World Making and Cosmopolitan-Vernacular Heteroglossia in Modern Chinese Fiction: Lu Xun’s “A Madman’s Diary” and the “Shaky House”

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Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the significance of diglossia, translingual practice and multiglossia in modern Chinese fiction in the early 20th century, based on a close reading of Lu Xun’s influential short story “A Madman’s Diary” (1918), which has been regarded as the first instance of modern Chinese fiction written in the vernacular. Reformists within the New Culture Movement, such as Lu Xun advocated using “western” knowledge and ideas, and the abolishment of traditional culture and Confucianism, in order to build a strong Chinese nation that could resist foreign imperialism. Nation building required the creation of a “national literature” in a vernacular “national language” (Hu, 1918,x). This study shows how Lu Xun (1881-1936), in his efforts to reform the “real” world made modern, literary fiction the arena for the battle of languages and of ideas.

He created hybrid, linguistically complex literary worlds in which languages, and the competing worldviews and ideologies embedded in them, became the contestants. In “A Madman’s Diary, the narrative structure is constructed as a diglossic battle between the juxtaposed Preface, written in the classical, literary language wenyan and Diary written in the vernacular, baihua. Through their allegiances with competing worldviews and ideologies, wenyan and baihua are the main contestants. However, this study also shows how the binary opposition between the Preface and the Diary is undermined by a third contestant, western “translated modernity” (Liu), through the infiltration of foreign loanwords and transliteration from English etc., which has implications for the reading of this literary work.

The analysis and discussion of “A Madman’s Diary” is preceded by a short introduction to diglossia in pre-modern China; the New Culture Movement; and the May Fourth writers development of the new-style vernacular and their “Shaky house” experience (Zhou, 2011) and “translingual practice” (Liu, 1995).

Diglossia in pre-modern China and the New Culture Movement’s calls for language reform

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1 This is a question of definition and impact. Chen Hengzhe’s “One Day” (1917), a short story in the vernacular, published US Student Quarterly, could, according to Wang, have been seen as: “the first example of modern Chinese vernacular literature”, had it reached more readers in China (Wang, 479). Still, as Shih claims: “the modern short story form […] was modeled explicitly after its western counterpart, where more emphasis is given to the economy of plot and character conflict, and where supposedly “modern” issues are dealt with”, Shih, 85, f. 43.
For two millennia, the classical, literary language wenyan, was used in the bureaucracy, in high literature, philosophy and history. The First Emperor of the Qin dynasty (221-207 BCE) ordered a unification of the writing system, and thus a standardized written language developed, used in the imperial administration to cope with dialectal diversity in this vast empire and keep it under control. Men within the ruling class studied the Confucian Classics and the literary writing style in order to pass the imperial civil service examination (abolished in 1905), while the population at large were illiterate. According to Norman, the development of wenyan created a sociolinguistic situation that fits “relatively well” with Ferguson’s definition of diglossia (250), with a High and a Low language with different functions. Ferguson description of a High Language:

> a very divergent, highly codified […] superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community […], which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation. (1964, 453)

The Low language in the Chinese context was the written vernacular, baihua, with roots in folksongs, translations Buddhist texts (Chen, 68) and oral storytelling (Bördahl, 1). Baihua became a vehicle for popular fiction, such as the famous novels of the Ming and Qing dynasties. Although the literati enjoyed reading and writing fiction in contemporary vernacular: “…wenyan was considered refined and elegant, thus ideal for high-culture functions, while baihua was despised as coarse and vulgar, suitable only for low culture functions” (Chen, 69). Norman: “Before the time of the May Fourth Movement, it [baihua] was considered fit only to be a vehicle of popular entertainment” (246)

Wenyan was a cosmopolitan language, the scripta franca of the elites of East Asia of East Asia up to the 20th century (Denecke and Zhang, VIII), and the vehicle of a cosmopolitan Confucianism (Levenson, 5; Hu and Elverskog, 1), promoted by the rulers of the last dynasty, Qing (Guy, 51-52), that fell after the 1911-12 revolt. The Opium Wars of the mid-19th century, the semi-colonization of China by western imperialist powers, the defeat in the Sino-Japanese war (1894-5) etc. led to the rise of a “national salvation” discourse among students and intellectuals in the early 20th century. The aim of the reformists was to build a strong, modern and independent China, free from colonial powers, a nation among nations. This required in many of the reformists’ views abandoning Confucian values and traditional culture in favor of “western”. Massive education of the people was required, and that in turn demanded a written language closer to the spoken language. A strong nation thus required a national language in the vernacular. The language reform of Japan’s Meiji period (1868-1912) served as an example
(Chen, 70), as did the European idea of nation-ness being connected with a specific language, as stated by J. G von Herder (1744-1803) (Zhou, 129; Anderson 67-68).²

The journal *New Youth*, started by Chen Duxiu (1879-1942) in 1915, became an important vehicle for the New Culture movement promoting the reform of language and literature. In Hu Shi’s (1891-1962) manifest in *New Youth* in 1917, he demanded the reform of Chinese literature, and criticizes literature written in *wenyan* for being void of substance and full of old cliches etc., and urges writers “not avoid using vulgar [vernacular] diction” (Hu, 1917, 467?)³ In the subsequent issue, Chen Duxiu criticized the “unintelligible” and “over-ornamented” *wenyan* literature “of the aristocratic few”, demanding a realistic “plain, simple, and expressive literature of the people” (Chen, 1917, 563?).⁴ In 1918, Hu Shi called for:

…the creation of a language in the national language and a national language suitable for literature […] Chinese literature produced by men of letters during the last two millennia is a dead literature, written in a dead language[…]. If China needs a living literature, we must write in the vernacular, in the national language, and we must try to produce literary works in the national language. (Hu Shi, 343?, transl. by Zhou, 38)

Hu Shi’s “dead” versus “living” metaphor added considerable force to his argument and “national literature in national language” became a slogan among May Fourth writers.⁵ For the New Culture Movement, language reform involved ideology, worldviews and values. Ping Chen: “While *wenyan* was taken to be synonymous with traditional Chinese values, after the May 4th movement *baihua* was assumed to be the only appropriate linguistic vehicle for the whole set of new, mostly imported Western concepts subsumed under democracy and science.” (Chen, 79)

**The May Fourth writers and the “Shaky House”**

Creating a unified, national literary language proved to be quite a challenge, since there was no ready-made standard of *baihua* to adopt at the time, and no general agreement among authors.⁶ There were several types of writing in use and the new-style *baihua* (or May Fourth style *baihua*) favoured by the New Culture Movement was, according to Chen “a general name that referred to the various types of the new style that reformist writers were experimenting with at

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² However, Andersons “neat picture of the spread of the vernacular movement” from West to East is refuted by Zhou, who depicts a much more complicated picture regarding the vernacularization process in non-European countries (129-134).

