have similar functions in producing and caring for the nation's future, the children. This neglects the fact that most advertisements from this period with childrearing related images portray a mother and her child. Although the father appears from time to time, he is almost always accompanied by both the mother and child. In all 172 issues of *Liangyou*, I only encountered one advertisement that depicts a father and a child together without the mother (Figure 5). Still, when comparing the descriptions from Figure 5's Kellogg's advertisement and the one in Figure 6, it becomes clear that a strong sense of childrearing responsibility is attributed to the mother. Figure 6's caption begins with "as a loving mother" (*shenwei cimuzhe* 身為慈母者), and the advertisement speaks directly to mothers who should serve Kellogg's Corn Flakes to their children so the children can "sleep soundly every night" (*meiye hanshui* 每夜酣睡). In Figure 5, the caption reads "Kellogg's Corn Flakes is the best food for males" (*Keluoge yumipian shi nanzi zhi zuihao shiwu* 克洛格玉米片是男子之最好食物) which does not directly address fathers or suggest that they should personally offer Kellogg's Corn Flakes to their children.[156]

[155] Leo Lee, *Shanghai Modern*, 70-71.

[156] It not clear whether the word choice *nanzi* has significance beyond *nanren* or *nanxing*. Based on Tani Barlow's *Colonial Modernity*, the word for woman/women in Chinese was not yet stable in the Republican era. (Tani Barlow, *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism*, 55-59). Therefore, it is worth speculating that the word for man in Chinese might have undergone a similar evolution. The Chinese description, as already suggested, does not directly encourage the father to prepare the cereal for his son, which leaves room for other interpretations. It is

Rather, the product is presented as something that the father would also enjoy (perhaps especially when served by an attentive wife), as the illustration shows the father and the son happily eating the cereal with the phrase "Father and Son both love Kellogg's" (Fuzi jie ai Keluoge 父子皆愛克洛格) across the bottom of the illustration. The interaction between the father and the child is very different from that between the mother and the child in Figure 7. The mother character in these advertisements consistently provides care and service to her child, brushing the child's teeth, checking the child's wellbeing at night, and feeding.[157] These advertisements bring to mind Chen Xuezhao's criticism that women remain the primary caregivers in a modern marriage, which confines women to their traditional roles and forces them to give up their recently acquired modern womanhood. Chen's complaint reveals how the new modern women's roles that Lee uncritically mentions often turned out to be burdens disguised as privileges.

possible that the advertisement targets *Liangyou*'s female readers, especially mothers who wish to please both their husbands and sons.

[157] For research about illustrating images and photographs of women in *Liangyou*, see Jung Yoon Ha's "Searching for the 'Modern Wife' in Prewar Shanghai and Seoul Magazines," and Lei Jun's "Producing Norms, Defining Beauty: The Role of Science in the Regulation of the Female body and Sexuality in Liangyou and *Furen Huabao*," in Paul Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen and Yingjin Zhang eds., 178-225; 111-31.

Figure 5. “Father and Son both love Kellogg’s” (*Fuzi jieai keluoge* 父子皆愛克洛格), *Liangyou* no. 128 (May 1937).

Figure 6. “Sleep soundly every night” (meiye hanshui 每夜酣睡)
Liangyou 120 (September 1936).

Figure 7. (left) “Sozodont toothpowder, mouth rinse and toothpaste.” *Liangyou* 24 (February 1928); (middle) “Everyday Flashlight.” *Liangyou* 24 (February 1928); (right) “Sanatogen.” *Liangyou* 120 (September 1936).

The Modern Female Reproduction and Childrearing Complex in Republican Woman Writer’s Stories

My discussion so far has explored the Nora phenomenon in the May Fourth radical movement. Although the notion of “wise mother, good wife” or “wise wife, good mother” continued to confine women to their traditional familial roles, I contend that the concept of modern womanhood was brought into sharper relief by the portrayals of Republican women writers. Still, children, in radical women’s ideological essays, are

represented as the disrupting force that fracture gender equality in a modern conjugal family because childrearing is inherently a woman's duty.

This section will focus on three May Fourth female writers and their depictions of fictional motherhood. It examines how the eugenics narrative is constituted in their stories. In Ling Shuhua's (凌叔華 1900-1990) "Little Liu" (Xiao Liu 小劉, 1929), Chen Ying's (沉櫻 1907-1986) "Woman" (Nüxing 女性, 1929) and Xie Bingying's (謝冰瑩, 1906-2000) "Abandonment" (Paoqi 拋棄, 1932), the female characters either witness the transformation of a woman when she becomes a mother or experience the erosion of their modern womanhood when they find out that they are pregnant. The women in these stories have complicated feelings about their pregnancy and their children. Although they accept reproduction as their duty, they recognize that motherhood will subvert their modern womanhood and endanger their conjugal happiness. In other words, for them, becoming a mother is not an event to celebrate, but rather a source of fear. In these stories, children are not associated with grand ideas such as the future of the nation, but rather, represent the end of one's personal modern womanhood and conjugal happiness. As such, these portrayals question and undermine the dominant developmental eugenics narrative in Republican China.

The Cautionary Tale of Little Liu: From Rosy Red Cheeks to a Waxen and Sallow Face

Ling Shuhua (凌叔華, 1900-1990) was one of the most decorated women writers of the Republican period.[158] As a daughter of a concubine of a Qing official, Ling Fupeng, Ling Shuhua received a classical education in both literature and painting during her youth. She later studied at Heibei First Women's Normal School (Hebei diyi nüzi shifan 河北第一女子師範) prior to pursuing her degree in foreign literature at Yanjing University (Yanjing daxue 燕京大學) in 1922. Her short story "Intoxicated" ("Jiu hou" 酒後, 1925; literally "After Drinking") published in *Contemporary Review* (*Xiandai pinglun* 現代評論, 1924-1928) won her instant fame.[159] She continued writing into the early 1930s, and most of her work was published in *Contemporary Review* and *Crescent Monthly* (*Xinyue yuekan* 新月月刊, 1928-1933). Lu Xun once wrote that Ling's work represented "the essence (or soul) of the wealthy elites" (*gaomen juzude jinghun* 高門巨族的精魂) and that it was "generally very circumspect, measuredly depicting the

[158] The brief biography of Ling Shuhua is based on Lily Xiao Hong Lee "Ling Shuhua" in Lily Xiao Hong Lee edited, *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women: The Twentieth Century 1912-2000* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2003), 351-4; "Ling Shuhua" in Amy Dooling and Kristina Torgeson eds., *Writing Women in Modern China*, 175-7; "Ling Shuhua" in Bonnie S. McDougall and Kam Louie eds., *The Literature of China in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997),121-3.
Lily Lee states that "Intoxicated" was Ling Shuhua's first short story but this distinction actually belongs to "Temple of Flowers" ("Hua zhi si" 花之寺, 1924). See Chen Jingzhi's *Xiandai wenxue zaoqi de nüzuojia* (Taipei: Wencheng chubanshe, 1980), 86. Also in Qin Xianci's 秦賢次 "Ling Shuhua nian biao" 凌叔華年表 in *Ling Shuhua xiaoshuoji*, vol. 2, 474-475.

[159] Lu Xun commented that Ling Shuhua's "Intoxicated" deviated from her usual writing style (*chugui zhi zuo* 出軌之作), see *LXQJ*, 6: 258.

obedient ladies of the old-style family" (*dadi hen jinshende, shike'erzhide miaoxiele jiujiatingzhong de wanshunde* nüxing 大抵很謹慎的，適可而止的描寫了舊家庭中的婉順的女性).[160] Essentially, Lu Xun singled out Ling's writing because her themes were generally limited to the concerns of docile women in the domestic sphere. Ling was also disparagingly called a writer of the *guixiu* ("well-bred young lady") school (*guixiupai* 閨秀派).[161] Although the term *guixiu* generally describes a woman of a distinguished family, here it describes women writers who "[did not] write enough about 'important' matters … [and were] too confined to the domestic world of feminine sorrow."[162] However, Ling Shuhua's work was arguably underappreciated by her male peers, as it often reveals rather convoluted attitudes towards a woman's family life and subtly explores complex social issues.[163]

[160] Ibid., 158. It is uncertain whether Lu Xun meant to criticize or praise Ling Shuhua, or whether he was ambivalent; Chen Jingzhi 陳敬之 interprets Lu Xun's comments in a positive light and my reading of Lu Xun's comments leans toward the negative. Chen Jingzhi 陳敬之, *Xiandai wenxue zaoqi de nüzuojia* 現代文學早期的女作家 (Taipei: Wencheng chubanshe, 1980), 89.

[161] Yi Zhen 毅真 "Jiwei dangdai zhongguo nüxiaoshuojia" 幾位當代中國女小說家 in *Women's Journal* (*Funü* zazhi 婦女雜誌, 1915-1931) 16, no. 7 (July 1, 1930) was the first article that categorized Ling Shuhua within the *guixiu* school. This information is recorded in Qin Xianci's 秦賢次 "Ling Shuhua nian biao" 凌叔華年表 in *Ling Shuhua xiaoshuoji*, Vol. 2, 479-480; identical information also be found in Chen Jingzhi's *Xiandai wenxue zaoqi de nüzuojia*, 79 and 88.

[162] Rey Chow, "Virtuous Transactions: A Reading of Three Stories by Ling Shuhua" in *Modern Chinese Literature*, Vol. 4 No. 1&2 Gender, Writing, Feminism, China (Foreign Language Publications, 1988), 71-86. (http://www.jstor.org/stable/41490629.)

[163] The comment here is based on my reading of *Ling Shuhua xiaoshuoji*, but other scholars like Rey Chow, Amy Dooling, and Lily Xiao Hong Lee have expressed similar views on how Ling Shuhua's stories allow us to challenge the conventional reading of *guixiu* school writers in the Republican era.

The story “Little Liu” features first-person narration and the narrator is a girl named Feng’er (鳳兒). The story begins with the 26-year-old Feng’er recalling her memory of attending a girls’ middle school where she meets the young radical Little Liu. Little Liu embodies the May Fourth radical spirit and constantly challenges the established Confucian values at the school. Then the story fast-forwards to the present-day, and Feng’er is married and has recently relocated to Wuchang (武昌) with her husband. After learning that Little Liu also lives in the same town, Feng’er decides to pay her a visit with hopes that the energetic Little Liu of her childhood memory would provide a welcome diversion from her rather uneventful daily life while her husband is out at work. However, her visit with Little Liu does not go as expected. The present-day Little Liu no longer radiates charisma. She is now a married woman with five children. Feng’er is struck by Little Liu’s enervated body and soulless eyes. During Feng’er’s visit, the two women talk about some middle school classmates and Feng’er observes Little Liu’s harried household life. The story ends with Feng’er expression of perplexity upon leaving little Liu’s residence. Beyond portrayal of families and exploration of modern womanhood, the story “Little Liu” challenges the very notion of the developmental eugenics narrative by questioning whether a modern family could successfully produce better Chinese generation.

A positive way to characterize the middle school-aged Little Liu is as a May Fourth follower whose radical spirit is reflected in her words and actions at school. Yet in today’s view, she can be easily described as a mean girl who is popular among her peers but will incentivize others to follow her lead and conduct cruel acts against those

she despises. For example, she nicknames a student in her class "Duck" (*yazi* 鴨子) to derogatorily describe how the girl walks on her bound feet.[164] It is interesting to note that other than a direct description of Duck's visibly tiny triangular bound feet, every piece of information about Duck in the story is presented in the form of gossip. No one really knows whether Duck is actually married, a concubine of a wealthy family, or pregnant, as the rumors suggest. More importantly, Duck's personality is never described in the story. In a way, Duck is an apparition, not because her role in the story is insignificant, but because she is less concrete than others, and because she stands for the looming form of "old" womanhood that May Fourth radicals detested. One way to comprehend why Duck becomes the center of all the demeaning gossip is to focus on her visible body, the bound feet. Bound feet in the eyes of late-Qing reformers and later the May Fourth radicals did not simply represent the impairment of a woman's body; they symbolized national shame and the reasons why China was crippled and could not lift itself to the level of a modern nation. As bound feet were a metonym for Chinese civilization in all of its ineptitude, the character Duck is reduced to her bound feet. With all the vile implications that come with bound feet, Duck becomes the natural villain, a foil to the seemingly heroic Little Liu who follows the radical call and fights against wicked traditions.

Little Liu's hostility towards Duck can be explained by the latter's bound feet and their relation to the national shame complex. On the surface, this hostility can be

[164] Ling Shuhua 凌叔華, "Xiao Liu" 小劉, in *LSXSJ*, 1:117-37, 118-9. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Ling Shuhua's "Little Liu" are my own.

interpreted as a repercussion of the conflicting objectives of advocating women's economic independence and promoting the "wise mother, good wife" as the foundation of China's nation building during that radical era. Little Liu agrees with a girl named Huisheng (慧生) who says that the rhetoric of wise wife good mother delivered by the principal during last year's graduation speech would have already caused students in other schools to hold student protests (*nao fengchao* 鬧風潮).[165] To her, the essence of wise wife good mother is the traditional principle of "three virtues and four follows" (*sancong side* 三從四德)[166] with which a docile woman should comply. She is also frustrated and ashamed that her schools is nicknamed the "Training School for Wise Wives and Good Mothers" (*Xianqi liangmu yangchengsuo* 賢妻良母養成所)[167] by other girls' school students because of the principal's speech.

In fact, Little Liu's hostility towards Duck only displays that she still carries certain features of a docile woman who abides by men's words. When she incentivizes her entourage to verbally mock and humiliate Duck in public because of her resentment of the school principal and her frustration, she fails to retaliate directly against the principal, the patriarch and the authority of the school. This only displays her inadequacy in challenging male authority directly. Furthermore, if all the rumors about Duck are true, then Duck is more a victim of the vile Confucian patriarchal family system and shameful cultural practices than their accomplice. The subtle irony is that the

[165] Ibid., 121.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid., 120.

seemingly socially transgressive Little Liu, in fact, channels the sexist condemnation of late-Qing and Republican male reformists that associated bound feet with China's debility and shame. In this sense, Little Liu is not a radical who fights against the patriarchy, but a vessel transporting men's words. This understated character trait also foreshadows Little Liu's future.

Another way to look at the gossip about Duck is to scrutinize how characters deliver and react to the gossip. One event that stands out from all others is when the girls are gossiping about Duck's pregnancy. Little Liu, the source of this particular gossip, says that she overheard Duck's rickshaw driver complain that Duck's morning sickness soils the seat cushion. Upon hearing this, Little Zhou (Xiao Zhou 小周), one of the schoolgirls, immediately exclaims "dreadfully filthy (髒死了)" [168] and spits on the ground. Beyond the literal reading, it is possible that the girl's comment about filth refers to the act of sexual intercourse, especially when it is required as part of a loveless arranged union. It is also possible that the word "filthy" is directed at the unborn child. Here we might explore the latter reading in the sense of the developmental eugenics narrative, that the child is the future of the Chinese nation. On the surface, the condemnation of a future Chinese citizen as filthy, even when it is technically a fetus, seems at odds with the ideological stance that children are the future of the nation. However, because the child is not produced by a loving modern couple and because Duck is physically impaired, the child may be seen by detractors as an abomination, an obstacle on the road to national modernization. That is to say, Duck's child is not a

[168] Ibid., 120.

proper member of the imagined new generation but rather of the old, incapacitated past generation. It is in this sense that the unborn child is filthy to the radicals.[169] Nevertheless, the understated idea of the potential of children to be inherently undesirable is established at this point in the story and further foreshadows these radical girls' futures when they become mothers.

Ultimately, Little Liu's plan successfully drives Duck away with everyone in the classroom chanting her name. Little Liu, at that moment, is proud, confident and increasingly beautiful in the narrator's eyes. Maybe here Little Liu represents the future radical woman whose radiant look and sparkling eyes reveal her self-assured and transgressive spirit. After the girls drive Duck away, the narrative returns to Feng'er's present time. At this point, she has finished her college degree, teaches two hours of foreign language weekly and otherwise spends her time at home.[170] There is no clear discussion about her relationship with her husband, so it is difficult to say whether she is happily married, but the following passage reveals Feng'er's feelings when she is home alone:

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[169] My reading of this incident does not delve into traditional Chinese views on women's bodies, but it should be noted that the notion of filthiness could come from traditional Chinese beliefs that women are unclean and that their bodily discharges are contaminants. This idea is also linked to childbirth because of the "postpartum discharge, which is believed to be the same substance [as menstrual blood]." Emily M. Ahern, "The Power and Pollution of Chinese Women" in M. Wolf and R. Witler ed., *Women in Chinese Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975). Also see Anne Behnke Kinney, *Representation of Childhood and Youth in Early China*, 167-9.

[170] Based on clues from the story, her husband is probably a faculty member or an advanced student at a local college (Lin Shuhua, *LSHXSJ*, 1:128).

> [T]his is my first time living in a Wuchang style house that has high walls and a small yard. When I sit quietly, I will sometimes look up but only feel the darkness from the four sides. The darkness is probably a result of the walls. One time when I took a nap, I was suddenly nagged by a sense of doubt: "doesn't this look like I had broken the law and been locked up in a prison?" [171]

Before further exploring Feng'er's feelings, it is important to point out that the passage quoted here reveals that the protagonist has a comfortable life, as she can take a nap during the day without worrying about any quotidian struggles. Despite her seemingly worry-free life, her words do not convey any kind of happiness. She reveals that she feels desperately trapped when she is home alone, to the point that she compares her daily experience to a prison sentence. While we may speculate whether Feng'er's conjugal marriage is happy when her husband is present, this passage definitely reveals that she is at least lonely and bored when her husband is not around. Briefly placing Feng'er loneliness aside, the family that Feng'er and her husband create is a carbon copy of the imagined ideal modern conjugal family. In radical discourse of the time, it was unfathomable that the home of an imagined modern conjugal family would ever be considered a prison, yet Ling Shuhua's portrayal of Feng'er's life says otherwise. Feng'er's discontent in her daily home life causes readers to question whether conjugal happiness can ever be achieved in the setting of a modern conjugal family, where one or

[171] Chinese original text: "武埠高牆淺院的房子我又是初次住，靜坐時偶爾抬頭一望，祇覺得黑漆的四面都是牆，有一回我睡午覺時忽然疑惑起來，「這別是犯了什麼法來坐監牢了吧？」". (Lin Shuhua, *LSHXSJ*, 1:128.)

both family members must earn wages outside of the home while simultaneously nurturing a relationship based on companionate love and togetherness. In addition, Feng'er's feeling of being locked up, of being confined inside the home space, reveals the interiority of a modern educated woman who still upholds her traditional gender role as a proper lady, staying inside the domestic space and avoiding venturing out the door to present herself in the public domain. Feng'er is a modern educated woman who is constantly negotiating desires for social transgression and maintaining her traditional virtuous womanhood.

