



Hesitation and Way out

Analysis of the Image of Intellectuals in Lu Xun's Writings based on Wei Lianshu as an Example

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Abstract. The *Loners* was written in the period of the May Fourth Revolution, and it is a typical point in the background of the era of drastic changes, reflecting Lu Xun's inner loneliness and uncertainty, his firm anti-feudal and May Fourth Revolutionary spirit, and his humanitarianism in the face of the chaotic world, and conveying his thoughts on the way out of the intelligentsia. According to the analytical framework of creative purpose, image analysis, and creative influence, the article discovers Lu Xun's reflection on the Enlightenment "New Thought" in the specific discussion. The author will contemplate the contemporary reality, delving into the life and maturation journey of the central character, Wei Lianshu. This exploration will encompass the challenges faced by Wei Lianshu in the narrative of "runaway". After analyzing the text and the writer closely, this paper concludes that Lu Xun himself gained a new critical life after the death of Wei Lianshu and enlightened intellectuals to go forward. Simultaneously, the spiritual influence of Enlightenment thinkers serves as a cautionary message to emerging intellectuals of the contemporary age. It urges them to cultivate introspection, to boldly ponder over issues, to challenge established authority, to resist oppression, and to approach with an unburdened spirit the uncharted pathways that lie ahead for society.

Keywords: intellectuals, *The Loners*, Enlightenment.

1 Introduction

"The Loner", from the novel "Wandering", is a typical chapter of Lu Xun's concern about intellectuals. In this fiction, Lu Xun turns his pen to the intellectuals and analyzes them, but it is also a journey of Lu Xun's self-reflection and continuous search. As the high tide of May Fourth fades, the revolution is at a low ebb, the public remains numb, and the former pioneers are faced with the uncertainty of having no clear way out. The experience of the young students of the May Fourth Movement, who were born in the 1890s, was different from that of the early reformers like Liang Qichao, born in the 1860s and 1870s, and from that of the revolutionaries like Chen Duxiu, born a decade later[1]. The future and destiny of these young intellectuals deeply touched Mr. Lu Xun's heart, and the *Loner* came into being against this background. The *Loner*, in

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which Wei Lianshu encounters the dilemma of having no way out after his "departure", reflects Mr. Lu Xun's own reflection on enlightenment in terms of loneliness, revolutionary spirit and humanistic concern.

"What happened after Nala's departure" is a question that the pioneers of the May 4th generation could not avoid. The pioneers of modern literature used their pens as blades to carry out a profound criticism of the old system and the old rituals and inspired a generation of young people to rise in resistance and join the revolution. Lu Xun is one of the writers who have penetrated into the era. The study of Lu Xun is an important part of modern literary research. With the enrichment of scholars' research theories and the continuous expansion of the research field, there is a certain tendency of metaphysics in the fervent research, and Lu Xun's ideological research has been neglected to a certain extent in the process of pursuing empirical evidence to a certain extent. From the 1880s to the present day, the research of Lu Xun has been pushed forward from the ideological level to the political level and then extended to the life level. In *The Search of the Mind*, Mr. Qian Liqun pointed out that Lu Xun's "Dialectics of the Mind" should be explored [2]. Mr. Wang Furen believes that *The Scream* and *Indecision* are "a mirror of China's anti-feudal ideological revolution" [3].

This paper focuses on the contrast between the characters in *The Loner* and Lu Xun himself, discusses the inner uncertainty and confusion of the intellectuals in the face of the realities and the new life they gained after further criticism, and discovers the enlightenment and reflection contained therein in a situational and figurative way, to put forward feasible examples that can deepen the methodological approach to the study of Lu Xun's thought, and help weaken the stereotypes and metaphysical tendency of the study of Lu Xun, which will have a positive significance in further building a bridge between today's and 19th-century literature and serve as a reference and inspiration for young intellectuals in the new era.

2 Background Motivation for Creation

The most painful souls in modern China are the truly modern intellectuals, who have awakened their self-consciousness after accepting the new ideas, who are concerned about their country and others, and who relentlessly pursue the significance of their existence in the darkness of confusion. Lu Xun shaped the image of modern intellectuals, is to better recognize themselves, looking for similar, in the common struggle to break free from the reality of the spiritual shackles of the intellectuals under the oppression, and then get rid of the confusion, to find the way to freedom of existence. Wei Lianshu is such a new youth who has accepted new ideas. In the face of the "May Fourth Movement" tide, many young people who had raised their arms to call for enlightenment and revolution found that the road ahead was still confusing, and the new ideas were struggling under the oppression of the remnants of feudalism. Lu Xun Wei Lian Shu, the ambition of the young people who have not yet been realized is a sad bell to wake up the confused young people, with the revolutionary spirit of the national pioneers and courage to inspire young people in reality, not afraid of despair, dare to revolution.