³ For an introduction to the reformist’s discourse on reform of language and literature in manifests by Liang Qichao, Hu Shi, Chen Duxiu, see Rydholm, *World Literatures*…

⁴ English transl. by Chow (276).

⁵ The date May Fourth refers to the student demonstrations in Peking in 1919 against the Versailles Peace Conference and Japanese imperialism. The May Fourth Movement was a major intellectual, sociopolitical and cultural reform movement 1917-21 (Chow). Writers producing literary works in that period, reflecting the reformist spirit of the movement and developing the vernacular in literature are in general referred to as “May Fourth writers”.

⁶ Some reformists advocated abandoning the logographic script in favor of romanization of the Chinese script, to increase literacy (see Norman, 257-265).
the time” (76). Scholars generally agree that the replacement of wenyan with baihua was not a government effort but the work of individuals, of intellectuals, cultural reformist and elite writers (Norman 255; Zhou 7). However, their baihua was an “awkward mixture of styles” (Chen, 78). These May Fourth writers grew up with their native dialect, were educated to write in wenyan, and then studied abroad. Many learnt foreign languages and translated literary works from English, French, German, Russian or Japanese into Chinese. Many writers “wrote in a heavily Europeanized style, producing texts that read like literal translations from a foreign language” (Chen, 78). Translation, or rather translilingual practice (Liu), went hand in hand with vernacularization and literary creation. This reveals the complexities in creating a new literature in new style baihua at the time, but also the freedom of experimentation with language and style, at a time when foreign loan words were pouring in along with “western” knowledge.

In his important work Placing the Modern Chinese Vernacular in Transnational Literature, Gang Zhou discusses the Chinese vernacularization process in the context of World literature. Zhou, with reference to Heidegger’s statements of language as the “House of Being” (“A Dialogue on Language”), introduces the concept of “Shaky House” in the context of the May Fourth writers developing the new-style baihua. Zhou: “by the “Shaky house” family, I mean the specific kind of vernacular literature produced at certain historical junctures of linguistic upheaval, whose literary medium manifests dramatic language change and is replete with linguistic tension and precariousness.” (Zhou, 96-97). According to Zhou the May Fourth writers worked in uncertainty:

In the case of the generation of May Fourth writers, who were ordained to experience a dramatic language change, their proper abode must have been shaky and precarious. Their sense of alienation and their uncertainty towards the linguistic medium they were writing and creating distinguish them sharply from both the previous and following generations….I argue that in the kind of linguistic tension and unfamiliarity of these May Fourth vernacular writers experienced in their writing, they more closely resemble bilingual writers and translators, whose proper abode are also shaky…(Zhou, 7).

The 1920ies new-style baihua was not base simply on everyday speech or a particular dialect, it incorporated “a large amount of expressions from Old Chinese or literal translations from foreign languages” and thus “was still quite removed from the actual speech of any group of speakers” (Chen, 77). Shu-mei Shih has stated that the May Fourth writers’ “heavily Europeanized and Japanized (i.e. translated) vernacular might in effect be as alien to the ordinary reader as wenyan”(71). There are many reasons to regard the May Fourth writers as members of a Shaky House family, but in Lu Xun’s case, as I aim to show, there is no evidence of “uncertainty”, but rather a very conscious use and manipulation of the written language, more in line with what Lydia Liu has described as “translingual practice”.

**The new style baihua and translilingual practice**

In her important work Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity - China, 1900-1937, Lydia Liu discusses the importance of language and translation in
the Chinese reformists’ imagination of a modern China. She uses the concept of “translated modernity”, instead of “influence”, to refer to processes of change in modern Chinese literature due the East-West encounters (xix?). In her view, translation is not simply a history of domination and resistance, not simply a transference of ideas from West to East, from past to present, from traditional to modern (preface), thus “granting too little to the agency of the non-Western languages in these transactions” (Liu, 22?). Thus she uses the terms “guest” and “host” language, instead of the general terms “source” and “target” to highlight “the possibility that a non-European host language may violate, displace, and usurp the authority of the guest language in the process of translation as well as be transformed by it or be in complicity with it.” (27). Liu explains the main concept “translingual practice” as follows:

Broadly defined, the study of translingual practice examines the process by which new words, meanings, discourses, and modes of representation arise, circulate, and acquire legitimacy within the host language due to, or in spite of, the latter’s contact/collision with the guest language. Meanings, therefore are not so much “transformed” when concepts pass from the guest language to the host language as invented within the local environment of the latter. In that sense, translation is no longer a neutral event untouched by contending interests of political and ideological struggles. Instead, it becomes the very site of such struggles. (26-27).

Liu further states that:

I am interested in the conditions under which “confrontations” 7 occur between China, Japan, and the West at the site of translation or wherever languages happen to meet, for this is where the irreducible differences between the host language and the guest language are fought out, authorities invoked or challenged, and ambiguities dissolved or created, and so forth, until the new words and meanings emerge in the host language itself. In short, the confrontations register a meaning-making history that cuts across different national languages and histories. (32)

Liu’s “translingual practice” will constitute the theoretical framework for this study of “A Madman’s Diary”. I will show that the linguistic “confrontations” between a “guest” and “host” language appear in “A Madman’s Diary”. Liu urges us to “focus on the ways in which intellectual resources from the West and from China’s past are cited, translated, appropriated, or claimed in moments of perceived historical contingency so that something called change may be produced. […] this change is always already different from China’s own past and from the West, but have profound linkages to both” (39). I will show that this is also relevant with regard to the Confucian ideology carried by wenyan, and the introduction of social-Darwinism through

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7 Lydia Liu refers Gayatri Spivaks’ interpretation of a group of South Asian historians, the Subaltern Studies group’s theory of change, in which the “transition” (from feudalism to capitalism, from tradition to modernity etc.) in the great narrative of East-West encounter is replaced by several kinds of “confrontations” on different levels, also reflected in sign-systems (Liu, 30-31).
translingual practice in the new style vernacular in “A Madman’s Diary”. Liu discusses the complexity in the process of translating “western” modernity, as it was often mediated by translation via Japanese, a Japanese language with deep roots in Chinese script, using kanji, Chinese characters. This is relevant in the case of certain Sino-Japanese-European loanwords in “A Madman’s Diary”. In this study, I will discuss a selection of words and expression that unsettle the diglossic, binary opposition between the Preface and in the Diary, vehicles of ideologies evoking certain authorities, Chinese or foreign, which in turn has implications for the reading of the entire text. I begin by a discussion of the diglossic narrative structure of “A Madman’s Diary”, followed by an analysis of translingual practice and multiglossia, first in the Preface, and then in the Diary. In my conclusions, I return to the issue of the Shaky house.