My reading of Feng'er's ambiguous feeling towards her seemingly comfortable life resonates with Amy Dooling's observation that in the 1920s and 1930s some fictional woman characters created by women writers "enjoyed the distinctly twentieth-century privilege of attending school before ultimately complying with orthodox society's gender scripts. But if education has not sufficiently empowered (nor for that matter emboldened) the heroine[s] to actively reject [their] prescribed role within the patriarchal order, it has opened [their] eyes to the various choices newly available to some women." [172] Maybe some sense of disappointment in herself and her outcome makes Feng'er think of her rebellious childhood idol, Little Liu. This is probably why, after discovering that Little Liu also resides in Wuchang, Feng'er quickly gets ready and decides to pay her childhood friend a visit. She imagines that her boredom and malaise

[172] Amy D. Dooling, *Women's Literary Feminism In Twentieth-Century China* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 95.

will soon be melted away by Little Liu's boundless energy and cheeky witticisms. However, Feng'er is stunned when she sees what Little Liu has become:

> Is it really possible that the woman in front of me is Little Liu? How did her rosy red cheeks turn waxen and sallow? How did her bright and sparkling eyes become so murky and dull? Oh my, that smile, that slender figure…… while thinking of all these, I am only dumbfounded as I face the person before me.[173]

If eyes are the windows of one's soul, Little Liu's dull and murky eyes indicate her soulless lifestyle as a mother of five children. Despite the help of a housemaid who takes cares of household chores and provides care for her children, her changed body suggests what a woman's body would have to endure after delivering five children and suffering a miscarriage within about eight years. During their conversation, Little Liu shares that she had her first child at 18 years of age and was not able to breastfeed any of her children except for her firstborn. Little Liu's inability to feed her subsequent children suggests that multiple children within a short time span is too much for even a young and healthy woman to bear. Her literally drained body also indicates that a woman should have a baby later, once she reaches full physical maturity, as Liang Qichao argues in his "On Prohibition of Early Marriage."[174]

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[173] Chinese original text: "難道面前這女人，真是小劉嗎？蘋果一般的腮怎會是這黃蠟色的呢？那黑白分明閃爍的雙眸怎會是這混濁無光的眼兒呢？咳，那笑容，那苗條身材……這樣我想著只怔怔地對著目前的人。" (Ling Shuhua, *LSHXSJ*, 1:130).

[174] For discussions about Liang Qichao's work see Chapter 1 in this dissertation.

In their conversation, Little Liu takes up her old role in middle school as the source of all the gossip and news. She discloses that Little Zhou died long ago during labor and she heard that "people said Little Zhou carried a strange fetus (guaitai 怪胎) that could not be delivered in a natural way."[175] In traditional Chinese views of birth, this strange fetus would be seen as unlucky and a harbinger of misfortune for the family.[176] In addition, the Chinese character *guai* 怪 is often paired with the character *mo* 魔, and together as *moguai* they mean demon or monster. Such children are not the proper future of the nation, but rather a form of cancer that drains women's souls and life force. Combining this analogy with Little Zhou's earlier description of Duck's rumored pregnancy as "filthy to death," it seems reasonable to speculate that Little Zhou's deadly pregnancy is to be inferred as an outcome of a traditional marriage instead of a modern conjugal one.

Beyond Little Liu's frail body, her household environment also brings into question the notion of the scientific mother who would raise her children in a modern, scientifically-informed way so that China's future citizens would have the robust and healthy physiques needed to compete with citizens of other nations. Little Liu constantly needs to lie down and rest because of her depleted vitality. This implies that Little Liu never has the chance to establish herself as the scientific mother who applies modern childrearing knowledge and hygienic protocol. The housemaid in Little Liu's family does

[175] Ling Shuhua, *LSHXSJ*, 1:131.

[176] Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China*, 340. Also see Anne Behnke Kinney, *Representation of Childhood and Youth in Early China*, 154-62.

not appear to have much education and lacks understanding of hygiene. For example, when a young boy wants to defecate, the housemaid makes him sit on a spittoon to discharge his waste. Since the spittoon is never covered or removed, the house is filled with the odor of excrement. In addition, the boy simply wipes his snot on Little Liu's clothes. All these suggests that even a woman with modern education, such as Little Liu, will fail to establish her household in an ideal modern fashion if her body is depleted by giving birth to multiple children. Even a modern small family cannot contain the "filth" brought by a child.

The ideological call to serve as a "wise mother" encourages women to devote themselves to raising a better generation for China's salvation, establishing an appealing developmental eugenics narrative. The story of "Little Liu" confronts such a notion and asks whether it is worth it for women to sacrifice themselves by immersing themselves in family life. Moreover, Ling Shuhua blurs the line between acts of feminist revolution and conformism. Her characters Little Liu and Feng'er display the complexity of modernity for women during the Republican period. At the same time, the story points out the hypocrisy of the father character, who is unwilling to spend his time with the family and often tells the children to go to their mother when they ask for his attention. It shows how, Republican women are constantly battling unsupportive spouses and unattainable ideals to salvage their precarious modern womanhood.

Don't Want to Be A Mother: Choosing to Have an Abortion

Chen Ying (沉櫻, 1907-1986), like most of the Republican women writers, was born into a scholar family and received a modern education at school and classical Chinese training at home.[177] However, Chen Ying's family was unusually progressive. Her father was a late Qing educator but had studied at a western school. Her second uncle (from her mother's side) was a student at Peking University and often talked about gender equality, abolishing foot binding and women's educational rights, and he had great influence on her.[178] However, her passion for novels was ignited by her mother. Unlike most of her female family members, who were literate, Chen Ying's mother was learned but illiterate. Yet according to Chen Ying, her mother had an amazing ability to memorize poems and taught her to recite the *Golden Treasury of Quatrains and Octaves* (*Qian jia shi* 千家詩). One of her mother's favorite novels was *The Story of the Stone* (*Hong lou meng* 紅樓夢) and she asked people to read the story to her numerous times. The young Chen Ying would often take the opportunity to stand by her mother's side to listen to the story.[179] During her final couple of years of her elementary education, she joined the protest against imperialism as the May Fourth movement expanded into

[177] The brief biography of Chen Ying is based on Chen Ningning 陳寧寧, "Wen shijian qing wei hewu" 問世間情爲何物, in Chen Ying 沉櫻 and Ke Ling 柯靈 ed., *Chen Ying xiaoshuo: aiqing de kaishi* 沉櫻小說：愛情的開始 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1997), 1-4; Zhu Jiawen 朱嘉雯, *Zhuixun, piaobo de linghun: nüzuojia de lisan wenxue* 追尋，漂泊的靈魂：女作家的離散文學 (Taipei: Xiuwei chuban, 2009), 75-93; "Chen Ying" in Amy Dooling and Kristina Torgeson ed., *Writing Women in Modern China*, 275-7.

[178] Ke Ling ed., *Chen Ying xiaoshuo: aiqing de kaishi*, 1.

[179] Zhu Jiawen, *Zhuixun, piaobo de linghun*, 76-7.

Shangdong (山東). In 1925, Chen Ying enrolled in the communist-established Shanghai University to study Chinese literature. Due to the tension between the national government and the communist party, the university was forced to close in 1927 and Chen Ying transferred to Fudan University to continue her college education. During her time at Fudan, she began her writing career. Her first short story "Homecoming" ("Huijia" 回家, 1928),[180] published in *Big River Monthly* (*Dajiang Yuekan* 大江月刊, 1928-?), was praised for its Russian literary style by Mao Dun (茅盾, 1896-1981) who also questioned whether the story was secretly written by an established writer under a pseudonym.[181] Another well-known writer, Shen Congwen (沈從文, 1902-1988), also praised her writing style.[182] From then to the middle of the 1930s, Chen Ying published many short stories in *Short Story Monthly* (*Xiaoshuo yuebao* 小說月報, 1910-1929), *Modern Literature* (*Xiandai wenxue* 現代文學, 1930), *Literature Quarterly* (*Wenxue jikan* 文學季刊, 1934-1935) and several short story collections.[183]

The story "Wife" ("Qi" 妻, 1929) was first published in *Short Story Monthly* and later under the title "Woman" ("Nüxing" 女性) in Chen Ying's short story collection,

[180] Chen Ying published this short story under the name Chen Yin 陳因. (Chen Yin, "Huijia" 回家 in *Dajiang yuekan*, no. November (1928).

[181] Mao Dun "Chen Yin nüshi de 'Guijia' 陳因女士的 '歸家'," in *Dajiang yuekan*, no. December (1928). Mao Dun remembered the title of Chen Yin's work incorrectly.

[182] Chen Congwen 沈從文, "On Creative Short Stories in China" "Lun Zhongguo chuangzuo xiaoshuo" 論中國創作小說 in *Shen Congwen quanji* 沈從文全集 (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., 1985), vol. 11, 161-186, 186. In his comment, Shen Congwen also points out that Chen Ying often focused on trivial matters that were limited to the domestic sphere.

[183] Zhu Jiawen, *Zhuixun, piaobo de linghun*, 78.

which was also titled *Woman* (*Nüxing* 女性, 1934).[184] The story depicts a woman's choice to terminate a pregnancy in order to retain her freedom and fulfill her personal ambitions. It is worth noting that the story is narrated by the woman's lover, Xige (熙哥) who chronicles how she vacillates between her ambitions and potential motherhood when she finds out that she is pregnant.[185] Throughout the story, the male narrator becomes increasingly perplexed about the woman's decision process. Chen Ying, through her story, does not simply question the reproductive imperative that a woman must follow within the developmental eugenics narrative. By showing how a woman's frustrations can only be legitimized through the voice of a man, she points out that men still have significant privilege and authority over women.

Xige and the woman live as a conjugal family. The story begins with "My wife and I live alone, so whenever I go out, she is left at home by herself. Unfortunately, my work takes me out quite often."[186] This simple description of their lifestyle underlines their independence and indicates that they are neither living with their families nor receiving financial support from them. It is important to note that although the narrator constantly refers to his partner as his wife (*qi* 妻), they are not a married couple. They

[184] This information can be found in Sun Jinjian 孫金鑑 ed., *Chen Ying* 沉櫻 (China: Huaxia chubanshe, n.d.), 154. Ke Ling ed., 109. "Chen Ying" in Amy Dooling and Kristina Torgeson ed., *Writing Women in Modern China*, 276.

[185] Xige is probably not the man's real name but rather the nickname that his lover calls him.

[186] For the original Chinese text please Ke Ling edited, *Chen Ying xiaoshuo: aiqing de kai shi* (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1997), 85. Translation is from Amy Dooling and Kristina Torgeson, *Writing Women in Modern China*, 279.

simply choose to live together, indulge their love, and pursue their shared career ambition in literature. They choose to cohabitate rather than marrying because they both loathe the conventional family lifestyle.[187] It is clear that their non-marital relationship indicates their radical ideology, their concern for gender equality, and their rejection of Confucian family dynamics. Even the small modern family structure is too confining for them.

Their radical domestic relationship also foretells that the woman will not conform to the gendered duties of a traditional woman or the ideological "good wife, wise mother" who chooses to stay and manage the home space instead of working outside the home. As the story continues, we soon discover that the woman is an active writer although she has not published any of her work, and has recently broadened her literary interests to include Russian literature. She takes private Russian lessons and assiduously studies the language every night. The man often contemplates her as she studies and is astounded by her "illuminating intellect" (*zhihui zhi guang* 智慧之光).[188] The man's narration reveals that his conjugal happiness and satisfaction are rooted in the woman's intellectual qualities instead of her physical attractiveness. Their intimacy strongly signals that their radical domestic partnership carries the desired features of a modern conjugal family which are love and gender equity.

Even though the woman's glowing intellect highlights the spiritual elements of their relationship, it does not hinder the physical intimacy between the two. The two

[187] Chinese original text: "妻和我都同樣地厭惡做個家庭中的人." (Ke Ling ed., 86.)

[188] Ke Ling ed., 87.

lovers often express their love for each other through verbal communication, touch, hugs and kisses. However, their sexual intimacy and the resultant pregnancy eventually put their relationship in jeopardy. Yet in reality it is the man and woman's contrasting attitudes towards the pregnancy that reveal the vulnerability of their relationship. For instance:

> One day, however, a sad expression appeared on my wife's face. She told me about several changes in her body that made her fear she might be pregnant. After hearing this unwelcome news, I myself shared a little of her unhappiness, but gradually I began to feel that it was not such a terrible thing after all. […] At times she would grow angry at my casual attitude. "You're being self-centered," she would say. "You feel that what's done is done. It has nothing to do with you, so you don't really care." She would blurt out such exaggerations when she was in a dark mood, but of course I always understood and quickly forgave her.[189]

The man's words disclose his acceptance of the unexpected pregnancy. Although he employs the word "unwelcome" to describe the pregnancy when he first hears about it, he does not actually have any particular feelings about it. It is clear that his initial sorrow comes from his lover's despairing look and voice instead of his own concerns. The worst thing is that he never tries to understand why his lover is in such distress. He never seriously considers her despairing outcries but instead treats them as her emotional

[189] For Chinese original text, see Ke Ling ed., 87-88. The English translation here is from Amy Dooling and Kristina Torgeson ed., 281.

hormonal outbursts, small unpleasantries to be forgiven and forgotten.[190] Clearly the lovers have different understandings of how the pregnancy will impact their lifestyle.

As the man, the narrator, fails to comprehend why the woman is distressed, it is left to the reader to detect what causes the woman's despair. And because the story is told through the man's narration, we can only make assumptions about the woman's distress based on her words and actions. Based on her choice to cohabitate without marital status and her desire for a literary career, we can assume she is a radical woman who does not want to simply be recognized as a man's wife and believes that she is able to have a professional career in the public sphere. When this aspect of her personality is so clear, it is interesting that, throughout the story, the man acknowledges his lover's radical identify but fails to actually embrace her as a modern radical woman by continuously refers her as his wife instead of addressing her by her name in his interior thought.[191] This betrays the fact that his radical gestures towards gender equity are ultimately empty and reveals that even a seemingly progressive modern man may not see a woman as his equal and can only regard her in conventional kinship terms in his most authentic and concealed thought.

In the same conversation, the woman points out that becoming a mother will force her to give up all her dreams and ambitions because she will need to stay at home

[190] The hormonal reaction reading is based on the fact that the woman notices the changes in her body and the man describes her as moody after discovering she is pregnant.

[191] To be clear, the man uses the second person pronoun "you" (*ni* 你) when he converses with his lover.

to raise the child. The clash between her modern womanhood and potential motherhood is apparent but rather complicated. On one hand, she describes having a baby as "falling into the trap of motherhood" that will curtail the development of her identity.[192] But on the other hand, she rejects the idea of employing a nanny to take care of her child because "a mother's love can't be easily suppressed."[193] Her words indicate that the desire to mother is a natural mechanism; she will naturally love and nurtures her child, and no one can restrain such emotion and bonding. And because of it, once the child is born, she is certain that she will be willing to cast her dreams away for the sake of her offspring. Arguably, she is not forced to abandon her modern personhood but chooses to do so by refusing to view motherhood as anything other than a zero-sum game. Though the outcome of pregnancy carried to term is the same regardless of a mother's motivation, it is notable that the potential mother of this story does not discuss raising a child because the child is the hope for the nation's future, but but instead focuses on how she is biologically programmed to nurture. Her attitude subtly challenges beliefs about motherhood in the dominant developmental eugenics narrative that encourages scientific mothers to raise a vigorous, robust generation for the sake of the nation.[194]

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[192] Chinese original text: "陷在做母親的牢籠中". (Ke Ling ed., 91.)

[193] Chinese original text: "母愛是不能遏止的". (Ke Ling ed., 91.)

[194] This conflict also appears in other parts of the story. For example, the woman says, "How is that possible? Having a baby automatically transforms a woman into a maternal person. Even now, whenever I think about it I feel disgusted by it, but oddly enough, at the same time I find myself beginning to wonder about the joys of motherhood. It's all too frightening! Women have maternal instincts, so it would be impossible to have a child without becoming a mother." For

Another reason for the woman's rejection of potential motherhood is that motherhood would interrupt her conjugal happiness. As I have discussed in the previous section, modern conjugal happiness was viewed as an important aspect of modern personhood because it reflects the belief that a modern conjugal family is based on free love, which affirms the autonomy of the involved parties. Under this system, a woman can decide whom she wants to have a relationship with and whom she wants to wed. Her modern personhood, thus, is entwined with her love relationship. Then the happiness of her relationship with a man represents and reaffirms a part of her modern womanhood. The following conversation between the couple displays this way of thinking:

> "The child hasn't even been born yet and you're already preparing clothes for it!" I teased her.
>
> "Who is it that really wants to start making preparations?" she mocked, throwing me an angry look.
>
> "I know you love children and you would love a baby much more than you love me. I don't want you to have a child, because then you wouldn't love me anymore," I said to her purposely.
>
> "I don't want a child and I don't love children. I just want to keep on loving you," she said, running over and embracing me.

Chinese text, see Ke Ling ed., 88 and the English translation is from Amy Dooling and Kristina Torgeson ed., 281-282.

This conversation gives us a glance into the couple's sweet relationship, as they casually tease each other because they know each other so well. However, the conversation takes a sharp turn when Xige jokingly says the baby will outweigh him and get all of his partner's love. He does not expect his playful remarks to totally backfire on him. His teasing words unquestionably trigger his partner's anxiety. Her reaction suggests that she might have been contemplating this very issue for some time and is truly frightened that her motherly love might eventually remove all traces of her love for her man. Her reaction does not simply indicate that their conjugal love is a part of her identity as a modern woman, but also suggest that she is fine with just being a good wife, a good companion, instead of a wise mother. This further supports the need to reevaluate the notion of "wise wife, good mother" as a phrase which attempts to meld imperatives that could be separate or even mutually exclusive.