Although there is no actual reference to the city of S in *The Loner*, the autobiographical nature of Lu Xun's statement to Hu Feng, "I wrote that about myself," suggests that S is the initials of Lu Xun's hometown, Shaoxing[4]. Combined with Booth's theory of literature, no matter how much an author tries to create a work that is not his own, there will always be elements in his work that are influenced by himself. The writer will analyze the problem as it needs to be analyzed and show himself in an attitude that fits the needs of the work [5]. The depiction of Wei Lianshu's workplace, S City, may also be an abbreviation of Lu Xun's writing about the social scene in which he was closely concerned about the current situation. Lu Xun creates the spatial background of the novel with a temporal and spatial context close to the one he lives in, with sharp and deep writing to portray the era of scars, which will be alone to convey the pain of injury.

3 Specific Enlightenment Image Analysis

3.1 Artistic Description Analysis

The main character in *The Loner* is the narrator "I" and the narrated person Wei Lianshu. Mr. Lu Xun himself had a feeling of loneliness when he wrote this novel. In *The Loner*, Wei Lianshu once called the narrator "I" as "Shen Fei", the pen name Mr. Lu Xun used. When Wei Lianshu appeared in the novel, he showed the appearance of thick hair, black eyebrows and a thick beard, which coincided with Xu Guangping's first impression of Lu Xun, and from the portrait level, it shows that Wei Lianshu's image is probably a kind of self-portrait of Lu Xun.

Mr. Lu Xun's novels have large, complex and wonderful psychological descriptions, as well as containing different perspectives of the narrative angle. The content and form of the new literature appear many times in this fiction, showing the writer's superior literary skills and forward-looking literary vision. For example, in *The Loner*, the character's ambivalent description of self-justification adds a sense of self-talk to the article. At the same time, this novel also exists in the authorities and bystanders of different perspectives. Wei Lianshu is being watched from the perspective of the authorities; telling the story of "I" is to see the people from the bystander's point of view, "I" in the development of the story does not have a huge impact on the story but the story of the witness, the formation of the "look" and "look" and "look". The "I" has no great influence on the development of the story but is the witness of the story, forming the structure of "seeing" and "being seen". At the same time, the image of "I" returning to my hometown is also a pattern of "leaving-returning-leaving again", forming a special kind of polyphony.

3.2 Text Language Portrayal

Revolving around Wei Lianshu, a significant character, his existence becomes intricately entwined with the notion of "loneliness" within the fluidity of life. Through this portrayal, Lu Xun consistently conveys a sense of being ensnared in the tumultuous currents of revolution. When Wei Lianshu meets his demise, it serves not only as the

culmination of the narrative but also as an expression of the author's own perplexity regarding his critical evolution into the new era.

The article titled "The Loner" prominently conveys a sense of loneliness. Upon delving into its contents, it becomes evident that the central character, Wei Lianshu, personifies the essence of solitude. His family background, described as a "wandering self-preface," narrates a trajectory from prosperity to adversity. As stated, "from a well-off family and fell into trouble" [6], Wei Lianshu's destiny perpetually mirrors the isolation and aimlessness akin to duckweed. He lost his parents at a young age and was raised by his grandmother, who was not related to him by blood and was his father's step-mother. Although his grandmother was the closest person to him, there was still a spiritual divide, and as for his own family, there was even more of a divide. The villagers even regarded him as a foreigner, having been educated in a "foreign school", and were unable to accept and understand his spiritual world. After the death of his grandmother, his relatives were ready to make a fuss to force him to follow the old customs while waiting for his return for the funeral, and still, no one was close to him. Even later, when his cousin and nephew tried to take over his dilapidated house in Cold Stone Mountain in the name of succession, he cursed in front of "me" and became an outsider who had no attachment to his hometown. He was regarded as an "alien" by society at that time, and under the spiritual difference that he could not coexist with the villagers of "Cold Stone Mountain", the death of his grandmother completely cut off his connection with his "hometown", and he lost his spirit. He has lost his spiritual home [7]. Under the double pressure of this society's economic and spiritual pressure, Wei Lianshu was destroyed by coldness and discrimination. The loneliness of this sort aligns with the contemporary aspiration for a departure from one's homeland, but, in the end, it leads to a spiritual dilemma for intellectuals who, for various reasons, find themselves unable to return home and are compelled to wander.