**Lu Xun’s “A Madman’s Diary”: diglossia or bi-lingualism?**

In his essay “Why I started to write fiction”, Lu Xun’s states his reasons, mainly to “enlighten” people and “cure” China:

> In speaking of ‘why I write novels’ just like ten years ago, I still hold on to ‘the idea of enlightenment’, and that it [fiction] must ‘serve human life’, and even improve human life. I deeply detest those who call novels ‘leisure books’, and in addition believe in ‘art for art’s sake’, seeing the novel merely as a new name for ‘passing time in a leisurely way’. Therefore, I draw my material from the unfortunate people of a sick society; my idea is to uncover the symptoms of the disease and draw attention to finding a cure. (1933, LXQJ vol 4, 526)

Lu Xun had studied medicine in Japan, but changed subject to literature. He claims to have come to realize, that it was not the body that needed to be cured, but rather people’s minds: “The most important thing, therefore, was to change their [the Chinese people] spirit; and since at that time I felt that literature was the best means to this end, I decided to promote a literary movement.”

Lu Xun became one of the leading voices within the New Culture Movement, rejecting traditional culture and Confucian morals, and promoting western learning and the written vernacular.

Lu Xun claims that “A Madman’s Diary” was written after repeated requests from the editor of New Youth (LXQJ vol 4, 526). In Hu Shi’s manifest calling for a “national literature in the

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8. As Fogel points out regarding new vocabulary in “modern Chinese”: “every single newly minted term has its own story” (1). The aim of this study is not to trace each Chinese or foreign loanword in Lu Xun’s short story, back to their original sources and how they have traveled and transformed in Chinese literature, since that would require an article for each word.

9. Lu Xun, “Zixu” [“Preface to Call to Arms”] (192), 271, transl. by the Yang’s in Modern Chinese Literary Thought (240). In his preface, Lu Xun claims to have he changed his mind after seeing newsreel slides in Japan of Japanese soldiers executing Chinese “spies” in China, while their countrymen just stood by watching indifferent.

10. By the time he wrote “A Madman’s Diary”, Lu Xun, according to Cheah, was probably more influenced by Kant’s pre-nationalist cosmopolitanism and his ideas of a global federation of nation-states, which according to Cheah means that he was not opposed to nationalism (Kant 1968e:203n in Cheah, 487). He seems to endorse the ideas of cosmo-nationalist ideas of Sun Yatsen in his republican nationalism, rather than Marxist proletarian
national language”, he had claimed that “A national language may be established only after we have produced a literature in the national language” (a, transl. by Zhou, 38). He also stated that the only reason that wenyan literature still existed, was that “there still is no new literature of true value and real life force to learn from and to replace it. When there is “true literature” and “living literature”, this “fake literature” and “dead literature” will naturally be extinguished” (a, 343). It was hardly a coincidence that “A Madman’s Diary” was published in subsequent issue of New Youth. It was exactly this kind of attack on tradition, by example of a new, “living” literature in the vernacular, that Hu Shi advocated.

However, the narrative structure of this short story has rendered much debate among scholars. In “A Madman’s Diary, the narrative structure is constructed as a diglossic battle between the juxtaposed Preface and Diary. The Preface is written in wenyan, the vehicle of traditional culture and Confucian morals, embodying a traditional, Confucian cosmopolitan worldview of the Chinese empire. The Diary is written in the contemporary baihua, the vehicle of the national-language-nation-building-discourse of the new elite (Hu, Chen). In this short story, the High language wenyan and the Low language baihua, through their allegiances with competing worldviews and ideologies, are the obvious main contestants.

“A Madman’s Diary” consists mainly of the diary written by “the madman” in first person, and in the new-style baihua. The madman lives in terror of being eaten by cannibals, and suspects everyone around him, including his doctor and his brother, of conspiring against him to this effect. However, it soon turns out that this is more than a depiction of clinical madness, as the madman searches for evidence of cannibalism in China in historical records:

> Everything requires careful consideration if one is to understand it. In ancient times, as I recollect, people often ate human beings, but I am rather hazy about it. I tried to look this up, but my history has no chronology and scrawled all over each page are the words “Confucian Virtue and Morality”. Since I could not sleep anyway, I read intently half the night until I began to see words between the lines. The whole book was filled with the two words — “Eat people!”

This is the passage in the diary that clearly shows that “man-eating” in the Diary is a metaphor for “Confucian Virtue and Morality” and that the story is intended as a critique of traditional society and culture, of Confucian morals. Hence it is no coincidence that the Diary is written in the vernacular, since it became the major vehicle for criticism of traditional culture and cosmopolitanism adverse to the nation state. (Cheah, 490). At least at the time Lu Xun wrote Madman, Marxism had not yet been introduced to China properly (Cheah).

12 Lu Xun himself stated that the “A Madman’s Diary” was intended as a critique of Confucian morals in “Lu Xun lun wenxue yu yishu” [Lu Xun on Literature and Arts], cited by Gu 450. According to Ming Dong Gu, scholars generally agree on that Lu Xun: “Through a madman’s mouth, the author voices his opinion of Chinese history and society. Under the disguise of Confucian virtue and morality, China’s history is an account of cannibalism, and Chinese society one inhabited by man-eating inhabitants” (Gu, 446).
Confucian morals, for reform, for the national survival discourse of building a national language and a modern nation. The reader begins to see the madman as being a rebel against traditional culture and society, not clinically mad, but rather “prophetically mad” (discussed below).