Last but not least, if the story is about a woman's journey towards choosing to abort her unwanted pregnancy for the sake of her modern womanhood, why does the author choose to tell the story from a man's perspective? The man's revelation below might offer some clues:

> I knew that she had good reason to be depressed and that her fears were well founded, and I wondered at times if perhaps going ahead with her plan wasn't the right thing to do after all. I couldn't resolve this question. Would a woman whose aspirations went beyond the norm of simply being a wise wife and good mother really be harmed by fulfilling her supposedly natural obligation to bear offspring? I thought of all the

> women I knew who were as ambitious and enterprising in their youth as any man, but who after getting married and becoming mothers shed all their youthful hopes as though merely stripping off an outer shell. They turned into completely different people. It was no wonder that my lovely wife was scared and struggling against the possibility of suffering a similar fate. I was well aware of the contradictions that arise in people's lives under the present social system, but what could I do that would be best for my poor wife?[195]

The man's revelation brings to mind Ling Shuhui's story in which Little Liu turns into a completely different person once she becomes a mother. Throughout Chen Ying's story, readers can sense the woman's frustration and ambivalent feeling towards her potential motherhood through her words and actions. We can see her frustration and hear her despairing outcries but our speculation regarding her distress requires validation from the narrator, the man. This leads us to wonder whether Chen Ying's decision to utilize a male narrator may speak to a deep-seated cultural assumption that a man's words carry more weight. Leading radical men, such as Hu Shi and Lu Xun, were welcomed to give speeches at women's schools to instruct students in how to become modern women, and many of the essays written by men in *New Youth* have similar instructive messages

[195] The translation here is from Amy Dooling and Kristina Torgeson ed., but with modifications. (285-286.)

for women.[196] However, even the most prominent women writers of the time were expected to write strictly on women's issues. In fact, *New Youth* actively called for essays by women on women's issues (Figure 8). Chen Ying's strategic choice to deploy a man's first-person perspective allows her to assume the authoritative, instructive male voice to deliver her message to both female and, more crucially, male readers. Then the man's revelations regarding his beloved woman's struggles can be viewed as a deliberate attempt by a woman writer to compel men to rethink their advocacy for the "good wife, wise mother" ideal that emphasizes a woman's predestined role as the scientific mother whose sole duty is to raise the nation's future citizens. The narrator's experiences also urge male readers to imagine how the modern women they fall in love with will no longer exist as such with the onset of motherhood.[197]

[196] Although there were a lot of publications about women's issues during the Republican period, the *Wusi shiqi funü wenti wenxuan* 五四時期婦女問題文選 contains 64 essays about women's issues and the majority of the essays were written by well-known men (Lu Xun, Chen Yanbing 沈雁冰 (a.k.a. Mao Dun), Hu Shi, Wu Yu, Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao 李大釗 (1889-1927) and others) of that period. The *funü yundong lishi yanjiu shi* 婦女運動歷史研究室 of Zhonghua quanguo funü lianhehui 中華全國婦女聯合會 was in charge of the essay selections. To be clear, I do not have information on the gender ratio of that particular unit or know the gender of the person in charge of the group. But the selections, I would argue, mostly deliver male instructions for the women's movement without providing many women's voices. *Wusi shiqi funü wenti wenxuan* 五四時期婦女問題文選 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1981.)

[197] Abortion is not the only way for a fictional woman to salvage her modern womanhood and conjugal happiness. Another way is to leave the children for her maternal family to raise. Stories like Ding Ling's (丁玲 1904-1986) "Miss Sophie's Diary Part II" ("Shafei riji di'erbu" 莎菲日記第二部, 1933) and Lu Yin's "A Woman's Heart" ("Nüren de xin" 女人的心, 1933) show fictional women characters making such a choice so that they can travel with their lovers or pursue ambitions in the public sphere. Ding Ling's story is located in *Ding Ling wenji* 丁玲文集, 2 vols. (Shanghai: Yiwen shudian, 1936), 1: 62-68. Lu Yin's story is located in Le Qi 樂齊 ed., *Nüxing de rouqing yu ganshang: Lu Yin xiaoshuo jingping* 女性的柔情與感傷：盧隱小說精品 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 1997), 175-259.

女子問題

女子居國民之半數。在家庭中。尤負無上之責任。欲謀國家社會之改進。女子問題。固未可置諸等閑。而家族制度不良。造成社會不平等之象。非今日重大問題乎。欲解決此問題。無一不與女子有關。本誌於此問題。久欲有所論列。祇以社友多屬男子。越俎代言。虛不切當。敢求女同胞諸君。於「女子教育」「女子職業」「結婚」「離婚」「再醮」「姑媳同居」「獨身生活」「避妊」「女子參政」「法律上女子權利」等關於女子諸重大問題。任擇其一。各就所見。發表於本誌。一以徵女界之思想。一以示青年之指針。無計於文之長短優劣主張之新舊是非。本誌一律彙登。以容衆見。記者倘有一得之愚。將亦附驥尾以披露焉。特布此告。

新青年記者啓事

Figure 8 “Woman’s Issues” (“nüzi wenti” 女子問題) *Xing qingnian* 3, no. 1 (March 1917).

Women Are Nation Builders, Not their Children

Xie Bingying (謝冰瑩, 1906-2000) grew up in an orthodox Confucian family but ran away from arranged marriages four times and unbound her feet after enrolling in a girls’ school.[198] All her actions were in defiance of her controlling family, especially her

[198] The brief biography of Xie Bingying is based on her autobiography *Nübing zizhuan* 女兵自傳; Zhu Jiawen’s “Shachang Nübing—Xie Bingying” in *Zhuixun, piaobo de linghun*, 23-39; Louise Edwards, *Women Warriors and Wartime Spies of China*, 66-90; “Xie Bingying” in in Amy Dooling and Kristina Torgeson eds., *Writing Women in Modern China*, 253-256.

Confucian mother whom she described as "a faithful believer of feudalism."[199] She joined the Wuchang Central Political and Military Academy (Zhongyang junshi zhengzhi xuexiao 中央軍事政治學校) and enlisted in the army. She later joined the Northern Expedition (beifa 北伐 1926-1928) and during that time, she completed and published her *War Diary* (*Congjun riji* 從軍日記, 1928). The diary was praised for initiating a new women's writing style and for its revolutionary passion. Her later *Autobiography of a Woman Soldier* (*Nübing zizhuan* 女兵自傳, 1936) further divulged how the tension between her and her family is due to her reification of the May Fourth movement. Xie Bingying "demonstrated that women could achieve both literary (*wen*) and martial attributes (*wu*) qualities, when found together, were traditionally the twin preserves of men in their performance of ideal masculinity." [200] Unlike most Republican women writers who often were criticized by critics for frittering away their words on familial sentiments and focusing on trivial domestic matters, Xie Bingying never faced such criticism. Because of her experiences as a soldier, her concern for the nation often pervaded her stories. Many critics of her time praised her stories for their emphasis on public life and national issues, but they often overlooked the nuances in Xie Bingying's portrayals of femininity and masculinity.

[199] Xie Bingying, *Nübing zizhuan* 女兵自傳 (Taipei: Lihang shuju, 1965), 105.

[200] Louise Edwards, *Women Warriors and Wartime Spies of China*, 66.

Different from the previous two women writers' stories, "Abandonment" ("Paoqi" 拋棄, 1932)[201] is presented by an omniscient narrator. Although most of the time the topic of narration switches between the two main characters, a woman named Shanshan (珊珊) and a man named Ruoxing (若星), this narrator has the ability to access any characters' thoughts. This allows us to peep into both characters' interiorities to investigate their intimate thoughts and feelings on certain issues, such as how they comprehend their romantic relationship, how they react to an unexpected pregnancy and later how they handle a newborn. The story "Abandonment" allows us to look into Xie Bingying's portrayal of modern womanhood against the backdrop of a nation building discourse that emphasizes children as the hope of the Chinese nation.

Both Shanshan and Ruoxing are socialist revolutionaries who participate in labor movements, promote socialist agendas and recruit socialist revolutionaries while still making a living working in factories. Although they are the ideal revolutionary couple who are evenly matched in their abilities, there is a sense of gender discrimination against Shanshan when she and Ruoxing are evaluated by their comrades. Ruoxing is described as a hardworking, brave young man with a great disposition. He is relentless in his revolutionary work even as the environment becomes increasingly adverse. He is highly praised by his revolutionary comrades in arms and everyone hopes to work with him. And of course, he rejects all his female admirers and romantic pursuits because he wishes to dedicate himself to revolutionary work. Shanshan's comrades praise her for

[201] The Chinese text here is from Xie Bingying 謝冰瑩, "Paoqi" 拋棄 in Zhu Shaozhi 朱紹之 ed., *Dangdai shida nüzuojia jiazuo ji* 當代十大女作家佳作集 (Shanghai: Dafang shuju, 1937), 613-680. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Xie Bingying's "Abandonment" are my own.

being an active participant who is honest and responsible. Like Ruoxing, she also rejects romance to dedicate herself to revolutionary work. Still, when it comes to work assignments, her male comrades will not give her the chance to shine because they deem her too young, inexperienced and uneducated about socialist revolution. Their concerns about her abilities may be legitimate, but Shanshan is, in fact, a highly educated revolutionary woman who has completed her education at the Changsha First Girls' Normal School and later received military and political training while studying revolutionary theories at the C Military Academy for eight months.[202] Although it is not fair to assume that Ruoxing does not have credentials like Shanshan's, at least the story never reveals whether Ruoxing is educated or has received further revolutionary training. This indicates that able women like Shanshan need even more impressive credentials in order to prove that they are competent enough to perform their assigned work. Though the goal of the socialist revolution is to establish a new, fairer social order, Shanshan and Ruoxing's revolutionary branch still regards men as having higher stature than women. In fact, the reason why Ruoxing finds Shanshan attractive is because "she can endure hard work and doesn't have any of the irritating habits of women."[203] Although Ruoxing's revelation suggests that Shanshan has the stamina and working spirit of a man, it also implies that Ruoxing believes that men are inherently better than women, and moreover, that he can endure more hardships than any woman.

[202] Xie Bingying in Zhu Shaozhi ed., 625.

[203] Ibid., 627.

But is it really true that Ruoxing, though praised by almost all his comrades, is truly a persistent and ardent revolutionist who is able to endure much more hardship than any woman? The text makes the answer to this question quite clear. Ruoxing has flaws and shortcomings that are exposed again and again throughout the story. However, Ruoxing's imperfections do not humanize him or make him more relatable to the reader. These character flaws instead cast doubt on the judgement of this revolutionary organization and the sincerity of Ruoxing's actions and remarks. His flaws include hedonism, impetuousness, carelessness, and lack of empathy. The couple's pawn shop experience crystallizes Ruoxing's flaws. After hours of walking and being rejected by one pawn shop after another, Ruoxing and Shanshan become increasingly hungry and exhausted. Shanshan endures tremendous discomfort because of her pregnancy. When she expresses her feelings to Ruoxing, she does not receive any comforting words and is instead insulted or told tokeep walking. Ruoxing shows no sympathy towards his lover and even frequently makes her enter the pawn shops alone because he does not like to be ridiculed by pawnbrokers based on the items that they intend to pawn. Finally, Shanshan is able to negotiate with a pawnbroker for six *mao* for her items. Once they have the money in hand, Ruoxing immediately wants to use it for personal enjoyment such as going to movies or eating a luxurious meal. While his intent exposes his desire to indulge materialistic urges, it also showcases his reckless decision-making. In addition, his urge to dive into material pleasures reveals his inability to endure hardship, in contradiction with his self-assessment. Ruoxing's carelessness with money and questionable honesty foreshadow the preceding event in which he literally

loses the money and the later event in which he loses his newborn child and lies to Shanshan about it. In this sense, Ruoxing is less an ideal conjugal companion but more an antagonist to Shanshan in the story. Ruoxing and Shanshan's relationship might resemble a modern conjugal union on the surface, but in fact, it is not.

Though it may not be ideal, Shanshan's modern conjugal relationship, like those of other women characters that I have discussed in this section, signifies her modern personhood. However, unlike other woman characters, her conjugal relationship is not simply the outcome of her agency and autonomy but is an outgrowth of her transcendent devotion to her nation. This complex relationship between modern womanhood and the nation is clarified by the narrator of the story:

> They had only been going out for a little more than a month and decided to move in together. They had not written love letters to each other, seen a movie, had a fancy meal or walked in a park together. Their love is completely built on their revolutionary thought and rationalized affections. But they only lived together for about a week because Ruoxing had to move to Pudong (浦東) for work and Shanshan is a woman worker at Huxi gonyi textile factory. […] Since she started working in the textile factory, she has gained deeper understanding of the revolution.[204]

In this passage, it is obvious yet still quite difficult to fully understand what kind of love nourishes their conjugal relationship. Like the couple in Chen Ying's story, Shanshan and

[204] Xie Bingying, "Paoqi," 627.

Ruoxing also have shared interests in helping factory workers and establishing a socialist China. But unlike the couple in the previous story, Shanshan and Ruoxing do not express their love through "mundane" communication, touches or kisses. Their love is a supplement to their revolutionary thoughts. It is a spiritual kind of love. The term "rationalized affection" (*lizhihuale de qinggan* 理智化了的情感) further clarifies that the affection between the couple is measured instead of passionate. On one hand, Shanshan's extensive developments in her revolutionary thought when she is working in a textile factory indicate that her revolutionary ideology is in close correlation with her work. On the other, her fast development in revolutionary ideology also hints that her relationship with Ruoxing is thriving as well. This further suggests that Shanshan's conjugal relationship is not simply an indicator of her love for her nation but also another type of physical and emotional labor directed towards building a socialist China.[205] Shanshan's identity as a patriotic socialist revolutionist is fully realized. She, a radical revolutionary woman, is a nation builder. However, her spiritual and physical devotion to her nation, an essential principle of her modern womanhood, foreshadows the clash between her personhood and unexpected motherhood.

The As her romantic relationship rapidly heats up, Shanshan soon experiences "what people call the crystallization of love (*ai de jiejing* 愛的結晶) but [both Ruoxing and her] view it as a hindering thing unexpectly growing in her womb."[206] It is

[205] Jianmei Liu, *Revolution Plus Love: Literary history, Women's Bodies, and Thematic Repetition in Twentieth-Century Chinese Fiction* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 109.

[206] Xie Bingying, "Paoqi," 627.

interesting that Shanshan and Ruoxing both carry such negative views on their unborn child. In Shanshan's case, her revolutionary ideological growth and her revolutionary identity are closely linked with her work and campagains in the factories. This is why she regards the fetus in her womb as a hindrance; the changing pregnant body will gradually restrain her physical ability to participate in any revolutionary field work. Oscillating between revolutionary labor and domestic reproductive labor, Shanshan's identification as a revolutionary woman is constantly renegotiated and reconstructed throughout her pregnancy. Yet the fetus eventually limits her devotion to her nation and subverts her agency. That is to say, her reproductive body would sooner or later confine her to the domestic space to perform domestic labor. However, Shanshan is fully aware that it is her destined duty to reproduce and nurture the future citizens for the nation. Her simultaneous enchantment and disenchantment with her fetus, therefore, is both intriguing and complicated. For example, in her conversation with Ruoxing, she fantasizes that their child will become "a revolutionary fighter" (*geming zhanshi* 革命戰士) if they instill revolutionary thought in the child as it grows.[207] Shanshan fantasizes about the idea that both parents are responsible for childrearing but forgets that at least one or both parents have to work to financially support the family. Maybe this is the reason why, beyond that rare occasion, she often describes the fetus as a wild monster that is going to destroy her body and her image as a modern, radical revolutionary woman.

[207] Ibid., 663.

Ruoxing, on the other hand, will not undergo any physical changes that jeopardize his work. So why does he also regard the pregnancy as a hindrance and what does the fetus prevent him from doing? In comparsion to Shanshan's imagination of their child becoming a revolutionary fighter, Ruoxing's reaction to Shanshan's possible pregnancy is solemnly suggesting that they should either terminate the pregnancy or figure out how to raise the child.[208] Although his seriousness seemingly indicates an earnest attitude about the economic ramifications of Shanshan's pregnancy, his troublesome personal traits remind the reader to pay close attention to his attitude towards the child as the story continues. Once Shanshan gave birth to their child, he quickly attempts to convince Shanshan to send their child to an orphanage, speaking to her in his native dialect which only she can understand.[209] Obviously, Ruoxing is concerned about how others will judge him if they overhear how he is convincing his wife to give up their child. He pretentious behavior indicates that he is concerned more with how he will be perceived by others than the actual wellbeing of their child. Ruoxing's self-centeredness has fully emerged by this point of the story. With this understanding, his concerns about the economic ramifications of the birth of their child can only be interpretated as selfishness.

The story ends with Ruoxing lying to Shanshan, telling her that he had taken their newborn daughter to an orphanage when in fact he had lost her on the street. After losing their daughter, Ruoxing imagines that she is devoured by stray dogs and

[208] Ibid.

[209] Ibid., 669.

that he is being chased by many ghostly children. Despite his gruesome imagination and his later guilt, it is notable that Ruoxing, the man, is the one who acts and abandons their child.[210] I argue that Xie Bingying adopts a similar narrative strategy to the one Chen Ying deploys in "Woman" which is to appropriate the man's inherent authoritative role in Chinese cultural convention. However, by having Ruoxing "lose" the child, Xie Bingying further decimates the man's authoritative role and establishes the woman, in this case Shanshan, as the reasonable and trustworthy voice in the discussion about Chinese nation building. When Ruoxing accuses Shanshan of being emotional and having no real reason for wanting to keep their child, Shanshan responds:

> Because I love her, because I gave birth to her, and because I cannot bear to see that she is suppressed or killed by others. She is a piece of flesh from me; she is our revolutionary seed; she is the future citizen of the nation (*weilai shehui de zhuren* 未來社會的主人); I love her, I need to save her.[211]

Shanshan's outcry clearly delivers the essence of the dominant eugenics narrative that heightens the relationship between children and the Chinese nation. Her cry about saving her daughter is clearly an allusion to Lu Xun's "A Madman's Diary" as she mimics the madman's cry of "save the children." However, she is not a madwoman but a

[210] It is worth noting that Ruoxing also regards the fetus as a hindrance, much unlike the man in Chen Ying's "Woman" who tries his best to save the fetus from being aborted. Based on Ruoxing's attitude at the beginning of the story, it appears that the unexpected pregnancy blocks him from pursuing personal pleasures in lieu of his revolutionary devotions. So in a way, Ruoxing proves himself to be the heartless parent who discards his child.