On the other hand, Lu Xun also saw the warmth of people and life. Lu Xun did not reject tradition, and in his past works, in addition to his bitter criticism and subtle satire, there is more of the warmth and innocence of Lu Xun's childhood, when he lived in tradition and was full of human feelings. Those simple and fragrant earthy smells, mixed with traditional warmth and the most original and touching beauty of primitive human nature, constitute the emotional undertones of Lu Xun's works that recognize the traditional relationship. On the one hand, there is the oppression of the old feudal rites on people, and on the other hand, there is the warmth that has been flowing in the bloodstream since ancient times, and these two sides of tradition make the confusion and contradiction of Wei Lianshu's work even more entangled. For example, in *The Loner*, although Wei Lianshu pretended to be calm and said, "Mostly because I was too emotional at that time," the cold words, in his description of his grandmother's painful cry when he recalled her burial, "But I somehow shrunk her life in front of my eyes at that time, and caused loneliness with my own hands, and put it in my mouth to chew people's lives, and felt that there were still many such people and that these people, then, made me want to cry bitterly." His attachment to his family and inner warmth can still be seen in [8]. Even though he hates the "cannibalism" of the old rituals, and even though he disagrees with his relatives in terms of ideology, the reality of the divide still cannot stop the soft and warmth of his heart from sprouting, and he still demonstrates

the emotional impact of affection and death on human beings, which reflects Mr. Lu Xun's humanistic concern.

Furthermore, Lu Xun often points to himself in the discussion between "I" and Wei Lianshu, turning it into a kind of introspective self-refutation. This kind of self-refutation of thinking formed "I" and Wei Lianshu these two subjects confront each other, which also contains a contradictory sense of destiny; for example, "I" and Wei Lianshu in the talk about the death of Wei Lianshu through the echo of the acquaintance of a, said: "I and Wei Lianshu acquaintance a, in retrospect is also unique, actually is to send coffins start, to send coffins end" [9]. Here, the use of "chic", this seemingly cold adjective, lightly skimmed over the heavy impact of death on the relationship. However, in the text, there are still traces of Wei Lianshu in "my" heart has a place, not playfully forgotten, but unforgettable. When "I" received a letter from Wei Lianshu, a man who has been separated from "me" for a long time, although "I" "always stressed that "I" "have gradually deleted the shadow of Wei Lianshu in "my" mind, "I" still feel touched by his image inadvertently, and even have more and more thoughts. From this, it can be inferred that Wei Lianshu was not a disinterested passer-by to "himself," but rather an unforgettable individual. During this period, Lu Xun portrayed "himself" in a different state of mind. The narrative woven between the two characters resonated from start to finish, forming a closed loop in Mr. Lu Xun's self-critique.

In *The Loner*, the main character Wei Lianshu takes revenge on the "spectators", the "mediocre people", and himself three times; Lu Xun projects his own inner accusation, loneliness, and helplessness like Wei Lianshu by shaping this character. Wei Lianshu's death is the tragedy of being oppressed by the times, but at the same time, it is Lu Xun's pronouncement of the death of the old self of uncertainty, and it is the rebirth of turning pain into strength [10]. Mr. Lu Xun's attitude towards life and death is "to live towards death", so most of his works end in death. Wei Lianshu in *The Loner* is a typical example of his demise. As a lonely "alien", Wei Lianshu goes to death in the midst of dashed hopes and self-struggle. However, this kind of death does not simply depict the passing of life, but because he thinks about how to live better, he values the realization of death, and then he really understands the value and meaning of living from death in order to carry out self-criticism and firm ideal beliefs better.

As Lu Xun said: "Despair is vain, just like hope." In this situation, the more settled Wei Lian is in the status quo, the more he enjoys the physical enjoyment brought by the change in identity, the more his spirit deviates from the original intention of the new intellectual, and the more he falls into despair. The more he suffered, the closer he was to death, but it was a reflection of his constant pursuit of "new life." He once wrote to "me", asking each other to forget on the grounds that he was not a fellow traveller, but he was still in the absurd reality, unable to get rid of the sadness of being unable to change the status quo and the desire to keep the soul alive. Facing the ugly self contrary to his desire, Wei Lianshu finally dies. Besides the tragic body, his soul bid farewell to the man he hated successfully and entered a new life of liberation.