However, the diary is framed by a preface written in wenyan by a friend of the family, providing details about the madman’s illness, claiming him to have suffered from “persecution mania”, and also telling that the madman had subsequently recovered and taken up a job in the government bureaucracy. The fictional narrator of the preface claims to publish the diary of the madman in the service of research in medical science. The preface written in wenyan, the vehicle of tradition and Confucian morals, carries the “voice of reason”, normalcy and serves to contradict the madman’s critique of society and traditional Confucian morals. “A Madman’s Diary”, according to Zhou:

…embodies the breakdown of the conventional linguistic hierarchy and a deadly language war that emerges out of this breakdown. Here a preface in classical Chinese […] is used as an ideological setup. […] a battle between two languages, two positions, and two ideological viewpoints. […] His text split into two universes linked with two languages and two ideological viewpoints, perfectly echoed Hu Shi’s theorization that defines classical Chinese and the vernacular as symbols of two completely conflicting forces. The new set of binary oppositions-past/future, traditional/modern, dead/living, East/West- that Hu Shi and other revolutionary thinkers associated with classical Chinese and the vernacular found its brilliant artistic representation in Lu Xun’s “Diary of a Madman” (85-86).

I agree with Zhou’s analysis of the war between languages and ideologies embodied in the narrative structure, but Zhou takes his argument further, to a point with which I disagree. Zhou claims that Lu Xun had a strictly bi-lingual approach toward the vernacular, as opposed to for instance the May Fourth writer Yu Dafu (1896-1945), who had a “multi-glossic approach” in his use of the vernacular (Zhou, 94): In Yu’s “Sinking”, classical Chinese, the vernacular, and foreign languages all exist harmoniously to serve the needs of our hero/narrator. […] we readers are invited to a multilingual playing field, following and identifying with our hero’s multi-glossic self”. (Zhou, 94). Zhou:

In his work, Lu Xun made every effort to transform classical Chinese and the vernacular (two language varieties) into two completely opposite languages. The paradigm shift we see from his text is what I call “from diglossia to bi-lingualism”. Classical Chinese and the vernacular, two complementary language varieties in the old diglossic structure, were approached bi-lingually in Lu Xun’s writing, presented as two languages, and as two ideological forces completely disconnected and in conflict (93)

Lu Xun’s ideological/linguistic battle line between the normative wenyan Preface speaking on behalf of traditional values, and the revolutionary diary in the new vernacular, may appear to be very sharp, like “two universes” (Zhou), two literary worlds, each with its language and world-
view, confined in its own textual space of this short. However, if we take a closer look at both the wenyan in the Preface, and the new vernacular in the Diary at word level, we find linguistic complexity, hybridity, and evidence of what we may call translingual practice, in Lydia Liu’s sense. Lu Xun as a translator he was highly aware of the problems of translating western concepts and ideas into Chinese. This is reflected in his literary works, in which we in my view can find “modes of transmission, manipulation, deployment, and domination within the power structure of the host language” (Liu, cited above). In the following analysis of Lu Xun’s “A Madman’s Diary”, I will show that from a linguistic point of view it is not “bi-lingual”, but rather multi-glossic. While clearly fighting a “diglossic language war”, it is in addition, and in fact, a multiglossic hybrid of languages and of ideologies, Chinese and foreign.

“A Madman’s Diary”: translingual practice and multiglossia in the Preface

Beginning with the Preface speaking on behalf of traditional society, it gives the impression to have be written by narrator with a traditional civil servant education based on Confucian morals and classical literature, and who is well integrated in the civil service system. This is evident by the following: he writes in the language of the educated elite, wenyan, the vehicle for tradition and for Confucian morals; he uses the classical literary term “kuangren” for “madman” in the title (to be discussed below); he clearly refutes the madman’s accusations against traditional society and Confucian morals since he claims him to be insane, suffering from pohuaikuang “persecution mania”; and, finally, this fictional narrator asserts as a sign of the madman’s “recovery” that he has accepted a post in the government bureaucracy, thus evidently having given up his critique against traditional society and Confucian morals, and regained sanity. However, if we take a closer look at precisely the two words related to madness in the preface, namely “kuangren” and “pohaiikuang” from the point of translingual practice and the authorities evoked (Liu), the narrator of the preface may actually be contradicting the ideological/linguistic standpoint represented by this preface. For my discussions of these two expressions in the Preface, I will in part rely on two articles by Ma Xiaolu’s articles which trace these words in Japanese and how they were translated into Chinese, and used by Lu Xun in this story (Ma a+b). But my aim goes beyond the purpose of Ma’s studies. I will analyze the impact of these expressions on the overall narrative structure of diglossic battle of this short story, and discuss how these expressions undermine the reliability of the narrator of the Preface.

Beginning with the title of the story, the narrator of the Preface claims to have edited and published the diary with the purpose of providing material for medical research, but not having chosen the title. Instead he claims that the title “A Madman’s Diary” Kuangren riji 疯人日记, was “chosen by the madman himself” after his recovery (LXQ). The irony of that, as Ma Xiaolu points out, is that the madman advocating the use of the vernacular, ultimately chose to be defined in wenyan, in terms of a classical literary allusion (Ma, 337). The choice of the word kuangren 疯人 instead of fengren 疯人 for “madman” in the title has a strong symbolic value. According to Ma Xiaorong we should consider the expression “madman” in three languages and

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Together with his brother Zhou Zuoren, Liu Xun studied in Japan for several years, and read a lot of European literature in Japanese and German translation, and also translated several literary works into Chinese. Lu Xun read a lot of European literature in Japanese and German translation, and also translated several literary works into Chinese. Lu Xun read a lot of European literature in Japanese and German translation, and also translated several literary works into Chinese. Lu Xun was very fond of Russian literature and acknowledged that: “A Madman’s Diary” had been inspired by Nikolaj Gogol’s “The Diary of a Madman” (Chinnery, 310). According to Ma, in Russian tradition the madman could be seen as a “poetic prophet”, a “holy fool” in possession of holy wisdom, but by the 18th century, madness came to be regarded as the opposite of reason, and Gogol thus chose the term “sumashshedshij”, which means “out of mind” for his “madman” (Ma, 336). According to Ma, this shows that: “In his story, madness represents the opposite of reason: the absence of the cognitive abilities required to think rationally” and that “In Gogol’s story .. instead of prophetic madness, clinical madness prevails…” (Ma, 4 and 5).