[211] Xie Bingying, "Paoqi," 670.

trustworthy woman and mother figure who positions herself as the rescuer and producer of the future Chinese generation. Furthermore, she makes womanhood inseperatable from Chinese nationhood since the child is implicitly of the flesh of its mother but not its father. It is even more interesting that Shanshan does not deny man's role in Chinese nationhood, but suggests that he needs to earn it. The botanical metaphor of the child as a seed already indicates that children need to be sown and grown by their parents. The seed, in this case, is under the modifier of "our revolutionary." The accentuation of "our revolutionary" reflects Shanshan and Ruoxing's revolutionary identity and duty. Moreover, it suggests that the seed would be grown in a revolutionary family and showered with not only love but also revolutionary ideology. In this sense, childrearing is a responsibility for both parents.

However, Shanshan's adherence to the dominant ideological narrative is dismissed by none other than a man, and a respected revolutionary at that. When Ruoxing later returns home without the infant in his arms, he tells Shanshan "because you experience this great pain and great hardship, you will have a deeper understanding of what your responsibilities are. Women should not give birth to any babies until the new society is established."[212] On the surface, Ruoxing's words forthrightly abandon the developmental eugenics narrative and install women as the direct builders of the new nation. Yet because he is an untrustworthy character, the weight of his declaration is significantly reduced. Given the presence of fellow revolutionary comrades at their home, Ruoxing's remark is calibrated to gain respect from others and build his

[212] Ibid., 680.

reputation. Through irony, Xie Bingying mocks certain revolutionary men for being Janus-faced in their treatment of women and family, and questions their means of Chinese nation building.

Conclusion

This chapter begins by surveying the intellectual discourse of Nora. For most May Fourth radical women, the character of Nora from Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* represented their ideal new woman who would leave behind traditional gendered duties and seek personal fulfillment. Nora's withdrawal from her family is an allegory of a woman's agency and autonomy that soon became the very core of many female Republican radical's modern womanhood. Meanwhile there were governmental and ideological calls for modern women to serve as good wives and wise mothers, emphasizing women's responsibilities to fulfill their biological function and use their inherently nurturing nature to raise the nation's future citizens. The slogan "good wife, wise mother" echoes the dominant developmental eugenics narrative about the need to produce a generation of children who are biologically and spiritually advanced, so that China could defend itself against imperialist encroachment.

However, as my research has shown, Republican radical women did not completely reject the idea of good wife, wise mother because they comprehended wifehood and motherhood very differently. In their eyes, the modern version of motherhood, despite the application of modern childrearing knowledge, still required mothers to stay inside the domestic space and give up their personal ambitions, making

it very similar to traditional motherhood. Yet being a wife in a modern conjugal marriage could bring forth a woman's agency to choose whom she wants to wed; furthermore, such a marital relationship could feature gender equity and the wife could be free to pursue her career goals and personal interests. Therefore, modern conjugal marriage alone was seen as much more desirable than motherhood and became an intrinsic part of modern womanhood.

The fictional representations of motherhood or potential motherhood by Republican women writers depicts the imagined struggles of these fictional women who enjoy their modern womanhood but worry that their biological duties to bear children will force them to return to their traditional gender role. Lin Shuhua's story presents a deeply confused Feng'er who witnesses how a once spirited girl, Little Liu, becomes enervated and lifeless after having multiple children. Chen Ying's story depicts a man witnessing his female lover going through an identity crisis upon finding out that she is pregnant. Both these stories portray children not as the future of the Chinese nation but as menaces to modern womanhood. Xie Bingying's story presents Shanshan who continuously strives to work during her pregnancy to retain her revolutionary identity in a disadvantageous environment and recognizes the connection between children and the nation's future. However, her newborn child is taken away and abandoned by her husband who believes their most urgent duty is to rebuild China before raising China's future. Xie Bingying's story in some way rejects what I have termed the developmental eugenics narrative, the call to produce advanced Chinese generations to rebuild China.

We must keep in mind that in all these three stories, the women characters never question their modern conjugal marriages and continue to be steadfast modern wives even when they face unwelcome motherhood. The following chapter will examine fictional fatherhood in stories by Republican radical men, and explore how men think of their marriages when encountering day-to-day hardship.

CHAPTER IV

THE UNAPPEALING FUTURE: INDISPOSITION TO BECOMING A FAMILY MAN

With echoes of "survival of the fittest" resounding in the background, the May Fourth generation and their late-Qing predecessors became increasingly panicked over the China's apparent inability to fight against the colonial powers, especially after the nation's defeat in 1895's first Sino-Japanese War and the terms of the Treaty of Versailles (1919). China, in their eyes, was worse off than nations that were colonized by a single colonial power, but was instead a sub-colony (*ci zhimindi* 次殖民地) of many colonial powers. Incorporating the transnational concept of evolutionary eugenics into their purview of the Confucian family-state relationship, they believed that the traditional Chinese family system had to be reinvented in order to build a new China. Therefore, the May Fourth radicals advocated for family revolution, promoting the western-style free love marriage as the seamless replacement for traditional marriage. They believed that this imagined modern conjugal family would produce a new generation of Chinese children who were physically and spiritually advanced and who could compete against or even defeat colonial powers and lead China to its glorious future. In contrast to the traditional Chinese cultural view of children, [213] these imagined

[213] For the Confucian view of children and family, see Ping-Chen Hsiung, "Children and Childhood in Traditional China" in her *A Tender Voyage: Children and Childhood in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), Keith Knapp, "Extended Families and the Triumph of Confucianism" in his *Selfless Offspring: Filial Children and Social order in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005). For early twenty century views on children, see Catherine E. Pease, "Remembering the Taste of Melons: Modern Chinese Stories of Childhood" in Anne Behnke Kinney, ed., *Chinese Views of Childhood*; Jon L. Saari *Legacies of Childhood:*

child saviors were the embodiment of the forward-moving ideological force of Chinese nation building.

Although the concept of children was fused with political consciousness, children were often presented as the political unconscious in May Fourth radicals' fiction. For example, Lu Xun's "A Madman's Diary" portrays a frightening cannibal village and accentuates the narrator's plea to save the children. The depictions of a cannibal family and village successfully show how flesh-eating demons are created through family education and Confucian learning.[214] The narrator's outcry effectively aligns children with the nation's future, yet children are otherwise minor characters who are rarely mentioned elsewhere in the story. Lu Xun's story is thus emblematic of a paradoxical, ambivalent narrative mode in which children stand in for the concepts of family revolution and national salvation. Furthermore, when the May Fourth radicals associated children with China's future, they failed to consider that the future that they so eagerly anticipated was not fully in their control, but rather in the hands of the children whom they themselves must raise. This begs the question of whether these radicals willingly surrendered themselves to the actual domestic tasks of raising the generation that could deliver the imagined national future.

Growing up Chinese in a Time of Crisis 1890-1920; Andrew F. Jones, "Introduction" and "The Child as History in Republican China: A Discourse on Development" in his *Developmental Fairy Tales: Evolutionary Thinking and Modern Chinese Culture*.

[214] The reading here is based on the madman's description of learning from his older brother and the "imagined" cannibalistic instructional texts and meanings in the classics.

What would happen to a conjugal family when a child arrived?[215] Would this conjugal family successfully transform into the imagined ideal family and produce enhanced children for the cause of China's future? In the previous chapter, I have discussed fictional stories that were written by female writers. Although the female protagonist in those stories regard motherhood as a setback in their journey to modern womanhood, they acknowledge their ambiguous feelings of affection towards the idea of becoming mothers. These stories suggest inevitable lifestyle changes for both men and women characters even when their children are still embryos. Through the pens of female writers, men in these stories do not need or show the willingness to shoulder the responsibilities of childrearing but they, in some elusive ways, also hesitate to embrace their forthcoming fatherhood.

The developmental eugenics narrative thus engages the child's ideological significance in the May Fourth era while instigating a growing tension in the ideal modern family. This chapter will focus on two leading May Fourth radicals, Lu Xun and Hu Shi, and their depictions of fictional family men. It examines how the developmental eugenics narrative is constituted in their stories. In Hu Shi's "One Question" ("Yige wenti" 一個問題, 1919), as well as Lu Xun's "A Happy Family—After the style of Xu Qinwen" ("Xingfu de jiating—ni Xu Qinwen" 幸福的家庭—擬許欽文, 1924) and "Regret For the Past—Juansheng's note" ("Shangshi—Juansheng de shouji" 傷逝—涓生的手記, 1925), the male characters, like their modern female counterparts, also

[215] In my research, I have defined a conjugal marriage/family as a free love companionship that consists of a man and woman. A modern family is the expansion of the previous that includes both parents and children.

challenge the erosion of their modern personhood when they step into the realm of parenthood. I argue that the men in these stories are constrained by their new integral obligations, which necessitate compromises that they do not want to make for the modern small family. Unlike the fictional women, who are frequently depicted by May Fourth writers as biologically trapped in traditional domestic roles when they have children, these imagined men become increasing agitated when they are confined to a new role that requires them to take on sole economic responsibility for their families. Like their female partners, the men are depicted as enjoying their conjugal relationships before a child arrives. However, unlike the women, who still uphold the conjugal relationship as an essential part of their modern personhood and try to maintain it despite the challenges of parenthood, the men often seek complete escape. Their negative experience of fatherhood blights their memories of conjugal happiness. They frequently step back and assess the conjugal relationship in the light of fatherhood, focusing on their loss of individual freedom and personhood. Their reactions in these stories suggest that May Fourth radical men were ambivalent toward their modern roles as family men even as they touted family revolution and children as the nation's future.

One Question: What Is the Purpose of Man?

The short story "One Question" by Hu Shi was first published in *The Weekly Review* in July 1919.[216] The story features first-person narration but there are two narrators in the story. The initial narrator "I" is Xiaoshan (小山) who returns to Beijing and runs into his high school classmate, Zhu Ziping (朱子平), at a park. The two engage in a brief conversation and Ziping expresses his desire to visit Xiaoshan, who holds a degree in philosophy, the next day to discuss a question on the outlook on life that has been troubling him for a while. The second part of the story is Xiaoshan's transcription of Ziping's story. In this part of the story, the role of narrator switches from Xiaoshan to Ziping as Ziping begins to recount his life journey after graduation from high school. This eventually leads to his ensuing question regarding the purpose of being a man.[217] This story reveals a man's frustration about devoting every moment of his time to his family, his modern responsibility. Such a revelation only highlights an ideological stalemate that a modern man faces once he becomes a father and establishes his ideal modern family.

The story begins with Xiaoshan leisurely browsing through the headlines of a newspaper at a park in Beijing. As he discloses that he is rather disinterested in the current political and military events, he sees a family of four, two parents and their children, walking towards his direction. He finds the man uncannily familiar but can not recall who he might be so he gives the man a second look.

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[216] Hu Shi 胡適, "Yige wenti" 一個問題, in *HSWC*, 1:805-812. Also in *The Weekly Review* 每週評論 *Meizhou pinglun*, no. 32 (July 27, 1919).

[217] The reasons of translating the word *ren* as man, a gendered term, will be discussed in the later part of this section.

> […] The man is carrying a young child and the woman is holding a hand of a three- or four-year old toddler. Somehow, I find the man rather familiar, so I carefully observe him. He wears a very old official gown and his face looks frayed. He hunches a little but because he is carrying a child, he appears much more hunchbacked.[218]

It is interesting that Xiaoshan concentrates on the man's overall appearance instead of zooming in on the man's face to find out how he might know the man. Based on the physical description, it is clear that the man is in his declining years. His overly arched back, caused by the weight of the child in his arms, seemingly suggests that the child is literally and figuratively dragging the man down. The man's status as a family man is presumed by the presence of a woman and additional child. Although the man's face and expressions could not be viewed from the passage, he is clearly an aging and defeated man and moreover a lifeless father. All these visual descriptions cement an image of a distressed family man.

This seemingly exhausted man is none other than Xiaoshan's close friend, Ziping, from high school. In contrast to Xiaoshan's uncertainty, Ziping has no problem identifying Xiaoshan right away. This information compels the readers to re-examine their initial interaction to determine why Ziping can recognize Xiaoshan without difficulty but not the other way around.

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[218] Original Text: "男的抱着一個小孩子，女的手裡牽着一個三四歲的孩子。我覺得那男的好生面善，仔細打量他，見他穿一件很舊的官紗長衫，面上很有老態，背脊微有點彎，因為抱着孩子，更顯出曲背的樣子。" Hu Shi, *HSWC*, 1:805. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Hu Shi's "One Question" are my own.

> [The man] sees me and looks at me as well. I am quite hesitant (bugan 不敢) to greet them, so they simply walk past me. But after a few steps, he gives the infant to the woman and walks toward me. "Aren't you Xiaoshan?" he asks. "Yes, I am. Aren't you Zhu Ziping? I was rather hesitant about greeting you [at first]!" I reply. "Yes, I am Ziping and we haven't seen each other for eight or nine years. You are still in your prime, but I am to my surprise becoming an old man. I'm not surprised that you are hesitant (*bugan* 不敢) to say hi to me."[219]

The casualness with which Ziping addresses Xiaoshan by his first name without any other formal greetings suggests that the two were once close friends several years ago. It also underlines that Ziping is confident that the person with whom he converses is Xiaoshan. In contrast to Ziping's casual greetings, Xiaoshan acquits himself rather circumspectly by addressing Ziping by his full name. Xiaoshan's cautious response suggests that he is very much in doubt about the man's identity even after hearing the man's voice while his attentiveness to Ziping also discloses the social relationship between them. For example, Xiaoshan confesses that he was rather hesitant about greeting Ziping at first. His attentiveness reveals that he could be socially inferior to Ziping, most likely the younger of the two.[220] In this case, it would be Xiaoshan's due

[219] Original text: "他看見我，也仔細打量。我不敢招呼，他們就過去了。走過去幾步，他把小孩子交給那女的，他重又回來，向我道，「你不是小山嗎？」我說，「正是。你不是朱子平嗎？我幾乎不敢認你了！」他說，「我是子平，我們八九年不見，你還是壯年，我竟成了老人了，怪不得你不敢招呼我」。" Ibid., 805.

[220] The story later reveals that Ziping is one year older than Xiaoshan. (Ibid., 1:806)

diligence to greet Ziping first. So, when Xiaoshan is rather hesitant (*bugan* which literally means "not brave enough") to greet Ziping at once, his hesitation displays his social anxiety, both wanting to act properly and fearing possible embarrassment if he mistakenly addresses the wrong person. His inability to follow social protocol is triggered by Ziping's overly aged appearance.

In the same conversation, Ziping reveals that he is quite surprised to find out that he is becoming an "old man" (laoren 老人) in comparison to Xiaoshan's "vigorous age" (zhuangnian 壯年). Ziping's reaction to Xiaoshan's appearance reveals that he consciously compares himself with Xiaoshan, and envies Xiaoshan's vigor. Furthermore, Ziping's words reveal that he was unaware of his dotage until he ran into Xiaoshan. This suggests that Ziping is not an outlier in his social group. That is to say, Ziping's physical appearance is in correlation with his age among the people with whom he normally associates. In this case, Xiaoshan's vigorous appearance seemingly suggests there is something different about him, something that allows him to retain his youthfulness. Nevertheless, a hint of remorse suffuses Ziping's words.

As their brief conversation continues, Ziping unintentionally shares that he could be mentally unstable: "[Xiaoshan], you study philosophy so I have a question for you. I have asked this same question to several people but they all said that I was out of my mind…"[221] Although it is difficult to judge whether Ziping has actually gone mad without knowing what the question is, it is probable that his frail physique reflects his mental

[221] Original text: "你是學哲學的人，我有個問題要來請教你，我問過多少人，他們都說我有神經病…" Ibid., 805.

instability. The story later reveals that Ziping, the father, is experiencing deterioration of his physical and mental health due to his fatherly responsibilities.

Since fatherhood is causing Ziping to age rapidly in terms of both physical and mental condition, it is interesting to look into his life, especially his marital life, before he became a father. As the two friends meet the next day, Ziping does not immediately ask Xiaoshan "the question," but shares his personal story from after high school. The following passage is Ziping's portrayal of his marriage:

> "To be honest with you, the first year of our married life was really joyful. My wife is a very gentle woman… I tutored at Mr. Chen's home in the morning and taught at the women's normal college in the afternoon; she was teaching at the elementary school. [When we] returned home in the evening, we would cook a couple hometown dishes, dine together and talk about our day. Afterwards, I worked on my students' reports and she accompanied me while tending to some needle work. From time to time, I stayed up late to write some pieces for the newspaper to make some extra money. But she was worried that I would over-exhaust myself, so she would put away the ink and paper, turn off the light by twelve o'clock midnight, and tell me to rest."[222]

[222] Original text: "我老實對你說，新婚的第一年，的確是很有樂趣的生活。我的內人，人極溫和…白天我上陳家教書，下午到女師範教書，他到蒙養院教書。晚上回家，我們自己做兩樣家鄉小菜，吃了晚飯，閒談一會，我改我的卷子，他陪我坐着做點針線。我有時做點文字賣給報館，有時寫到夜深才睡。他怕我身體過勞，每晚到了十二點鐘，他把我的墨盒紙筆都收了去，吹滅了燈，不許我再寫了。" Ibid., 809. I translate "我改我的卷子" to "I worked on the students' reports" because Ziping is a teacher. Although the phrase could also be

Although cooking, eating and chatting are simple, quotidian activities, the everydayness reveals the happiness of a married couple who truly enjoyed each other's company after a long day of work. The lifestyle of the married couple suggests that the couple have ventured across the gendered boundaries of a traditional marriage. For instance, the wife is an educator, a modern career woman, who teaches at a public elementary school instead of being a stay-at-home housewife. This means she, like her educator husband, also shoulders the family financial responsibilities with her salary. Meanwhile, Ziping participates in certain domestic chores, such as cooking. Even though gender equality is not explicitly emphasized in the passage, the married couple's lifestyle demonstrates an established sense of equality and mutual care. Moreover, the lack of description of Ziping's parents suggest that Ziping and his wife set up their family in the style of a conjugal family instead of the traditional multi-generational family. Ziping's marriage is unquestionably an ideal modern marriage in which the married couple are happily in love, work as partners to share their family economic burden, and also enjoy individual freedom to pursue their own career ambitions.