3.3 Analogy of Similar Images

In addition to *The Loner*, the typical intellectual image of Lü Weifu is also portrayed in *At the Tavern*, which is also from *Wondering and Wandering*. In *At the Tavern* uses the encounter in the restaurant to tell the story of a man who used to "go to the City God Temple to pull out the beard of the statue of the god" with the first narrator "I" and "discussed some methods of reforming China for days and days to the point of fighting"[11]. The main narrator of the precursor Lyu Weifu's compromise concessions, *The Loner* with "I" and Wei Lianshu's three discussions depicted a precursor lonely wandering, wandering life. In both essays, when "I" knew that the tragedy of the protagonist had become a foregone conclusion, the narrator, "I", participated as a "passer-by" and showed his firm conviction. Perhaps this is Lu Xun's self-motivation in his uncertain state of mind at that time.

Lyu Weifu and Wei Lian in Lu Xun's *Montverde* and *The Montverde* are typical unsuccessful intellectual images. These two novels were written in 1924 and 1925, when they were in the ebb period after the May Fourth Movement, and the pioneers generally fell into a loss and did not know the way out. As Lu Xun himself said: "Having seen the Revolution of 1911, seen the second revolution, seen Yuan Shikai proclaimed himself emperor, and Zhang Xun restored, "I" looked and looked, and "I" became suspicious, so I was disappointed and depressed" [12]. Lu Xun showed the tragic social reality of the awakened people through the images of these two prescient intellectuals. At the same time, Lu Xun made a clear distinction between the image of Lyu Weifu and Wei Lianshu and the hesitating self. In his writing, he showed that "recognizing oneself and the same kind, breaking free from the mental prison created by intellectuals, and killing a blood way to survive"—the power of courage [13]. In the face of the "May Fourth Movement", the new young people deeply influenced by enlightenment thought are in a difficult predicament in which they are confused about the future. Strauss said, "When we discover that the foundation of all objective, rational knowledge is an abyss." In the end, all truth, all meaning is supported by nothing but human freedom[14]. Lu Xun uses the two prescience young people, Lyu Weifu and Wei Lianshu, to ring the bell led by the national forerunner, clear the uncertainty fog, and alert the new young people to face difficulties and dare to revolution in reality.

4 Discussion

To sum up, Lu Xun's reflection and analysis of the contradictory situation of intellectuals are condensed into a novel such as *The Loner*, and the loneliness and ambivalence reflected reflect a strong introspective mentality -- the pioneer himself has a constant connection with society, tradition and the present. Even if he stands on the opposite side of tradition, he is still a part of this society. And responsible for the state of our society. This echoes his consistent proposition of putting people first. In the face of survival difficulties, the young people of new knowledge carry out personalized development after realizing "putting people first", promote spiritual strength, constantly criticize and continue to explore with the power of youth, and move forward in wind and rain.

Lu Xun never stopped thinking about the "way out", and always responded to himself with a critical and questioning attitude and put himself in a situation of endless exploration. In the face of difficulties, he was put to death in the tragedy of ebb and flow, and what he tempered was a more firm revolutionary determination. Wei Lian is Lu Xun, and "I" is Lu Xun -- after the confusion and pain, he internalized these hesitations into the deepest part of his soul and entered into a new "struggle". He can be said to be a navigation tower in the history of modern literature. His works are very personal characteristics, but also in line with the current of The Times, in the self-criticism and self-motivation to fully show the spirit of the forerunning strong, shocking.

5 Conclusion

Through studying the image of the intellectual Wei Lianshu in *The Loner*, this paper finds that Lu Xun integrates his reflections on the Enlightenment "New Thought" in terms of loneliness, revolutionary spirit and humanistic concern into the predicament encountered by the protagonist Wei Lianshu after he has "run away". The main character, Wei Lianshu, is in a difficult situation after his "departure". In the face of the uncertainty of the falling tide of the revolution, Lu Xun did not directly give a specific way out, but with the words "must be measured by the ruler that exists in the hearts of the Chinese who want to take part in the cause of the world"[15] to inspire individuals to dare to think about the problem, to question the authority, to resist oppression. In turn, the ideal goal of recognizing one's own kind and finding a way out is achieved. This study highly combines the specific analyzed texts with the author's personalities in a situational and figurative way, which, to a certain extent, is conducive to deepening the understanding of Lu Xun's thought in the process of empirical research and weakening the tendency of stereotyping and metaphysicizing in the process. Finally, this study has not yet touched upon the group-self relationship between the individual and the society in Lu Xun's works and has not been linked to the characteristics of the present era, so it can be further refined in the future to help establish a more in-depth study of the thoughts of Lu Xun, a typical writer in the flood of the era.

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