Gogol’s story may lack that “systematic symbolism” of Lu Xun’s “A Madman’s Diary” (Hanan, 66). Still, it contains an “elusive symbolic, as well as a strikingly modern and innovative side to it” (Kowallis 104 f 13-14). According to Fanger “Gogol’s madman is unquestionably a victim of the Petersburg bureaucracy and the Petersburg press; but he is a victim because he is a quintessential government clerk [...] He rebels not against a world of rank, but against his lowly place within it, and he can find no more effective target for rebellion than his own self.” (Kowallis, 104-5 f 14). This being said about the “madness” of Gogol’s madman, I think his diary also exposes a superficial and hierarchical society, and this may have inspired Lu Xun to use the form of a diary by a madman for social criticism, after all, traditional society based on Confucian ideology was also hierarchical.

In his articles, Ma Xiaolu (partly based on Tang Xiaobing’s work) claims Japanese to be the intermediary in the process of “transculturation of madness”, since Lu Xun read Gogol’s novel in Futabatei Shimei’s translation. Fubatei translated Gogol’s work as “Kojin Nikki”, in which kuoyin “madness” (Ma, 337), means “a person who has lost mental balance” (Ma, 337 f26). Kyojin in Japanese is written in kanji, Chinese characters, as 狂 in and in classical Japanese it could also refer to a “defiant person who would not confirm to social norms”, a meaning likely to have been derived from classical Chinese literature (Ma 337-8). However, Lu Xun’s brother Zuoren, chose the title Fengren riji 逢人日记 (Ma, 336 and Tang f) for his Chinese translation of Gogol’s story. Tang Xiaobing:

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13 Lu Xun acknowledged that his preparations for writing “A Madman’s Diary” were based on “his earlier readings of more than a hundred foreign novels and a little medical knowledge”, “Why I started to write fiction” (LXQ, vol 4, 526). Hanan discusses the influence of Andreev’s The Red Laugh on Lu Xun’s “A Madman’s Diary” (Hanan, 66-68), others trace an influence of Akutagawa’s Kappa, and most scholars agree on the influence of Nietzsche’s Also sprach Zarathustra (to be discussed in the following).

14 According to Ma Xiaolu, Lu Xun read the story in the Japanese journal Interest (Kyomi) march-may, 1907 (337).
Lu Xun's brother Zhou Zuoren translates Nikolay Gogol’s Diary of a Madman as Fengren riji instead of Kuanren riji, which later became the standard translation. Lu Xun himself was no less aware of the semantic difference between kuang and feng. In his earlier youthful essay “on the Power of Mara Poets” (1907), he postulates that kuang refers to the Nietzschean self-affirmation that provides an essential regenerative energy for any thriving civilization. The word also characterizes talented individuals who are contemptuously opposed to a stagnant society and whose actions exceed the public’s comprehension. […] As an adjective—a usage that dates back to The Book of Songs [11-6 BCE]—kuang is equivalent to ‘unrestrainedly outgoing, wildly defiant.’ In Confucius’s Analects, it also occurs as a verb meaning to progress or aggress. Feng, an ideogramic word of much more recent origin, was initially a pathological term denoting the mad, the neurotic, the insensible, or the sheerly stupid (Tang, 1226 f 24 and Ma, 337).

Zhou Zuoren’s translation is thus indicative of an interpretation of Gogol’s story as clinical mental illness, not as prophetic madness. Lu Xun had both his brother’s and Fubatei’s translation of Gogol’s title to choose from for his own short story, and he chose the latter. As Ma points out, “Because of the long history of social and political protest associated with kuang, this title is an important factor in motivating the allegorical reading of the short story by many scholars” (Ma, 7), and “Even if Lu Xun did not intend to refer to the Chinese kuang tradition but simply to connect his story with the Russian homonymic short story, readers aware of kuang’s rich cultural implications would likely be led by the title to consider its connotations and extract a hidden message relating to prophetic kuangren who target stagnant society “ (Ma, 11).

This choice of “kuangren” in the title is no doubt an important way of communicating to readers that the story is in fact about “prophetic madness”, of a rebel against society, not simply clinical madness, and this would be common knowledge for people educated in the classical literary tradition, such as the fictional narrator of the Preface. The fact that the narrator of the Preface states that the title “Kuangren riji” was chosen by the madman himself, “after recovering from his illness” may then actually indicate that the madman did not “recover” from his rebellious thoughts at all. He still chose “Kuangren riji”, instead of “Fengren riji” as title for his old Diary, signaling that he had acted as a wild and unrestrained rebel, rather than been clinically ill. In addition, since the narrator of the Preface chose to keep the title chosen by the madman, we may suspect that the narrator of the Preface sympathises with the madman’s ideas. The fact that the fictional narrator of the Preface pointed out that the title was not “his” may of course give the impression that the narrator wanted to distance himself from title, deeming it inappropriate for the madman’s condition. But if the fictional narrator of the preface “really” thought the madman clinically ill, and the book “really” was published only to be read by medical researchers, why did he keep the title at all? He could easily have altered it to “Fengren riji”, or in other ways reflected its stated “purpose”, e.g. added a subtitle: “A Madman’s Diary: An example of clinical mental illness for medical researchers”.

In addition, the importance of terminology of madness is further highlighted by the fact that the word “feng” 瘋 for mentally ill/crazy is actually used in the Diary. In the scene where the madman’s has held a long speech for his brother in the courtyard trying to make him give up “man eating” (discussed below), and has attracted a group of curious spectators outside his doorstep, his brother loses his patience and shouts to the crowd: “Get out of here all of you! What’s so funny about a madman (fengzi)?” (LXQ). Here the term “fengzi” 瘋子 is used for madman, not “kuangren”, which obviously reflects the perspective of the older brother, who “actually” believes his younger brother to be clinically ill. The choice of terms related to madness do reflect the attitude of the speaker in the Preface, as well as in the Diary. There is clearly a difference of perspective between the older brother and the madman in the story, even after his recovery, and this fictional narrator of the preface appears to have sided with the madman. His stated choice to keep “kuangren” in the title, instead of using “fengren”, clearly invites readers of literature rather than medical researchers, and triggers the literary allusions related to rebels and prophetic madness. Thus we may suspect that the narrator of the Preface is unreliable and secretly sympatheise with the madman’s cause, and thus publishes the diary, not in service of medical research, but as a critique of traditional society and Confucian morals.