It is actually surprising to find out that Ziping's apparently modern conjugal marriage was not a free love marriage but an arranged one. This marriage was arranged by Ziping's employer, Mr. Chen, who hired Ziping to tutor his sons and was also Ziping's high school teacher. The social and financial dynamics between Mr. Chen and Ziping clearly suggest that Mr. Chen is a figure of authority, which makes it complicated and

translated to "I worked on my writing drafts," it does not make much sense for Ziping to deploy the time frequency modifier "sometimes" to address his additional cash earning work.

difficult for Ziping to turn down a marriage arranged by Mr. Chen. In addition to Mr. Chen's persuasion, Ziping had been facing increasing pressure to marry from his mother for several years. Interestingly, both Mr. Chen and Ziping's mother exert themselves to persuade Zipping to accept the arranged marriage to fulfill his filial obligation, as Ziping, the only male descendant of his family, should produce male offspring to carry on the family bloodline. Although filial piety is one of the core values in Chinese culture, I argue that Ziping's willingness to concede to the proposed arranged marriage was merely under the pretense of filial piety, as he had neglected his mother's concerns and discontent for quite some time.

In the eyes of the May Fourth generation, arranged marriage and filial piety were generally regarded as vile practices. Given this view, it is quite fascinating that Hu Shi creates a fictional character who is educated but finds an arranged marriage appealing enough to disregard the critical radical beliefs. Based on Mr. Chen's account, the bride, who was finishing her education at the time, had secured a position at a local elementary school. This shows that the bride is a modern woman who is educated and able to support herself financially through her profession. On the other hand, her profession as an elementary school teacher indicates that her specialty is childhood education, which conforms to the prevalent view that women's education should be in service of childrearing. In other words, she has the training to become a scientific mother when her time arrives. Given these qualities, she is the perfect bride for Ziping to wed because she is the embodiment of the quintessential modern woman in the

modern man's imagination during that period.[223] And luckily, this arranged marriage works amazingly well for the couple. This suggests the compatibility of a couple, in this case both of whom are educated professionals, can organically engender mutual affection between them, despite the intervention of undesirable arranged marriage practices. Furthermore, it seems that Hu Shi suggests an alternative way to configure a modern family that actually incorporates traditional practices but involves somewhat less coercion. Whether Hu Shi knowingly suggests this or not, his portrayal of the conjugal family appears to be a negotiation between radical beliefs and traditional practices. At the same time, this fictional blissful arranged marriage questions whether love is a prerequisite for a successful modern marriage and shows that there can be happy arranged marriages as well.

[223] Susan Glosser points out that "[…] New Cultural family reformers focused on restructured women's roles in the family with an eye toward their own individual fulfillment and happiness. If men were to live the lives they wanted, if they were to redefine themselves and their nation, then they had first to redefine their families. Women became objects of reform because of the implicit expectation that they should make satisfactory companions for their modern husbands." (See Susan L. Glosser, *Chinese Vision of Family and State, 1915*-1953, 11.) Wang Zheng also argues that "Talking about women's emancipation was an easy way to express such an identification. Men who claimed to be progressive all jumped on the bandwagon of women's emancipation. The May Fourth era witnessed unparalleled intellectual agitation for women's emancipation. A Chinese feminist movement emerged as the result of the inclusion of women in men's pursuit of a 'Chinese Enlightenment.'" See Wang Zheng, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment: Oral and Textual Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 13. Other scholars also come to similar conclusions. For how Republican modern men reconstructed their modern masculinity by reconfiguring women into modern beings, see Ono Kazuko "Casting off the Shackles of the Family" in Ono Kazuko, Joshua Fogel, ed., *Chinese Women in a Century of Revolution, 1850-1950*; Vera Schwarcz, "The May Fourth Enlightenment" in her *The Chinese Enlightenment*; Shuei-may Chang, introduction to "Casting Off the Shackles of Family: Ibsen's Nora Character in Modern Chinese Literature, 1918-1942" (PhD Diss., University of Illinois, 1994).

Despite the initial happiness Ziping recounts from early in his marriage, he does not fit the image of a happily married man at the beginning of the story, but rather has become something quite opposite. The contrast between a happy married man and a defeated one urges the readers to pay attention to Ziping's story of what happened after the inaugural year. The turning point in Ziping's marital life was his wife's multiple pregnancies. Although Ziping describes how his mother was overjoyed when hearing the news of their firstborn, he does not express any excitement or joy at becoming a father. In fact, he dwells on the family financial burdens again and again as he recounts each pregnancy. For instance, after his wife gave birth to their first child, they had to hire a wet nurse due to her low milk supply. Although they expected the temporary suspension of the wife's paycheck because of the necessary maternity leave, he did not expect the extra cost of hiring a wet nurse. This might have been the first time that Ziping actually felt some kind of financial pressure in his life.[224] Eventually, the wife goes back to work to ease the financial pressure, but she soon becomes pregnant with their second child. This time, the family cannot afford to hire a wet nurse, which leads to the death of the newborn. The death of their second child takes a toll on the wife's overall health and ultimately leads her to resign from work because of her excessive sick leave. Her resignation, as Ziping states, comes as a crushing blow because it puts their family into an even more precarious economic state. When he continues on to his wife's third pregnancy, he hardly talks about the mother and child any more but focuses on the

[224] My speculation here is based on the facts that Ziping quickly found some well-paid positions after high school, and his conjugal family was, for a while, a dual income family.

pressure and difficulties that he experiences as the sole bread winner of the family. Even though Ziping never directly blames the family financial situation on the children, his story about his wife's three pregnancies clearly links the family financial crisis with the arrival of their children. From Ziping's viewpoint, children bring burdens to their family instead of joy.

At this point, Ziping shares that he is in extreme distress due to mounting financial pressure. His frustration about his family suggests his ideal conjugal family fails to transform into an ideal modern family when children arrive. The presence of children drastically alters Ziping's home from a space of bliss to a place of distress. In the developmental eugenics narrative, children are the forward-moving ideological force for China's development. The transformation of Ziping's household showcases that even an ideal conjugal family cannot keep up with the ideological call to modify the home space to accommodate nation building. This suggests that the conjugal family and modern family, although both working for China's modernization, travel towards the same goal at different paces. Since the ideal modern family is regarded as the true building block for China's modernization, an element of a national time is built into the concept. Yet Ziping's story suggests not all the members of the modern family can move at this national pace with ease. Time is scripted in Ziping's daily life:

> Every day I wake up at 5 o'clock but at 6:30 during the winter. After lunch, I usually take a half hour nap at the desk then continue working to the middle of the night. What am I busy working for? I need to eat, my

> wife needs to eat, and moreover, [we] need to feed our children. This is exactly what I'm busy for! [225]

The noticeable time references and constant action in this short paragraph deliver a sense of haste. Ziping does not have time to rest and is always busy working in order to put food on the table for his family, but his exasperation suggests he is always behind. Working is no longer for his individual fulfilment but an obligation that he needs to accomplish every day. Even eating, a quotidian activity and once emblematic of conjugal happiness, is now representative of daily struggle. Children, in Ziping's description, do not simply consume food; they also sap their parents' energy because they need to be fed. His words disclose his frustration towards his children but he continues placing them as his primary obligation. Ziping's household lays out how the modern family can exist due to obligation, to take care of children, rather than for the sake of love. The obligation to raise and shelter his family outweighs individual aspirations. Furthermore, if we examine Ziping's revelation through the lens of the developmental eugenics narrative, it appears that Ziping seemingly rejects his modern responsibility to raise the children, the nation's future, which negates the nation-building purpose of the ideal modern family.

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[225] Original text: "我每天五點鐘起來，——冬天六點半起來——午飯後靠着桌子偷睡半個鐘頭，一直忙到夜深半夜後。忙的是什麼呢？我要吃飯，老婆要吃飯，還要餵小孩子吃飯——所忙的不過為了這一件事！" *HSWC*, 1:811. Because of the nature of Chinese syntax, the subject can sometimes be omitted. In the original text there is no subject in the sentence of "need to feed our children."

Furthermore, Ziping's modern family also displays the unavoidable financial burdens that parents face once their children are born. The exhausted man, Ziping, particularly demonstrates the financial burdens that a man will need to carry when his wife returns to the domestic sphere upon becoming a stay-at-home mother. [226] Ziping also expresses that several of his colleagues have the same problem. The apparent universality of his predicament drives him to ponder the "One Question," the purpose of being *ren* (人). The Chinese term, *ren*, during the May Fourth era was frequently associated with the notion of an individual, in the sense of individualism. Yet it is also probable that Ziping's usage of *ren* reflects his gender identity as a man. However, these two translation choices lead to two very different questions: one asks whether an individual can truly achieve his or her purpose when also saddled with the task of caring for family, and the other asks whether the task of caring for a family is suitable for men, specifically.

It is instructive to examine Hu Shi's story in its historical context, especially against the backdrop of the Nora phenomenon in China. As I have discussed in the previous chapters, the initial Chinese understanding of *A Doll's House* disregarded the significance of Nora's gender and focused on the theme of individual autonomy and agency. The story was likened to the quest of Chinese men and women to become modern individuals. It is possible that the character of Ziping, who lacks autonomy and

[226] About ten years later, Chen Xuezhao elaborated upon similar concerns about the family economic situation when a woman becomes a mother. See Chapter III.

agency due to domestic responsibilities, is an echo of Nora.[227] In this sense, one might argue that Ziping should act like Nora and leave his family behind in order to discover his individual purpose. Yet Hu Shi's fictional man, Ziping, does not take such drastic action in the story.

Instead of translating *ren* into the gender-neutral term "individual," as might fit the historical context, I argue that "a man" is a more appropriate translation in this story. Throughout the story, Ziping's complaints about taking care of his wife and children and financial burdens indicate that his question about the purpose of being an individual is motivated by his modern role as a husband and a father in a modern family, without the financial and childrearing support of a traditional multi-generation family. Ziping's question about the purpose of being *ren* is arguably a gendered question because it reveals not only his frustration about being a modern man but also his desire to do something that he deems more meaningful as a man who directly connects with the public sphere.

Whether or not it is Hu Shi's intention to use the fictional Ziping to invoke the notion of individualism, Ziping's frustration about being entrapped by domestic affairs might be reminiscent of Nora's story, but Ziping's story does not invoke any sense of individualism as Nora's fight for individual autonomy. One of the reasons Ziping's struggle can only be interpreted through the lens of gender is that, unlike Nora who

[227] Although Ziping has the opportunity to go to work and enter the wider social sphere, the purpose of working, for him, is to support his family. In Ziping's case, he regards work as a part of his domestic responsibility and this makes him continue to feel domestic pressure when he works. Therefore, he feels entrapped in the domestic space even though he is physically outside the domestic confinement.

defies patriarchal authority, Ziping defies nothing. In the developmental eugenics narrative, it is the parent's sacred duty to care for and shelter their children, the nation's future. In addition, Ziping's family is the imagined ideal modern family consisting of modern educated parents and their children, a building block for new China. The domestic duties that Ziping wants to escape are not only intrinsic parts of his identity as a modern man, but also national matters. [228] As a matter of fact, attending all these domestic affairs was his sole purpose of becoming a modern family man. All these forbid Ziping from shutting the door and leaving his family behind.

The father character of Hu Shi's creation reminisces on the conjugal bliss he enjoyed before becoming a father and facing daunting domestic responsibilities. Unlike how many mother characters written by women writers are afraid of losing their modern womanhood due to biological imperatives, Hu Shi's fictional father regrets losing his modern manhood after becoming a father because of social pressure to shoulder domestic responsibilities for a modern family. Following this logic, Ziping envies not only Xiaoshan's vigorous appearance but also his freedom as a bachelor.[229] Leaving the "One Question" unanswered, the story employs an ambivalent narrative

[228] For essays that address the issue of children and their future wellbeing, see Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940), "Xinjiaoyu yu jiujiaoyu zhi qidian" 新教育與舊教育之歧點 in *Xin qingnian* 5, no. 1 (July 15, 1918); Zhang Yaoxiang 張耀翔 (1893-1964), "Lun wuguo fumu zhi zhuanheng" 論吾國父母之專橫 in *Xin qingnian* 5, no. 6 (December 15, 1918); Chen Jianshi 沈兼士, "Ertong gongyu" 兒童公育 in *Xin qingnian* 6, no. 6 (November 1, 1919). All the essays are in 原刊本影印新青年 Genkapon ēin shinsēnen, vol. 5 & 6.

[229] Xiaoshan's single status is assumed but not specified in the story.

mode in response to the inculcated developmental eugenics narrative in the midst of Chinese nation building.

Regrets about Being in a Relationship and Forming a Family

If Hu Shi's story delineates a man's perplexity after becoming a father, then Lu Xun's story "Regret for the Past" lays out another dimension of the modern man's ambivalence about committing to a relationship. The story debuted in Lu Xun's short story collection *Wandering* (*Panghuang* 彷徨, 1926). It features first person narration and the narrator "I" is a young man named Juansheng (涓生). Strictly speaking, the story takes the form of an entry in Juansheng's journal in which he details his relationship with a woman named Zijun (子君). Juansheng's motivation to write the entry is suspicious, even though the entry begins with a remorseful statement: "I want to try, if I possibly can, to record my regrets and grief, for Zijun, and for myself."[230] The opening statement quickly spills out into a tale explaining the tragic outcome of their relationship, in which Juansheng 's heartbreak and melancholy are strikingly displayed. By pointing out that the purpose of the entry is for both Zijun and himself, Juansheng craftily proffers his apologies to Zijun while downplaying his guilt in their tragic relationship. Does his guilt originate in the moment he hears about Zijun's death? Or

[230] Lu Xun, "Shangshi" in *LXQJ*, 2:113-134: 113. The translation is based on Julia Lovell's translation in "In Memoriam" in *Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun* (*RSAO*) (New York: Penguin Group, 2009), 254-72: 254, and Yang Xianyi and Dai Naiyi's translation of "Regret for The Past" in *The New-Year Sacrifice and Other Stories* (*NYSO*) (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002), 310-55: 310.

does her death reignite his guilty conscience, reminding him of when he broke up with her? In either case, Juansheng's guilt encapsulates not only his feelings towards Zijun but also his memories about their relationship at different stages, and especially what went wrong in their relationship.

Hu Shi's earlier story brings out the concept of national time within the developmental eugenics narrative and how the arrival of children disrupts the former equilibrium of a conjugal family by moving it onto the course of national time. Lu Xun's "Regret for the Past," I argue, brings out the concept of home space within the developmental eugenics narrative and how it is configured and reconfigured through the developments of a couple's relationship. It shows how a home of an ideal conjugal family at the beginning of the relationship later becomes a cage, a space for punishment, through a man's perception of his romantic relationship. Moreover, it reveals how a modern radical man does not fully understand modern family ideology and the role that he must play even though he champions and desires a modern family.

Generally speaking, the developmental eugenics narrative is oriented around the evolutionary thinking and inclination to produce better children for China's future. As the May Fourth radicals claimed that "Chinese society lacked creativity and energy because the joint family 'buried alive' countless numbers of young people and wasted their talents,"[231] a modern family had to be in place in order to secure the wellbeing of

[231] Susan L. Glosser, "'The Truths I have Learned': Nationalism, Family Reform, and Male Identity in China's New Culture Movement, 1915-1923" in Susan Brownell and Jeffry N. Wasserstrom, ed., *Chinese Femininities Chinese Masculinities: A Reader* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 121.

future generation. Yet, in order to build a modern family, the radicals had to emancipate themselves from the traditional family formation. One of the reasons was the traditional Chinese marriage was arranged by the parents of the future groom and bride, and in many instances the engaged couple did not know each other. By not conforming to their parents' marriage arrangements and seeking their own marriages, radicals not only rejected parental authority but also procured their individual autonomy and agency. Thus, the modern conjugal marriage, a free love companionship that spurned the traditional jointed family structure and functioned as an independent unit, became the desired ideal course for many May Fourth radicals as they declared their individualism.

Juansheng's early entry reveals nostalgic memories of his time with Zijun when he was completely in love with her and actively pursued her:

> We would spend a moment silently gazing at each other, then my shabby room would echo with the sound of my own voice: discoursing on the dictatorship of the Chinese family, on the need to sweep away tradition, on the equality of the sexes, Ibsen […] And she would smile and nod, her eyes shining with childish excitement. I'd pinned to the wall a copperplate engraving of a bust of Shelley looking at his most handsome, torn from a magazine. When I showed it to her, she glanced at it, then looked down, as if embarrassed. I guessed, at such moments, that Zijun probably had not yet freed herself of the shackles of tradition…[232]

[232] For original text, see *LXQJ*, 2:114. English translation is modified from *RSAO*, 255.

It is not difficult to spot the topics of family revolution, gender equality, and Ibsen's plays which prompted the May Fourth generation to seek their independence, leave their traditional family behind, and establish their own modern lifestyles. While the passage portrays an exuberant Juansheng shouting out radical ideals on social issues and Zijun's childlike sparkling eyes radiating admiration, it also renders a moment of enchantment between them. However, Zijun's unusual silence actually foreshadows the eventual outcome of their relationship. With the room filled with his own voice, Juansheng is obviously not bothered by Zijun's silence. This suggests that Juansheng not only is attracted to a traditional, docile woman but also enjoys the power dynamics in a traditional relationship. These power dynamics are also displayed in Juansheng's instructive role when the couple interact with each other. What will happen to their relationship if and when Zijun begins to talk?

The same passage also discloses that their conversation takes place in Juansheng's "shabby room," though the physical shabbiness of the space does not dampen the mood. With the May Fourth radical rhetoric in the air, and a picture of the British radical Romantic poet P. B. Shelley (1792-1822) on the wall, the room is spiritually rich. Furthermore, Zijun's transgression as an unwed woman alone with a man to whom she is not related by marriage or blood saturates the space with even more radical energy. In Juansheng's room, her seemingly docile silence radiates a radical woman's stillness that transcends the traditional cultural gender boundary. All in all, Juansheng gets caught up in the atmosphere and intensity of the moment; through the dynamics of their discussion, his shabby room becomes a space filled with radical spirit

and passion which Juansheng mistakes for romantic affection, free love, for Zijun. Their relationship, therefore, is based on an ideal of modern conjugal love which transforms a shabby room into a modern home and unlikely companions into a modern couple.

As Juansheng's journal continues, it is difficult not to notice that Juansheng only addresses Zijun's family problem but never his own, and this might indicate that he has left his traditional family behind. Then the instructive role he plays when he is with Zijun suggests that he is both teaching and encouraging Zijun to leave her own traditional family behind. Perhaps his intentions are self-serving--a modern radical man, as he perceives himself, needs a modern radical woman in order to build a modern family. Having a modern radical woman as his companion raises his status, cementing his own radical and modern identity within his social circle.[233] It is not surprising to see his overt joy when Zijun shouts "I belong to myself! No one else has any right over me!" at her father and uncle to declare her autonomy and agency as a modern individual. Zijun's action against her father, the patriarchal authority, parallels the generalized Chinese understanding of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*—Nora does not fight against her husband for her autonomy and agency for the sake of gender equality, but simply fights against patriarchal authority. In that enchanted moment, Juansheng knows that Zijun has

[233] When May Fourth intellectual men tried to align themselves with modernity to build a modern China, they had to establish their own modern families in the process. Since the foundation of a modern small family consisted of a man and a woman, women's roles inevitably needed to be reinvented in order to complement those of modern men. Following this logic, Juansheng's romantic interest in Zijun is built upon his desire to be a modern man. Also for more on modern men and their new modern families, see Susan L. Glosser, *Chinese Vision of Family and State, 1915-1953,* 10-11, 49-50; Judith Stacey, *Patriarchy and Socialist Revolution in China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 72-76; Wang Zheng, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment*, 16-17.

become a radical modern woman and his desire for her as his modern companion increases.

However, Juansheng's eagerness to establish his own "hopeful little small family" (满怀希望的小小家庭)" blinds him from the fact that he is driven by his sheer desire to execute the ideological calls for family revolution as an ideologue rather than by true love.[234] The wording of "hopeful little small family" resonates with the notion of family revolution within in the developmental eugenics narrative, that a modern family will shelter and raise a new generation of children, the hope for the Chinese nation. By emphasizing the notion of hope, Juansheng's imagined little small family is filled with political ideology, much like his shabby room filled with radical rhetoric. Although he manages to establish a modern family pro forma, Juansheng's family might lack the element of love. This issue, plus the fact that Juansheng and Zijun's relationship featured the uneven power dynamics of a teacher-pupil relationship in its incipient stage, are harbingers of their tragic end. There are also other signs in their early relationship that Juansheng begins noticing in the hindsight that suggest that he and Zijun are not the right match. After the two move in together, Juansheng grows disenchanted with Zijun. In his journal entry, Juansheng reflects:

> I gradually came to read her body and soul. Within three weeks, I felt I had an even deeper understanding of her: things I had thought I understood I now realized had been barriers, keeping us apart.[235]

[234] For original text, see *LXQJ*, 2:113.
[235] For original text, see *LXQJ*, 2:117-8. For translation, see *RSAO*, 258.

This passage invites the possible reading that Juansheng is masking the fact that his desire for Zijun has declined following their sexual intimacy by pointing out their overall incompatibility. My reading of the passage does not argue against such a reading, but it takes Juansheng's reflection at face value, accepting that it is probable that Juansheng is no longer enthralled by Zijun's earlier outburst at her father and realizes that there are critical differences between them once they begin living together. Again, looking back at their earlier interaction, Juansheng's loquaciousness contrasts sharply with Zijun's silence. Their interaction further reveals that he hardly has the opportunity to hear Zijun's thoughts and his perception of her was simply based on his own vanity and the presumptions of his imagined ideal woman. However, his false impression does not mean that he lacks feelings for her. Rather, his miscalculation presents the likelihood that his stances on love and conjugal relationships are different from Zijun's. Nevertheless, his words negate his earlier proclamation of mutual understanding and affection uttered when he and Zijun silently gazed at each other.

It is rather fascinating that when their relationship begins to flounder Juansheng picks up his instructive role again in an attempt to teach Zijun about love. "It is so true," Juansheng says as he explains the meaning of love to Zijun, "love needs renewing, growing, recreating."[236] Love, according to Juansheng, not only needs reinventing but also has to be constantly moving forward. Herein lies the irony in how he defines love. If love must be constantly moving forward, then his continuous reminiscence on their past

[236] For original text, see *LXQJ*, 2:118. For translation, see *RSAO*, 258.

before living together contradicts his own definition of love. His lingering on his past memories only displays that he is infatuated with an ideological concept of love but neglects how it should be fulfilled in his prosaic life. This is the very reason why he is puzzled regarding how Zijun becomes more vigorous when they begin to cohabit and her daily life is merely filled with domestic chores.[237] Her vivaciousness reveals her happiness and contentment in her current state and also indicates that she is moving forward as their relationship develops. She is in the process of becoming a modern good wife, a role of her choice. Yet Zijun's transformation results in disenchantment for Juansheng who only perceives a good wife as a benighted traditional archetype. While he complains that Zijun stops reading and studying, taking daily walks, and conversing with him because she only focuses on domestic chores, his discontent only shows he does not understand that the necessities of daily life require menial labor that will take time away from their leisure activities and intellectual pursuits. What separates the couple is the disjuncture between his idealistic notions and Zijun's grounded attitude towards their daily life. His fantasies about modern conjugal companionship and his complaints about Zijun reveal his delusions about modern women and his ignorance of everyday practicalities.

In addition to their fundamental differences and his loss of interest, there are other factors and misfortunate events that eventually coerce Juansheng to end their relationship. One of these is the increasing financial hardship they face after Juansheng is laid off by his employer. Juansheng's layoff is similar to Ziping's in Hu Shi's story

[237] Original text: "子君竟胖了起來，臉色也紅活了". (*LXQJ*, 2: 118.)

whose contract with the women's normal school is not renewed due to his radical statements and comments in the classroom. In Juansheng's case, he is laid off because of his unorthodox personal behavior, particularly living with a woman outside of marriage. Both male protagonists' radical and unconventional conduct costs them the jobs and stable incomes that their families desperately need. As May Fourth radicals, it is their intention to revolutionize their social environment. Even after radical men fought against their fathers to free themselves from the control of their families, they continued facing a similar fight against patriarchal power in society at large. While Chinese society still operated under the traditional patriarchal structure, modern radical men continued to face retaliation from their past. If Lu Xun's "What Happens after Nora Walks Out" ("Na La zouhou zenyang" 那拉走後怎樣, 1924) delivers his concerns about how modern women cannot sustain themselves in an outdated Chinese society, [238] both his and Hu Shi's stories portray the possible predicaments that radical men would have to overcome.

After the loss of Juansheng's monthly income and with his inability to get a new job, the couple's livelihood is in jeopardy. In addition to the daily life struggles, being unemployed means he spends more time at home with Zijun. If working in an office

[238] For scholarly discussions on Nora, see Tani E. Barlow, *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 121-122, 316-318; Shuei-may Chang, "Casting Off The Shackle of Family," 32-76; Ruihua Shen, "New Woman, New Fiction: Autobiographical Fictions By Twentieth-Century Chinese Women Writers" (PhD Diss., University of Oregon, 2003), 82-114; Shu Yang, *Grafted Identities: Shrews and The New Woman Narrative in China, 1910s-1960s* (Doctoral Dissertation, 2016), 7-8 and chapter 3; Li Ling 李玲, *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue de xingbie yishi*, 6-8; Liu Siqian 劉思謙, *Na La yanshuo: zhongguo xiandai nüzuojia xinlu jicheng* 娜拉言說：中國現代女作家心路紀程 (Shanghai: Weyi chubanshe, 1993), 146.

allows Juansheng to leave the house and discharge his negative feelings toward Zijun, it is not difficult to imagine how Juansheng starts to develop feelings of loathing towards Zijun with his additional time at home. He complains about all the clangor she makes when she prepares meals and criticizes her housekeeping skills, claiming that he needs a peaceful place to work on his writing. As his antagonism towards Zijun grows, he begins to see the commonality between her and the chickens and dog in their household. A short entry in his journal spills out his internal condescension and mockery of Zijun's lifestyle:

> And the meals – the never-ending stream of meals that had to be eaten every day. Zijun's sense of self-worth seemed tied exclusively to food consumption (chifan 吃飯). After one meal, [she] scavenged for money for the next one and so on. In addition, she still has to feed [the dog] Follower and the chickens. Everything she had once known seemed to have been wiped out by the imperative to cook, eat and feed, leaving her entirely insensible to how it might disturb my train of thought. I tried glaring at her at mealtimes, but she just munched obliviously on.[239]

[239] For the original text, see *LXQJ*, 2:121-122. The translation is based on *RSAO*, 262 with several modifications. Because subjects are often omitted in Chinese syntax, it is sometimes difficult to figure out who actually takes the actions. My translation here suggests Zijun is the one who scavenges for money for their next meal and feeds the dog and chickens, but it is possible that Juansheng or both of them dealt with these daily events. However, based on Juansheng's rather detached attitude toward daily life necessities, it is unlikely that he would put any effort into dealing with prosaic trifles.

Even though Juansheng is a beneficiary of Zijun's food preparation, he is aggravated that her lifestyle revolves around provisions. In claiming that Zijun is more similar to animals that only care about food, Juansheng seems to separate himself from her and those like her. Now the home space is occupied by two types: Juansheng, the human who produces ideas, and Zijun, the animal that consumes material goods. The dehumanization of Zijun and Juansheng's loss of interest in her companionship suggest that Juansheng reduces his partner to the level of a parasite that consumes everything that he brings home. [240] If Zijun is a parasite, their breakup is not only expected but also justified as a way of purging the home space in Juansheng's mind.

Another impact of struggling to meet daily life needs is Juansheng's increased feeling of being trapped by his modern domestic responsibility for financing his own small family. The mounting family financial pressure begins pushing Juansheng to re-evaluate his relationship with Zijun just as it does to Ziping from Hu Shi's story. Although both men feel trapped in their modern domestic roles, Juansheng's feelings are slightly different from Ziping's. For one, a part of Juansheng's dissatisfaction comes from sharing the home space with Zijun. This is why he later decides to stay in a library during the day to seek temporary freedom under the excuse of working on his writing. It is worth noting that even though both men believe that their domestic relationships hold them down, Juansheng's revelation discloses something more:

[240] Juansheng's attitude toward Zijun shows that he regards her as the cause of his predicament. His attitude toward Zijun echoes the late-Qing enlightened male view on footbinding, that crippled, uneducated women were the parasites of the nation who were the main reason why China was weak.

A general drop in temperature–both in the weather, and in her behavior towards me–made home an uncomfortable place to be. But where else could I go? Though I didn't get glared at the streets or in the parks, the freezing wind was about to crack open my skin. Eventually, I sought refuge in the Popular Library.

[…] None of the books were worth reading – the old ones were outdated and there were hardly any new ones.

[I] wasn't there for the books. I noticed around a dozen kindred spirits hanging about the place: thinly dressed, like me, and reading as an excuse to keep warm. It was the perfect bolt-hole: wandering the streets, I might bump into people I'd once known who now had nothing but scorn for me. In here, I was safe, because all my former acquaintances had other stoves to gather around.

And though there was nothing for me to read, I did have time to think. Sitting there, bored, alone, I began to go back over the past half year, over how I had neglected everything else in life for love – and first and foremost, the struggle to survive. A person must be able to live before they can love. A way forward always exists for those who are willing to fight for it. Despite all the setbacks, I hadn't yet forgotten how to flap my wings…[241]

[241] For original text, see *LXQJ*, 2:124. For translation, see *RSAO*, 264.

To Juansheng, home is a miserable space that could no longer provide him any warmth and comfort, and could not shelter him from the cold real word. This home is far from his imagined "hopeful little small family" and he cannot even bear to stay there. He compares his home space with the frigid world which causes pain from the freezing wind. It is fascinating that Juansheng does not deploy any deliberately incarceratory vocabulary like "cage" to describe his home in this passage because, in a way, he is being punished and his home feels like a prison. His last phrase "flap my wings" creates an image of a caged bird waiting for its moment to escape.[242]

In the last paragraph of the above quote, Juansheng's revelation begins with a mode of solitude and ends with a yearning to fly away. It also emphasizes that survival is the most pressing issue in life before anything else. His yearning to fly away; however, is not really about seeking freedom, but more about the chance to rejoin the patriarchal society from which he once revolted in order to fulfill his basic needs. Love may be seen as the vehicle for a man to apprehend his means of being an individual, but being in an unconventional free love relationship further removes him from society. A radical modern man who idealizes gender equality yet resides in a patriarchal society will face repercussions because his behavior is incongruent with social expectations.

[242] In her 1919's vernacular poem *Bird* (*Niao* 鳥), Chen Hengzhe 陳衡哲 (1890-1976) portrays a caged bird desiring to break out of its cage to fly freely into the sky. In that May Fourth radical era, the caged bird was the allegory for all the young men and women who felt oppressed by the traditional Chinese patriarchal family system and wished to have an independent life. See Chen Hengzhe, *Niao* (鳥), in *Xin qingnian* 6 no. 5 (May, 1919), 485-6. The poem is reprinted in 原刊本影印新青年 Genkapon ēin shinsēnen, vol. 6. In my opinion, Lu Xun appropriates the notion of a caged bird for Juansheng's self-projection, but here the caged bird is oppressed by the new responsibility of a modern small family and desires to return to the patriarchal past.

Individuality, a celebrated trait of modern personhood, only makes a man's life more difficult during the period of transition from traditional to modern society. Love is no longer worth fighting for when one's existence is in danger. Though the ideal modern family may be the safe haven for a modern man, it is difficult to stay within it when one's livelihood and masculinity are in jeopardy. In this context, "to flap my wings" discloses Juansheng's willingness to abandon his individuality to reconnect with the patriarchal society that once supported him.

In order to rejoin society, Juansheng needs to shed some modern traits and acquire some traditional ones. One of those traditional traits is patriarchal authority, which he wields twice in the story. The first incident occurs when he decides to abandon Follower, the family pet. Before analyzing this incident, it is necessary to understand what the dog represents in the context of a modern family. Zijun acquires the pet at a local temple fair and later names it for the way in which it always trails her. While Zijun is fulfilling her role as wife (in either a modern or traditional sense), Follower is her loyal companion as she maneuvers in the home space. The dog's behavior resembles that of a young child who follows his mother around inside the house. In a sense, the dog serves as the surrogate child in this family. Unsurprisingly given Follower's child-like role in the family, Zijun and Juansheng continue scavenging for food for him during their time of hardship. However, as the family's period of deprivation wears on, Juansheng begins to resent the fact that Follower impacts his own daily food rations. For the sake of his own survival, Juansheng takes up the patriarchal role, disregards Zijun's sentiments, and abandons Follower so that he and Zijun would have more food. Interestingly,

Juansheng's act of abandoning Follower in a pit bears a resemblance to the age-old filial story, "Guo Ju Buries His Son" (Guo Ju mai'er 郭巨埋兒). As the tale goes, Guo Ju decides to bury his son to prevent his mother from sharing her already sparse food rations with her grandson. But in his attempt, he accidently digs up a pot of gold. The gold is a reward from heaven for his filial behavior.[243] However, Juansheng's motive in abandoning Follower, the surrogate child, is to save his own meager daily food supply. His conduct conveys that he is willing to eliminate others and sacrifice his morals when it comes to survival. The brutal nature of the abandonment is only muted and understood as rational behavior since Follower is a dog rather than a person.

Since Follower, although loved by Zijun, is still biologically a dog, it is debatable whether Follower should be treated as a child of the family. However, its presence in a childless family suggests that perhaps this "hopeful little small family" is unable to produce an actual child. The implied reproductive malfunction could be viewed through two similar yet contrasting ways. One is the incompatibility of the man and woman, and the other is the emptiness of Juansheng's endeavor to create a seemingly modern conjugal union. According to the developmental eugenics narrative, the ideal mother has to be a scientific mother who receives modern education, especially on the subjects of childrearing and family economy. Although Zijun demonstrates her ability to manage the household chores, she has never received formal education. She is not a complete modern subject which means that she is not exactly the same type as Juansheng, a

[243] Lu Xun, in fact, ridicules the story Guo Ju mai'er in his essay "Er'shisixiao tu" (二十四孝圖) (1926). The essay was originally published in *Mangyuan Half-Monthly* (莽原半月刊 1925-1927) vol. 1 no. 10 (May, 1926). The essay is also located in *LXQJ*, 2:258-68.

modern man. Then their failure to produce a child evidently proves that they are not compatible beings in producing the future generation. Yet this reading cannot be sustained once incorporating Juansheng's antagonism towards Zijun as their relationship progresses. Zijun's household management and adoption of Follower could be interpreted as her readiness to become a mother. In this case, Juansheng is the one who refuses to fulfill his responsibility as a modern father per the developmental eugenics narrative. As a matter of fact, he already exhibits his unwillingness to be a modern conjugal companion once he has established his "hopeful little small family." In this sense, the reproductive failure exposes Juansheng's empty desire to establish a small modern family, an illusory image of modern Chinese nationhood.

After Juansheng abandons Follower, Zijun's fate becomes clear. Obviously Juansheng cannot abandon Zijun in the same fashion as he does Follower. In order to justify his abandonment of Zijun, he has to come up with a situation in which he and Zijun will terminate their relationship by mutual agreement, a breakup seemingly decided by both of them. Still carrying the façade of a modern man who champions gender equality and women's rights, Juansheng contrives to purge Zijun from his home space by capitalizing on their earlier memory of their relationship:

> I began talking to her, bringing the conversation round to our past together, to art, foreign writers and their works – *A Doll's House*, *The Lady of the Sea*. I spoke of Nora, and her courageous resolve … All this we had spoken last year in that shabby old room in the hostel; but now my

words rang hollow. As I listened to myself, I was haunted by the image of a spiteful imp, standing behind me, mockingly parroting my words.[244]

Clearly, Juansheng is fully aware that he is exploiting the story of Nora's transgression to draw Zijun to resign from their family for his personal gain. Despite the fact that Juansheng is the one who wants to leave his family behind, it is impossible for him to proclaim that his attempt at a small modern family has failed, that he is leaving is to obtain his autonomy and agency, as there is no authority left to blame or rise up against except himself. His pretentiousness in steeling Zijun to became an independent woman, like Nora, drives him to decorate what he perceives as a miserable home with radical rhetoric in order to replicate that radical spirit that filled the shabby room. His efforts to reconstruct their home space into a well of radicalism could simply seem redundant for Zijun because she already perceives their home and relationship as products of her modern agency. Above all, Juansheng is haunted by his radical self. I argue that this is the very moment when his guilty conscious arises. If this is the guilt that later forces him to repent, then the home space will forever be his penitentiary, a prison where he repents for his wrongdoings to himself as well as Zijun.