To further evidence my reading of the “madness” in the Preface, we may also consider the educational background of the narrator of the preface. Is he a traditionalist, educated only in classical learning, or is he a “modern” man educated in western knowledge? Let’s look at a second example in the Preface, also related to mental illness, the term “pohuaikuang” 迫害狂, “persecution mania”. The narrator states in the Preface “I received the Diary and read it through, finding out that what the brother had contracted was a kind of ‘persecution mania’” (LXQ). The word pohai 迫害 “persecution” is what Lydia Liu calls a Sino-Japanese-European loanword, that is, a loanword from modern Japanese “that consists of kanji terms coined by the Japanese using Chinese characters to translate European, especially English words” (Lydia, appendix B, 284). And pohai is followed by the word “kuang”, “madness”, thus “persecution madness”. The term “persecution mania” from Western works on medicine, psychology and criminology had at least two different translations into Japanese in the beginning of the 20th century, according to Ma Xiaolu: higai moso and hakugaikyo 迫害狂 (Ma, 10). In medical books or scientific treatises the mental disease was translated more frequently as higai moso, while in modern literature or books on social criticism, it was translated more often as hakugaikyo, the term Lu Xun chose in his “A Madman’s Diary” (Ma, 10). According to Ma:

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15 Lu Xun as a translator was aware of the problem of nonequivalence at word level, and would sometimes put translated words within ellipsis points to mark this. Another example, discussed by Davies, is the case of “rendao”. Since Chinese did not have an equivalent word for “humanism” in the “modern, western” sense, Lu Xun claimed that: “As a Chinese word, humanism should (for the time being at least) be kept within ellipsis points “…” and “This is because humanism becomes established, nourished, and protected through the unceasing struggle of each and every person. We don’t receive it as an act of charity from others or in the form of a donation” (“Buman” [Dissatisfaction] 1919 in LQXJ I:358, transl. by Davies, 234).
Interestingly, Lu Xun, who highlights the scientificity of Western medicine in his short story, decides not to adopt the more scientific of the two options. His borrowing of hakugaikyo (a term often used in arts and humanities) instead of higai moso (a term often used in scientific studies) to designate “persecution complex” in “Diary of a Madman” demonstrates his stronger interest in social and literary criticism.” (Ma, 10)

The fictional narrator’s choice of the term hakugaikyo (pohuaikuang) instead of higai moso in the Preface thus renders more strength to the interpretation of the story as a social criticism. However, in my view, the use of the word “pohuaikuang” also reveals something else, namely that the Confucian scholar/bureaucrat that we thought to be the fictional narrator of the Preface, who represents tradition and “reason” in the ideological/linguistic binary opposition between the Preface and the Diary, is not so traditional after all, but rather has studied Western medicine and literature, probably in Japan. He is familiar with a terms for mental illness in Japanese, translated from western medicine and literature, and known to few readers even among the educated elite in contemporary China, (hence the term pohaikuang is in ellipsis points in the Preface). He even feels qualified enough in medicine to make a diagnosis himself, since he, after reading through the diary, comes to the conclusion that these are the symptoms of “persecution mania”. But if he had only studied medicine in Japan, he might have used the Japanese medical term higai moso. Instead he uses the term hakugaikyo. This shows that in addition to medicine, the fictional narrator of the Preface had studied or read also works on literature and social criticism in Japanese and that he chose the latter since he actually intended a reading of the Diary as social criticism.

Zhou states about the “two narrators” in Lu Xun’s short story and the choosing of sides:

a shift from the framing narrative in classical Chinese to the vernacular text in the old vernacular novels [Water margins, Journey to the West etc.] indicates no change in the narrator.¹⁶ The narrator is always the same person, who uses two linguistic varieties for different purposes. But in Lu Xun’s story, the framing narrative and the vernacular proper are totally separated, like two unconnected worlds, each having its own narrator.” (Zhou, 85)

Readers at the threshold of their reading are asked to make a cognitive, linguistic, perceptive, and political choices. They may identify with the narrator in the preface, who writes in classical Chinese and assumes the traditional voice associated with the Confucian moral system. Or their may choose to sympathize with the madman who writes in the vernacular and expresses uncompromising hatred for the old convention. There is hardly any middle road (Zhou, 93)

¹⁶ Some traditional novels had a wenyan preface followed by a vernacular narrative to prove the authors cultural status and elevate the status of the novel (a classical frame provided depth, philosophical or moral teaching), thus wenyan and baihua were used to complement each other and to create a harmonious unity (Zhou, 84).
However, I disagree with Zhou about the two narrators and also about this short story belonging to the “shaky house” family. The use of the terms “kuangren” and “pohaikuang” by Lu Xun were most likely intended to lead readers thoughts to literary works on social criticism in Russia and Japan (Lu Xun’s intended readers in New Youth were mainly reformists like himself, of whom many had studied in both China and Japan and would get the clues). So, the choice of using a Sino-Japanese-European loanword “hakugaikyo” in the Preface written in wenyan undermines the ideological/linguistic binary opposition between the Preface and the Diary. It undermines the authority of fictional narrator of the preface, since it turns out to be written by a “modern” man who most likely had studied western medicine and literature in Japan, as most reformists at the time. The fictional narrator of the Preface thus, in my view, turns out to be unreliable both with regard to his stated purpose with publishing the Diary, and in that he may “actually” sympathize with the madman’s critique of Chinese society and tradition. In addition, since the Diary is full of examples corroborating the narrator of the Preface’s stated diagnosis, we may even suspect that he made it all up, he wrote the diary himself as well, to criticize a society and culture, Confucian morals, just as so many of the other reformist student/writers who had studied in Japan at the time (and as the author himself). So in my view, and as I have tried to show, Lu Xun, provided readers with several clues that can lead us to realize that the “two worlds” separated by diglossia are also connected, and that there is only one narrator, of both the Preface and the Diary, a “rebel” using diglossia for different purposes, which in my view adds to the overall ironic effect when reading the story.

In spite of the binary opposition between the Preface and the Diary based on diglossia, wenyan vs baihua, we find in the Preface linguistic hybridity, evidence of translingual practice and multiglossia, “confrontations” between languages at word level, leading to an ambiguity that gives the narrator of the Preface away. However, I do not think that this places Lu Xun’s story in the shaky house family either, since this according to Zhou implies doubt and uncertainty, not a “conscious word play” as in Yu Dafu’s work. On the contrary, I think “A Madman’s Diary” has a very carefully constructed diglossic binary opposition, which upon closer reading turns out to be multiglossic and has deeper implications for the reading of the text. This is evidence of Lu Xun’s “conscious word play”, his mastery of uniting subject and form (Han) and of developing his narrative technique.