In the end, Lu Xun's "Regret for the Past" echoes some of Hu Shi's portrayals of the modern man's predicaments within a traditional patriarchal society and his feelings of being trapped in a domestic relationship due to the new responsibilities of his modern small family. In both stories, the male characters wish that they could employ the May Fourth Nora narrative to retrieve their lost autonomy and agency, yet they

[244] For original text, see *LXQJ*, 2:126. For translation, see *RSAO*, 266.

simply cannot do so because their partners do not have any authority over them, and in most situations, they are the authority figures in their households. A woman who walks out on her family may forfeit her relationships and her social reputation, whereas a man who walks out loses all these things plus his sense of self-esteem, his formerly desired roles as "master" and "provider" in the domestic domain. Lu Xun's story delineates a serious internal conflict within a modern man who struggles to unite radical ideology, an imagined modern relationship, and real-life practicalities. He might champion modern family on one hand while grieving the loss of traditional manhood on the other; he might champion women's liberation and modern womanhood on one hand while wielding patriarchal authority on the other, thus embodying, as I term it, "the modern man's paradox."

Continuously Searching for a Modern Happy Family

Lu Xun's "A Happy Family" was first published in March 1924 in *Women's Magazine* (*Funü zazhi* 婦女雜誌 1915-1931) in Shanghai and later anthologized in his short story collection, *Wandering*. Unlike the two aforementioned stories, this story contains third-person narration and the protagonist is a man who attempts to write a story for a journal to bring home extra pay. Although the title of the man's intended story is "A Happy Family," it is never his intention or interest to discuss social issues. His writes such a story purely for easy financial gain; he knows that family is a trendy topic among young radicals and he plans to submit a draft to *Happiness Monthly* (Xingfu

yuebaoshe 幸福月報社).[245] The story centers on the man's act of writing, especially how his physical surroundings constantly intervene in his thoughts and sway the outcome of his story. Even with constant modifications, the fictional man still fails to create an imagined happy family. His failure seemingly reveals that the ideological modern family ideal is an unachievable dream of that era.

Since Lu Xun wrote this short story in a style that mimicked that of Xu Qinwen's (許欽文, 1897-1984) sarcastic story "The Ideal Companion (Lixiang de banlü 理想的伴侶, 1923)," his purpose for writing the story is instantly quite clear.[246] He did not write to story to celebrate the modern family, but rather to ridicule it, and especially the male protagonist, as the story progresses. Although family was a general interest among May Fourth men and women, it is still notable that Lu Xun's story first appeared in a magazine that targeted women readers. Lu Xun's motivation for publishing a story that ridicules a man and his imagined ideal family in a women's magazine is worthy of discussion.[247] Under the premise of the developmental eugenics narrative, individualism

[245] *LXQJ*, 2:35.

[246] In the footnote of the story, Lu Xun stated that this piece of writing was his imitation of Xu Qinwen's sarcastic writing style in "Lixiang de banlü" 理想的伴侶 (1923). (*LXQJ*, 2:42.) Xu Qinwen's story can be found in *Chenbao fukan* 晨報副刊 (1921-1928) of the September 9, 1923 issue under the column *Zatan* 雜談.

[247] As he was one of the leading figures of the May Fourth movement and a recognized great writer of his time, it is understandable that many publishers would send requests to Lu Xun. Since Lu Xun was an extremely prolific writer, it is probable that he could sometimes send out some of his work to these publishers without clear ideas about what kind of publications these publishers produced. That is to say, it is probable that this story was not purposely written for *The Women's Magazine*. Here I take the choice of publication at face value.

was promoted and linked with the modern conjugal relationship that led to the establishment of the ideal modern family. While gender equality was highly promoted in the process of establishing the modern family, women were at the very center of this narrative because of their reproductive bodies and their clear responsibility in childrearing. In addition, their role in modern companionship continued to conform to men's imagination and satisfaction.[248] In hindsight, Lu Xun's later decision to put this story in *Wandering* might suggest his uncertainty about alerting women to men's ambivalence toward the modern conjugal relationship and his skepticism about the function of the modern family in the process of Chinese nation building.

Before further looking into the story of "A Happy Family," it should be pointed out that the leading male characters in the three stories under discussion all love to write and are eager to publish their work in newspapers or journals. This shared interest among the three fictional men raises some questions. Does their shared passion for writing function as a narrative trope, serving as commentary about frivolous modern men of the era who avoided physical domestic work? Or does this recurring theme of writing across these three stories function as a motif that carries a particular meaning? In imperial China, traditionally educated men were called *wenren* 文人 which literarily means men of letters. Although their goal was to pass the civic examination and enter the officialdom, they actively engaged in writing to express their emotions and opinions through circulating their work within their cohorts. Writing became increasingly critical

[248] See footnote 220. For the new woman as literary trope in male writers' fiction, see Amy D. Dooling, *Women's Literary Feminism in Twentieth-Century China*, 71-73.

and was connected to the state's welfare in the turbulent late-Qing once newspapers became an outlet for enlightened men to expatiate their visions for as well as their frustrations with China. All these suggest that writing has a social function and allows a man to directly connect with national affairs.[249] In this case, the recurring theme of writing is a motif within the developmental eugenics narrative. That is, when children are the future and modern families are the foundation of a new nation, men are required to be responsible for their families before connecting directly to the nation. That is to say, men have to answer the calls of becoming good husbands and wise fathers who would dedicate every effort to the family just as their wives should do. However, perhaps unexpectedly, situating themselves in the domestic domain severs them from their traditional cultural affiliation with the public domain. When men are bound by domestic responsibilities, the only way for them to reach out and reconnect to the public domain is through writing. This may be the reason why these fictional men never give up writing and try to publish their work in newspapers and journals even

[249] Most essays in Chapter 1 and 2 were first published in newspapers. Fiction also held a particular position in critiquing society. For example, Liang Qichao, in his "On the Relationship between Fiction and Government of the People" (Xiaoshuo yu qunzhi 小說與群治, 1902), elaborates how fiction can influence its readers and right a society going astray. In this sense, fiction is not simply seen as being for one's leisure, but it also carries certain social functions. For similar discussion of fiction and society, see Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885-1967), "Riben jin sanshinian xiaoshuo zhi fada" 日本近三十年小說之發達 in *Xin qingnian* vol. 5 no. 1 (July, 1918); Hu Shi, "Jianshe de wenxue geming lun" 建設的文學革命論 (1918) in *HSWC*, 1:55-73 and Lun duanpian xiaoshuo" 論短篇小說 (1918) in *HSWC*, 1: 129-142; Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879-1942), "Wenxue geming lun" 文學革命論 (1917) in *Chen Duxiu wencun* 陳獨秀文存, 2 vols (Hong Kong: Yuandong tushu gongsi, 1965), 1:135-140. For scholarly research on this topic, see Chen Pingyuan, Michel Hockx trans., "Literature High and Low: 'Popular fiction' in Twentieth-Century China" in Michel Hockx ed., *The Literary Field of Twentieth-Century China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 113-33. Also see Introduction chapter.

though their work is often rejected or the rewards for their work often have no substantial impact on family finances. [250]

Tellingly, as the man begins to write an essay about an ideal family, he struggles to find a location in which to establish it. He tries to place the story in multiple locations in China but there are always reasons why these settings do not work. There are safety concerns in provinces that are controlled by warlords, and military conflicts occur daily. While it is safe to live in foreign concessions, they are too expensive for any family of modest income to afford. Further looking into his difficulties in choosing a location to place the imagined ideal family, it is not difficult to come to the conclusion that China is not ready to support a modern family. Furthermore, if the ideal family can only be established in a select environment, then it is impractical and preposterous to persuade the public that modern family structure is the foundation for China's salvation. Following this logic, it is more important to amend the environment first, but how is it possible to amend the environment when the nation and society depends upon the family-state paradigm? It is not surprising that "[the man] contemplated inventing somewhere and calling it A" to place this ideal family.[251] The man's difficulty of finding a suitable location for the ideal family exposes the paradox of national salvation through family revolution.

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[250] All the fathers/husbands of the three stories state that writing is another way to make extra money to improve the family financial situation. I have no intention to undermine the stated financial needs in these stories. However, since the characters all struggle to write a good piece of work to publish, it is not efficient at all to choose writing as an alternative way to make extra income.

[251] Original text, See *LXQJ*, 2:36. For translation, see *NYSO*, 238.

Once the location is set, the man continues to work on delineating the features and members within a modern family. An ideal family, in his description, does not simply mean a happy married couple but needs something more than happiness and love:

> The family naturally consists of a husband and wife – the master and mistress – who married for love. Their marriage contract contains over forty terms going into great detail, so that they have extraordinary equality and absolute freedom. Moreover, they have both had a higher education and belong to the cultured elite…[252]

Other than the already discussed issues of gender equality, freedom and a free love marriage, the passage brings out other interesting features of an ideal modern family. Although the marriage is built upon love, love does not guarantee equity and freedom for the husband and wife. They need an actual contractual agreement for their assurances. The marriage contract ensures that neither of them will violate the other's rights. The wording of the contract suggests that the contract is a precautionary measure for the future of the marriage. Maybe having a marriage contract is a smart and rational move, but its contractual legality overshadows the celebration of love in a modern marriage. On top of those, the passage expresses strong class discrimination because this model of a modern happy family already excludes families from lower social classes, as the imagined ideal family can only be established by educated elites. The suggestion that an ideal family has a class affiliation only can intensify the

[252] Ibid.

aggression between social classes instead of celebrating this ideal marriage union as the foundation of a better China. Here this form of marriage no longer stands for love, freedom and equality and instead reveals an exclusivity and cruelty, negating the possibility that other social classes can be a positive part of China's future.

An interesting and important feature of the story is the man's awareness, as his attention constantly moves in and out between his writing of an imagined ideal family and his physical reality. Throughout the story, it is noticeable that his train of thought is frequently interrupted by his physical surroundings. The interactions between his imagination and reality constantly prompt him to renegotiate with himself in order to reconfigure his imagined ideal family to reflect his reality, fashioning the imagined family so that it does not possess the unwanted traits his real family does. For instance, as he tries to concentrate on writing his story in this bedroom, his wife enters and piles up recently purchased cabbage. Reacting to his surroundings, he immediately writes down:

> The house of the Happy family must have plenty of rooms. There is a room for storage where things like cabbages are put. The master's study is apart, its walls lined with bookshelves; there are naturally no cabbages there.[253]

This humorous modification of his imagined ideal family based on his reality draws attention to his dissatisfaction with his real life. Furthermore:

[253] For original text, see *LXQJ*, 2:39. For translation, see *NYSO*, 247.

> In a Happy family …" he thought, his back still rigid, hearing the child sobbing, "children are born late, yes, born late. Or perhaps it would be better to have none at all, just two people without any ties… Or it might be better to stay in a hotel and let them look after everything, a single man without…[254]

His thoughts are completely against the grain of the very essence of the developmental eugenics narrative that longs for a new generation to build a future China. In addition to not wanting to be a father, he is no longer enchanted by the notion of an ideal family and desires a return to the life of a single man. Yet unlike the male characters in the previous two stories, the man of this "A Happy Family" story secretly wishes to walk away from his family relationship even without the pressure of financial hardships. His extreme modification of his imagined ideal family only suggests that he could not harness such ideology even within his own imagination.

After this point in the story, something totally unexpected happens. The man leaves his desk to pamper his sobbing daughter. He embraces her in his arms to soothe her and even imitates the movements a cat makes when it cleans its face to make her laugh. These actions of a caring father distance him from his momentary urge to return to his bachelor lifestyle. Then abruptly, he pushes his daughter away because he is agitated again, not by her wailing but by her gloomy eyes.[255] Although the word *yinqiqi* (阴凄凄) describes the daughter's tearful eyes, it also suggests a pair of ghostly eyes

[254] For original text, see *LXQJ*, 2:40. For translation, see *NYSO*, 250.

[255] Original text: "兩隻眼睛陰凄凄的". (*LXQJ*, 2: 41)

staring at him. If children are the future the nation, then he is now haunted by the ghost of the future. Still, his erratic behavior displays his ambivalence toward his domestic role as a family man. Maybe he still wants to take up the role of a father, but his ideal family has yet to materialize.

The story ends in an uncanny fashion when he looks at the pile of cabbages in the room, "… a pile of six cabbages which formed an enormous letter A before him."[256] It is obvious that the "six-cabbage A" alludes to indeterminate location "A" mentioned at the beginning of the story. Here, it is difficult to determine Lu Xun's intention. It is possible that Lu Xun mocks the hypocrisy of radical men who advocate for the modern family but never commit themselves to such an idea. But it is also possible that he suggests that men devote their energy to searching for the ideal family but fail to recognize that their own families need their attention and appreciation. Or maybe Lu Xun simply tries to suggest that it is impossible to have an ideal family but it is the imperfection of a family that makes life real and worthwhile.

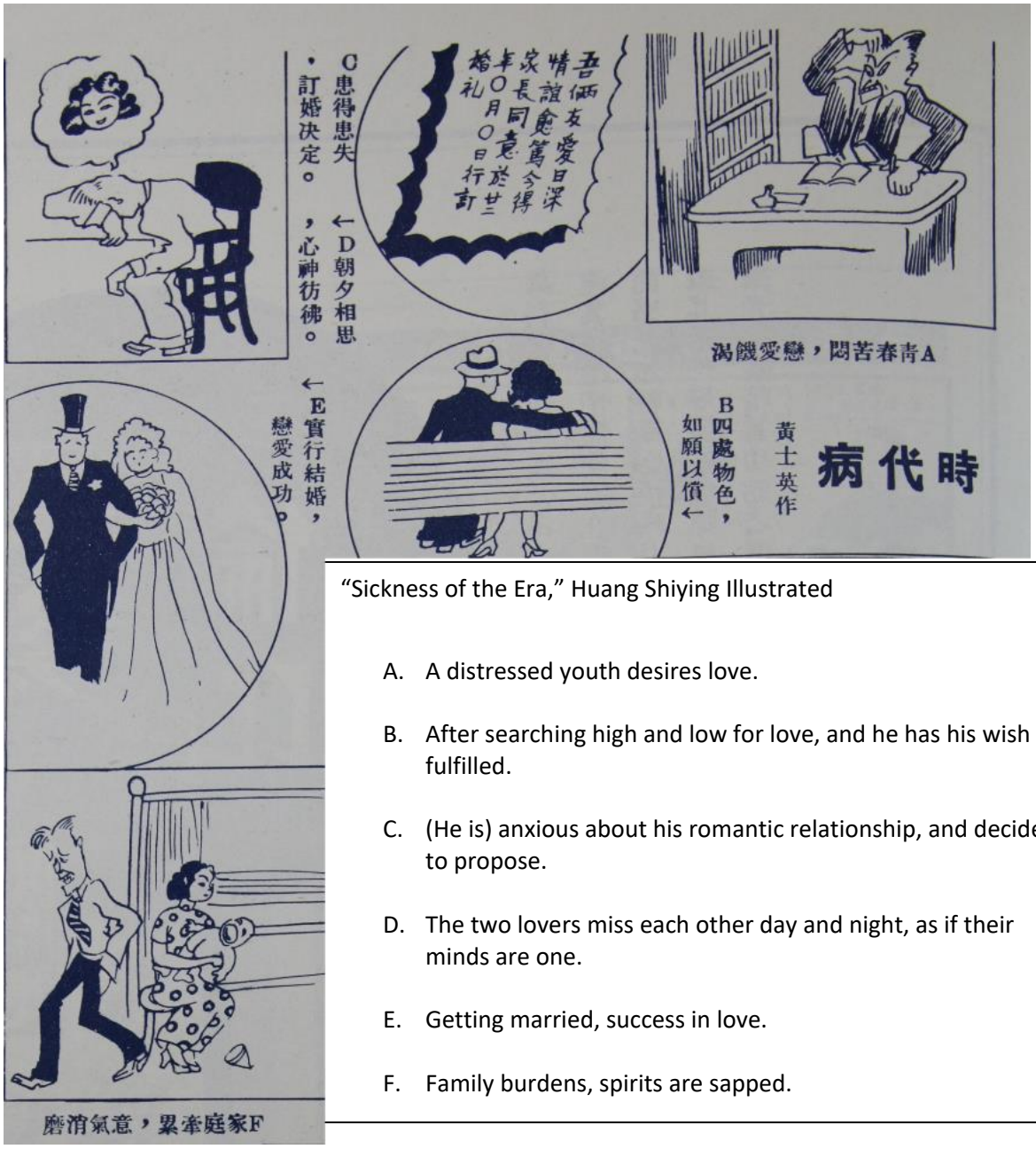
Conclusion

In August of 1933, Huang Shiying (黃士英?? - ??), a well-known comic artist of the time, published his comic "Sickness of the Era" (Shidai bing 時代病, 1935) in *The Young Companion* (Figure 9). In this six-frame comic, Huang illustrates a young man craving love, falling in love, getting married, but being defeated by his family responsibilities in the end. His comic tells a story that closely parallels the three stories

[256] For original text, see *LXQJ*, 2:42. The translation here is based on *NYSO* with some minor modification. (*NYSO*, 254)

in this chapter. All these fictional men are frustrated not by love but by their newly required domestic responsibilities including fatherhood. Its title, “Sickness of the Era,” suggests that the transition from youthful romantic optimism to dejection was probably a common social phenomenon among men, and likewise chastised men for their capriciousness and their frustration.

This so-called sickness may have originated from men’s longing for modern small families that would allow them to reclaim autonomy, agency as individuals in order become model modern men. However, these fictional men fail to anticipate the financial responsibility and daily drudgery involved in upholding their families. The mismatch of their desire and their domestic obligations cause their agony. Their modern families all fail tremendously and never achieve the ideal as the foundation of a modern China. In addition, while the modern family was meant to produce progeny for the sake of China’s future, the children in these stories are never regarded as the future of the nation but rather the undoing of their families. Then the question becomes apparent: if it is almost impossible to harness the ideology of family revolution to produce successful families to lead China to salvation in fictional writing, then how can this work in reality? Reading the stories of Hu Shi and Lu Xun, the two leading figures of May Fourth generation, within the developmental eugenics narrative reveals men’s ambivalent attitude toward celebrating domestic unions and their refusal to become defined by fatherhood.



"Sickness of the Era," Huang Shiying Illustrated

A. A distressed youth desires love.

B. After searching high and low for love, and he has his wish fulfilled.

C. (He is) anxious about his romantic relationship, and decides to propose.

D. The two lovers miss each other day and night, as if their minds are one.

E. Getting married, success in love.

F. Family burdens, spirits are sapped.

Figure 9 "Sickness of the Era" ("Shidai bing" 時代病).
Liangyou 79 (August, 1933): 35.

EPILOGUE: Family, Nation, and Nation's Children

On July 7th 1939 near the Marco Polo bridge (Lugouqiao 盧溝橋) there was a military clash between Chinese troops and Japanese troops; although shots were fired, no one was injured. The following day, the Japanese intensified the attacks and the Chinese successfully held them off:

> At one o'clock in the morning of July 8, the Japanese troops at [Lugouqiao] (Marco Polo Bridge) about 12 miles south of [Beijing], demanded a search of the walled city of Wanping claiming that one of their soldiers was missing. Refused by the 37th Division of the [29]th Army stationed in the district, they started to bombard the city. The Chinese troops returned fire and fighting has continued ever since. Peace negotiations are being carried out with seeming success, but both countries are prepared to fight if necessary. Peace or war, which will it be?[257]

While peace was still a possible option at that moment, during that summer, Japan swiftly deployed its full-scale assault on China and the war between China and Japan lasted for another eight years. In the face of the Anti-Japanese Resistance War (kangri zhanzheng 抗日戰爭, 1937-1945; also known as the Second Sino-Japanese War), members of the Chinese public across social classes, genders, and political inclinations

[257] "China and Japan Clash at Lukouchiao" ("Lugouqiao shijian" 盧溝橋事件), *Lingyou* no. 130 (July 1937): 3. The English title and the quoted text were originally published in English.

all pivoted to fight for China's immediate survival and demonstrate their nationalism on all fronts.

To survive or to perish, the Chinese government and public focused on China's precarious present juncture. The developmental eugenics narrative was postponed indefinitely because China's future would become meaningless if its present were to be terminated by Japan. Men and women of different strata, ideologies and political affiliations all answered the nation's call and devoted themselves directly to the fight for China's existence. In newspapers, journals and other periodicals, a strong surge of "anti-Japan resistance literature" (kangzhan wenxue 抗戰文學) emerged for the purpose of raising national crisis awareness and evoking nationalism.[258] Well known writers such as Lao She 老舍 (1899-1966), Guo Moruo 郭沫若（1892−1978），Mao Dun, Shi Zhecun 施蟄存 (1905-2003), Xie Bingying, Yu Dafu 郁達夫 (1896-1945?) and many others constantly published their thoughts on the forms, styles, and media of the resistance literature in newspapers and periodicals.[259]

The general consensus among critics was that resistance literature should inspire nationalism, bravery, and anti-Japanese sentiment in its audience. In addition, resistance literature had to be accessible to the masses, including peasants and factory

[258] Anti-Japan resistance literature was also known as national defense literature (guofang wenxue 國防文學).

[259] Here are some essays on resistance war literature: Lao She, Guo Moruo, Zhang Shenfu 張申府 (1893-1986) et al., "Kangzhan yilai wenyi de zhanwang" 抗戰以來文藝的展望 in *Ziyou Zhongguo* 自由中國 (1938; 1941-1942) 2 (1938): 109-114; Shi Zhecun "Luetan Kangzhan wenxue" 略談抗戰文學 in *Shidailun* 時代輪 (1938), 1, 3-5; Yu Dafu "Zhanshi de xiaoshuo" 戰時的小說 in *Ziyou Zhongguo* 3 (1938): 209-211.

workers, and suitable for the frontline soldiers, providing hope for their cause.[260] In order to create an adequate literary product, writers should possess the correct "resistance awareness" (kangzhan yishi 抗戰意識) and "realistic emotion" (zhenshi de ganjue 真實的感覺) when they wrote their stories.[261] These criteria, in the sense of fictional writing, suggested that the goal was to promote specific political ideologies and emotions to suit the nation's needs—they made a case for propaganda literature. These criteria also reflected that there were varying types and levels of quality within the resistance literature circulating in the public sphere. In this case, the criteria functioned as guidelines for how to produce "correct and accurate" resistance literary works.

This nation-centered literature represented a drastic change from the preceding May Fourth literature in which individual autonomy and agency were encouraged and celebrated even when in conflict with the ideological and political calls for family revolution.[262] In resistance literature, national struggle was personal struggle, and national interest was personal interest. This nation-centric attitude was not unique to literature but was the overall ethos of the resistance war period. Furthermore, it

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[260] In his "Literature during the Resistance War Period" ("Kangzhan Qijian de Wexue 抗戰期間的文學, 1940), Mao Dun pointed out that radio broadcasting played a critical role in making resistance literature prevalent. (Mao Dun, "Literature During the Resistance War Period" ("Kangzhan Qijian de Wexue" 抗戰期間的文學) in *Student's Life Xuesheng Shenghuo* 學生生活 (1940) (1 volume with 7 issues) 1, no. 5 (1940): 26.)

[261] Shi Zhecun "Luetan Kangzhan wenxue," 3-5.

[262] My finding echoes Susan Glosser's point: "In their attempts to marry two hostile forces, individual and state, these young men introduced a tension into family-reform discourse that remained unresolved throughout the Republican era." (*Chinese Vision of Family and State, 1915-1953*, 198).

reversed the relationship between individual and state. For example, the first lady of China, Song Meiling 宋美齡 (1898-2003), in her 1939 International Women's Day speech encouraged and cautioned her women compatriots: "In order to liberate women, [we] must first liberate the nation" (yuqiu jiefang funü, bixian jiefang guojia 欲求解放婦女, 必先解放國家).[263] There is no question that Song's words and the event itself were women-specific. However, I would suggest approaching a genderless reading first before discussing the speech's gendered significance.

During the May Fourth movement, family revolution was meant to emancipate individuals from traditional family bonds so they could establish and cultivate their independent personhood, and the modern free love relationship resonated with the emphasis on individual autonomy and agency within modern personhood. This new form of marriage was the building block for the new China, and the children it produced would eventually lead China to a promising future. That is to say, Chinese nation building was envisioned as a process of individual liberation leading to national salvation. Yet Song's words reversed such a trajectory and placed the nation before the individual. If focusing on a gendered reading, Song's words seemingly suggest that her women compatriots should focus on the nation before themselves. Given the fact that China was in a dire situation, and men were also encouraged to put the nation before themselves and make the ultimate sacrifice by serving as soldiers, it is possible Song was simply encouraging temporary sacrifice and unity, not simply overlooking the unique

[263] "Yuqiu jiefang funü, bixian jiefang guojia" 欲求解放婦女, 必先解放國家, *Liangyou* 141 (April 1939): 1.

challenges women faced because of their gender. However, placing Song's words into the context of China's modernization, it is difficult not to notice that women were frequently treated as a product to serve political and ideological needs. Starting several decades before this speech, they were continually blamed for China's weakness because of their bound feet and their confinement to domestic responsibilities. Although women were then encouraged to revolt against their natal families and establish their modern womanhood, they were also asked to and answered the ideological and governmental calls to become wise mothers to raise China's future citizens. Now, in desperate times of war, they were told to put their personal desires aside and asked to leave their homes in order to serve their nation once more. Through all these changes, women never became a political entity and never truly achieved parity with their male counterparts; instead, women and their situation remained an ideological abstraction to be manipulated for different purposes.[264]

[264] "Woman" as an ideological abstraction also occurred in the Socialist regime during the Resistance War. For example, Ding Ling's elaboration of a woman's journey interwoven with in her self-reflection and criticism in her "Thoughts on March 8" ("Sanbajie you gan 三八節有感, 1942) encapsulates her identities as a woman, a radical and a communist to instantiate woman, an ideological abstraction, through her struggles and her designated biological functions in the twentieth century. Yet Ding Ling was soon condemned by her comrades for her definition of woman and her criticism of the regime. Ding Ling was punished and had to publicly apologize for her essay. Ding Ling's case, I argue, shows how woman acts as a surrogate for political and ideological agendas without possessing any actual political power. As she stated in her postscript, "But I also feel that there are some things that, if said by a [male] leader before a big audience, would probably evoke satisfaction. But when they are written by a woman, they are more than likely to be demolished." (Ding Ling, "Sanbajie you gan" https://www.marxists.org/chinese/reference-books/yanan1942/2-02.htm.) English translation is from Gregory Benton in "Thoughts on March 8" in Tani Barlow and Gary Bjorge ed., Ding Ling, *I Myself Am a Woman: Selected Writings of Ding Ling* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 316-21:321.

Although resistance literature was a nationalistic response to Japan's military invasion, it unexpectedly relieved some of the tensions and conflicts between individualism and the developmental eugenics narrative in Chinese fiction. In this new form of literature male and female protagonists did not leave their families to seek their individualism but rather to go to the frontline to fight for their beloved nation. This plot point features in works such as Ba Jin's 巴金 (1904-2005) *Fires* (*Huo* 火, 1940-1945; also known as The "Resistance War" Trilogy, kangzhan sanbuqu 抗戰三部曲).[265] In addition, the settings of these fictional stories were moving from urban cities to rural areas, and the protagonists were no longer educated intellectuals but farmers and soldiers, as in works like Yao Xueyin's 姚雪垠 (1910-1999) "Niu Quande and Carrot" ("Niu Quande he Hongluobo" 牛全德和紅蘿蔔, 1941).[266] These literary developments during war time seemingly echoed the evolutionary thinking in China's push towards modernization and modernity.[267] More strikingly, this new form of literature survived and evolved even after the war concluded.

[265] Ba Jin 巴金, *Fires* (*Huo* 火) (Fuzho: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1985).

[266] Yao Xueyin 姚雪垠 "Niu Quande and Red Carrot" "Niu Quande he Hongluobo" 牛全德和紅蘿蔔 in *Resistance War Literature and Art Kangzhan wenyi* 抗戰文藝 (1938-1946) 7, no. 4/5 (1941): 265-293.

[267] To be clear, not all stories portray heroic characters. For example, Xiao Hong's 蕭紅 (1911-1942) *Ma Bole* 馬伯樂 (1940-1941, unfinished work) depicts the protagonist, Ma Bole, a spoiled and selfish young man of a wealthy urban family who has some college education and grows up in the era of May Fourth. He is neither a May Fourth radical nor an ideal modern man but a caricature similar to Lu Xun's Ah-Q but with money and education. Although Ma Bole is not a heroic character, the brutality of war and struggles of refugees are presented through his flight with his family from Qingdao to Shanghai to Chongqing to Hong Kong. Xiao Hong's work might not really fit into the category of resistance literature but it reveals daily life during wartime with

After the eight years of the resistance war, peace was only momentary in China. The political and ideological clashes between the Nationalist government controlled by the Kuomingtang 國民黨, and the Chinese Communist Party (Zhongguo gongchandang 中國共產黨) quickly escalated into a civil war (1945-1949). On October 1st 1949, the People's Republic of China (Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo 中華人民共和國) was established. Chinese literature from that period before the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) is generally now referred to as seventeen-year literature (shiqinian wenxue 十七年文學), and was known as people's literature (renmin wenxue 人民文學) at that time. As scholars like Ding Fan, Bonnie McDougall, and Marston Anderson have pointed out, Mao Zedong's 毛澤東 (1983-1976) "Talks at the Yan'an Forum for Art and Literature" ("Zai yanan wenyi zuotanhuishang de jianghua" 在延安文藝座談會上的講話, 1942) foregrounds the trajectory and transformation of Chinese literature in the Chinese communist region.[268] Yet I would go as far as to suggest that resistance war literature, even from its initial stage, already displayed clear signs of the transformations Mao encouraged.

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sometimes revels in slapstick humor. Xiao Hong, *Ma Bole* (Ha'erbin: Heilongjiang remin chubanshe, 1981).

[268] Ding Fan 丁帆, "Lun 'Shiqinian Wenxue' zhong peihe zhengzhi de jizhong moshi" 論"十七年文學"中配合政治的幾種模式 in *Donghai Zhongwen Xuebao* 東海中文學報 21 (2009): 331-336. Bonnie McDougall, introduction to *Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art," A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980). Marston Anderson, *The Limits of Realism: Chinese Fiction in the Revolutionary Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 202. Mao Zedong 毛澤東, "Zai yanan wenyi zuotanhuishang de jianghua" 在延安文藝座談會上的講話 (1942). (https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-194205.htm.)

As mentioned at the beginning of the epilogue, the developmental eugenics narrative was postponed during wartime, and so my interest in seventeen-year literature mainly lies in whether this narrative made a comeback in socialist China. Based on my current limited research, the authors of the Yan'an period (1936-1948) and seventeen-year literature found a way to tackle the conflicts between preserving the modern self and serving the nation through producing and caring for the future generation. An example of this appears in Zhao Shuli's 趙樹理 (1906-1970) "Xiao Erhei's Marriage" ("Xiao Erhei Jiehun" 小二黑結婚, 1943) from the Yan'an period.[269] In the story, the ideal conjugal partnership is reinvented and relocated from an urban location to the countryside. The couple, Xiao Erhei and Xiaoqin (小芹), are not educated but of strong moral fiber, representatives of soldiers and peasantry. Although their love for each other leads them to defy their own arranged marriages, their free love marriage is less about individualism and more about a new social order in which parental authority cannot outweigh the law (*fa* 法). Here, *jia* (family as domestic space) is now a part of *qu* (區, a governed space of the law) instead of a microcosm of the state. The young couple's wish to marry each other is granted by the district director and thus their marriage epitomizes a new social regime.[270] While the small family is still put forth as

[269] Zhao Shuli 趙樹理, "Xiao Er'hei Jiehun" 小二黑結婚 in *Renmin Wenyi* 人民文藝 (1946) 1, no. 6 (1946): 6-10.

[270] Roy Chan's discussion of "Xiao Erhei Jiehun" illuminates how *fa* and *qu* strike down traditional parental authority, rehabilitate improper behaviors, mediate the social and domestic spheres, and reinvent a marital union that "allegorically signifies the emergence of a new nationhood." See Roy Chan, "The Revolutionary Metapragmatics of Laughter in Zhao Shuli's

the building block of the future socialist state, family is not fully a private unit but a state subsidiary erected through the help of public governmental power.

Later, Li Zhun's 李准 (1928-2000) "A Brief Biography of Li Shuangshuang ("Li Shuangshuang Xiaozhuan" 李雙雙小傳, 1960) further assimilates the private family space into the national public space and suggests that a successful nation leads to a happy marriage.[271] In the novel, Shuangshuang's family is a small modern family which includes her husband, Xiwang (喜旺), and their children, but theirs is not an ideal family because their marriage is not based on free love and neither is educated. However, with Shuangshuang leading the way, both become politically educated model citizens and finally fall in love with each other. In the previous chapter, I discussed the fast-moving national time within the developmental eugenics narrative in Hu Shi's story, "One Question." The notion of time becomes less of an issue after Shuangshuang and Xiwang's village implements a public canteen in which a team of villagers prepare meals for all, allowing both men and women to leave the house to work for the nation. In this way, when all the members of the community work together throughout the day and later dine together as well, the wall that separates public and domestic space disintegrates.[272] The dining scene of the public canteen is rather fascinating because it is

Fiction" in Ping Zhu, Zhuoyi Wang and Jason McGrath ed., *Maoist Laughter* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2019), 156-160.

[271] Li Zhun 李准, "A Brief Biography of Li Shuangshuang" "Li Shuangshuang Xiaozhuan" 李雙雙小傳 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1979), 332-66.

[272] The conversion about transformation of the domestic sphere into the public had already started in Zhao Shuli's "Xiao Erhei Jiehun." See footnote 270.

not simply about people sitting and eating at a table, but more about how the community as whole interacts, how everyone knows everyone else's family gossip, and how all the children play happily in the background. The public and family clearly have been forged into one and travel at the same pace in time.[273] Throughout the story, it is interesting how children are constantly roaming in the background. Children, instead of being raised by fastidious and doting modern parents, are raised by the public and the nation.

The previous chapters have explained how children under the developmental eugenics narrative were future citizens of China but were still first and foremost members of their own modern families. This suggests that familial affections and duties might hinder children from fully devoting themselves to their nation. However, children in the story of Li Shuangshuang do not encounter this tension because they are treated as the nation's children from the start. Presumably socialist children would answer the nation's calls directly without consulting with or worrying about their families. Following this literary trajectory, the rise of the Red Guards (hongweibing 紅衛兵), in historical hindsight, becomes somehow predictable.

The Red Guards were the dominant force during the initial years of the Cultural Revolution (*wenhua da geming*, 文化大革命, 1966-1976) before they were disbanded and assigned to posts in the countryside. The Cultural Revolution was spearheaded by

[273] Roy Chan's notion of fast socialism has inspired me to broaden my reading of Li Shuangshuang from a spatial reading to incorporate the temporal elements. (Roy Chan, *The Edge of Knowing: Dreams, History and Realism in Modern Chinese Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017), 118-121, 129-133.

Mao Zedong (毛澤東 1893-1976) when he demanded "a purge of 'bourgeois elements' from cultural circles and of 'right opportunists' from within the Party."[274] His call for students to rebel against authority was quickly answered by college students and then later high school and middle school students. These youths who were born into the socialist regime leapt at the opportunity to finally immerse themselves in the revolutionary spirit they had heard about throughout their lives. They saw a chance for both collective glory and personal fulfillment in fighting by Mao's side to rescue their beloved nation from falling back under rightist control. In actuality, for these youths, rebelling against authority quickly devolved into turning on their teachers, professors and school administers, attacking their mentors both verbally and physically. Eventually they even relished extreme rebellion against their own parents. Many Red Guards publicly denounced their parents with big-character posters (*dazibao* 大字報) or during struggle meetings (*douzheng hui* 鬥爭會).[275] Although my research on the Cultural Revolution is in its preliminary stage, I argue that Mao's ability to easily summon millions of zealous Chinese students to follow his imperative was an unintended outcome of the nearly seventy years project to disempower the family unit and align children with the nation. Perhaps, just as filial children of earlier times were once considered justified in avenging any perceived mistreatment of a cherished parent, the

[274] Rebecca E. Karl, *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 121.

[275] See Rebecca E. Karl, 117-138. Patricia Buckley Ebrey ed., *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook* 2nd ed., (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 449-457. Recounted by Yue Daiyun and written by Carolyn Wakeman, *To The Storm: The Odyssey of a Revolutionary Chinese Woman* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 167-250.

Red Guards' response could be considered an intuitive reaction to a threat against their most beloved provider, the state. This arguably perverse transposition of loyalty reveals how the project to mold children into vanguards of the Chinese nation eventually progressed beyond the wildest dreams of the May Fourth political reformists and the most unsettling nightmares of fiction writers.

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