“A Madman’s Diary”: translingual practice and multiglossia in the Diary

It is of course hard to prove the difference between “conscious word play”, and “uncertainty” leading to “unconscious” mistakes when it comes to authors of the past. To further argue my case, let’s look at some examples of the ideological/linguistic tensions and confrontations within the vernacular part of the Diary at word level, and the authorities evoked by these. Although the madman’s diary entries are written in the vernacular, we still find evidence of diglossia within the Dairy itself, so it is not a completely sealed of linguistic unity. There are several words and expressions in wenyan, often the form of quotations and allusions from ancient sources. The madman thus, just as the narrator of the Preface, obviously has had a traditional education, as he
tells of being home schooled by his older brother, teaching him how to compose traditional prose essays and read classical historical works (LXQ). His Confucian moral education is evidenced by his reference the “Confucian Virtue and Morality” (cited above), and the to the practice of filial piety (LXQ). He cites correctly some historical works describing incidents of man-eating, such as “exchange children and eat them” “yizi er shi”, and the “eating the flesh and using his skin to sleep on “shi rou qin pi”, from Mr Zuo’s historical commentaries. He cites correctly some historical works describing incidents of man-eating, such as “exchange children and eat them” “yizi er shi”, and the “eating the flesh and using his skin to sleep on “shi rou qin pi”, from Mr Zuo’s historical commentaries. He also cites the story in the 7th Century BCE philosopher Guang Zhong’s work Guanzi about of Yiya, the cook in the state of Qi in the Spring and autumn period, who allegedly cooked his son for an evil ruler who wanted to taste human flesh (even though the madman mixes up the rulers names)(LXQ 452, 455 f 8). In addition, he claims to have read Li Shizhen’s (1518-1593) “Bencao something…” (LXQ), i.e “Bencao Gangmu, “Taxonomy of Medicinal Herbs. So with this traditional education into the Confucian Classics, History, Philosophy and Chinese medicine and the ability to read and write in the prestigious form of wenyan, why did he start to question Confucian morals and regard it as a man-eating tradition?

By now it comes as no surprise when reading the Diary that the madman, just as the narrator of the Preface, also has had a foreign education. The most striking example of the haunting impression this foreign education had on the madman, is the foreign loanword “haiyina” pops up in the Diary within ellipsis points, as follows:

I remember reading a book somewhere about something called the hai-yi-na. Its general appearance is said to be hideous, and the expression in its eyes particularly ugly and malicious. Often eats carrion too. Even chews the bones to a pulp and swallows them down. Just thinking about it is enough to frighten a man. The hai-yi-na is kin to the wolf. The wolf’s a relative of the dog, and just a few days ago the Zhao family dog gave me a funny look. It’s easy to see that he’s in on it too.” (LXQ vol 1, 449-50, transl. by Lyell, 36-37)

This is a clear case of translingual practice in the Diary. The word hai-yi-na 海乙那 is a direct phonemic transliteration of the English word hyena (LXQ 455, f 7, Liu appendix f, 362). At the time many foreign words were translated into Chinese in different ways until one translation became standard. The standard term for hyena in Chinese was liegou, not hai-yi-na. According to Lydia Liu “the Chinese favors semantic or loan translations over phonemic translation” Liu s 36. So why did Lu Xun, an experienced translator choose to use a transliteration from Cosmopolitan English, the very language of an imperial power threatening to colonize China?

Adorno ones stated that: “Every foreign word contains the explosive material of enlightenment” (Liu, 39 f 117). In my view, Lu Xun chose this word just because it is “explosive”, it

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17 These are words chronicles as an officer in 448 B.C.E urging his fellowmen not to surrender to the enemy, claiming that people in the capital of Song under siege in 603 BCE rather exchanged their children and ate them than surrendered to the Chu army. Lyell 34 fn 6 referring to Legge 5.817). The second allusion refers to an officer bragging in front of the rulers in 551 BCE, claiming that he could easily take on two of the toughest men in the ruler’s service and eat them and sleep on their skins. Lyell 34 fn 6 referring to Legge 5.498.
immediately stands out as foreign word in a Chinese text, a representative of a “guest” language, cosmopolitan English, “confronting” the “host” language, the Chinese new vernacular, to use Lydia Liu’s terminology. But the haiyina is not a friendly “guest”, but rather an “intruder” who brings the threat of foreign aggression into the Diary. It is introduced as a foreign species kin of wolves and dogs, as it is categorized in Darwin’s The origin of species by means of natural selection, which was very influential in China at the time. Lu Xun, as so many other reformists at the time, were impressed by Darwin’s theory of evolution, and even more so, by Yan Fu’s Tian yan lun (1898) a translation of Huxley’s Evolution and Ethics.¹⁸ Yan Fu’s distorted translation, against Huxley’s intention, presents the work as a strong support for social Darwinism, the survival of the fittest among peoples and cultures. This “eating of the weak by the strong” sparked the fear of racial extinction by the stronger imperialist nations among reformists in China at the time (Qian Liqun, 157).

However, in Tianyan lun, there is also “hope” of survival for the people’s of weaker nations, if they become stronger, thus Yan Fu’s translation rendered tremendous support for the reformists “national survival discourse” and demand for radical reform and building a strong, modern Chinese nation. In the case of the rebellious madman, references to social Darwinism and the survival of the fittest would greatly strengthen his claim in the Diary, that Chinese people had to change, and thus it is only logical that these authorities are evoked. In the midst of all the talk about Chinese history and Confucian morals, the haiyina suddenly turns up in the Diary, in the language of a foreign aggressor, and as a vehicle for Darwin’s theory of evolution and of social Darwinism, bringing into the Diary the threat of foreign imperialist aggression, the threat of the foreign beast. The madman writing the Diary had obviously read Darwin’s theory of evolution and Yan Fu’s translation of Huxley’s work, since he presents his own take on the theory of evolution of mankind, from reptile to “real human being”:

Elder Brother, way back in the beginning, it’s probably the case that primitive peoples all ate some human flesh. But later on, because their ways of thinking changed, some gave up the practice and tried their level best to improve themselves; they kept on changing until they became human beings, real human beings. But the others didn’t; they just kept right on with their cannibalism and stayed at that primitive level. You have the same sort of thing with evolution in the animal world. Some reptiles for instance, changed into fish, and then they evolved into birds, then into apes, and then into human beings. But the others didn’t want to improve themselves and just kept right on being reptiles down to this very day. Think how ashamed those primitive men who have remained cannibals must feel when they stand before real human beings. They must feel even more ashamed than reptiles do when confronted by their brethren who have evolved into apes” (LXQ, transl. by Lovell, 38)

¹⁸ Lu Xun discussed Darwin and evolution theory in several of his essays prior to writing “A Madman’s Diary”. Lu Xun in sanxianji xuyan stated that “I have always believed in Evolution theory, that the future will be better than the past, that the young will surpass the old” cited by Qian (4, f. 2).
These words in the Diary are also known for the influence of Nietzsche’s *Also sprach Zarathustra*. Lu Xun himself acknowledged the influence of Gogol and Nietzsche on “A Madman’s Diary”:

In 1834 the Russian N. Gogol, had written “Diary of a madman”; in 1883 Fr. Nietzsche had put in Zarathustra’s mouth the words “ye have trod the way from work to man, and much in you is yet worm. Once ye were apes, and even yet man is more ape than any ape”.[...] But the later “Diary of a madman” aimed to expose the evils of the family system and the Doctrine of Propriety and was much more bitter than Gogol’s. Neither had it the vagueness of Nietzsche’s Superman (LXQ, transl. by Chinnery, 310).

Nietzsche’s influence on Lu Xun is also present in the form of another interesting expression used in the Diary, in the passage about evolution of mankind cited above, namely “real human being” zhenderen 真的人. This was a new hybrid concept Lu Xun developed in his early essays based on Daoism, evolution theory and Nietzsche’s “superman”\(^\text{19}\), used in what scholars have called Lu Xun’s “theory of spiritual evolution” (LXQ, “Po’e shenglun”, Wu, 52-53). Human beings are initially/born “pure in their hearts” “baixin”, words echoing the Daoist Classic Zhuangzi (LXQ “Wenhua pianzhilun”, Zhao, 100), stepping out of the slavery and oppression of feudal society, and becoming “real human beings” (LXQ, “Po’e shenglun”, Wu, 99 f 2). Thus Lu Xun envisioned an evolution from an uncivilized state to a civilized society through liberating the individual’s thinking. Furthermore, in his essay “On the power of Mara poetry”, he shows that “real human beings” could turn into Nietzschean style supermen, “warriors of the spirit” to lead the way in China. Brave writers, such as Byron, Shelley, Pushkin, Lermonotov, Mickiewicz, Slowacki and Petőfi, could raise the spirit of the people: “They spoke with strength to stir new life in their countrymen and make their country a great one” (LXQ, “Mara”, transl. by Denton, 107).

Now, back to the Diary, the madman’s use of the haiyina and the description of the evolution of mankind into “real human beings” cited above shows that the madman must have had a foreign education, he had obviously read Darwin, Huxley (in Yan Fun’s translation) and even Nietzsche. The concept of “real human beings” and the importance of “changing one’s thinking” and becoming “real human beings”, shows that “the madman” has thoughts of how human spiritual development which could save the Chinese, facing extinction by foreign imperialists by the logic of social Darwinism and survival of the fittest. In one of the final passages in the Diary, the

\(^{19}\) There difference between Nietzsche’s superman and Lu Xun’s “real human beings”, according to Qian Zhengang: Lu Xun did not despise the people and had a strong empathy with the weak and the poor (Qian, 5).
madman is again shouting to the crowd outside the house (before being dragged into the house and locked up by his family), a final, desperate call (to listen to the warnings in Yan Fu’s Tian yan lun) to evolve into (strong, independently thinking) “real human beings”, in essence: to evolve or die!:

You can change! You can change from the bottom of your hearts! You ought to know that in the future they’re not going to allow cannibalism in the world anymore. If you don’t change, you’re going to devour each other anyway. And even if a lot of you are left, a real human being’s going to come along and eradicate the lot of you, just like a hunter getting rid of wolves –or reptiles” (transl. by Lowell, 40)

This is very explicit. But the foreign beast of the “hayyina”, the concept “real human beings” and these entire passages alluding to Yan Fu’s Tian yan lun, would have meant very little to the average population at the time. These expressions and passages in the diary would be best understood by Lu Xun’s fellow reformists within the New Youth camp, students educated in Japan, and to comprehend the expression “real human being”, one would benefit from having read Lu Xun’s essay on the Mara poets.

To sum up, just as in the case of the Preface written in wenyan, in the Diary written in the new vernacular we also find, in addition to linguistic hybridity, wenyan, translingual practice and multiglossia. We find new hybrid concepts in Chinese language and transliterations of foreign words like Haiyi na, a beast carrying a social Darwinist discourse. However, these “foreign intrusions” in the fictional world, linguistically and ideologically, do not break up the overall unity of the Diary itself, but rather introduces the reasons for the madman’s claims, the demand for change. However, the multiglossia within the diglossic binary opposition between the Preface and the Diary, serves different purposes. While the Sino-Japanese-European loanwords on madness in the wenyan Preface undermines the narrator’s reliability, reveals his identity and true sympathies, the transliterations from English and new concepts based on foreign science and philosophy instead strengthen the arguments of the “prophetic” madman in the Diary, proving his identity to be that of a “modern man”, advocating reform and western learning, vernacularization and building a strong, modern Chinese nation.

Conclusions: “A Madman’s Diary” and the “Shaky House”

Lu Xun was most certainly aware of the experimental quality of the new May Fourth literature, and the criticism he might face. New style baihua had been attacked by proponents of wenyan for being “vulgar”, “worthlessness”, and “childish” (Davies, 252). Ma Xiaolu points out that the narrator of the Preface make excuses for the language in the Diary proper, claiming that the diary

20 In 1927, Lu Xun confronted the critique of baihua using the example of a child learning to walk: “The childish can grow and mature, as long as they do not become decrepit and corrupt, all will be well.” (transl. by Davies, 252) Gloria Davies Lu Xun’s Revolution (2013) eminently portrays Lu Xun’s lifelong struggle against wenyan and in favor of baihua, for a a language of the masses?? Lu Xun even came to favor latinization, an alphabetization scheme called “latinxua” (Norman, 260).
is full of “wild statements” and inconsistencies, but “regarding word errors in the diary, I have not altered a single character” (LXQ, vol 1 and Ma, thus “blaiming the madman” for any imperfections in this new vernacular. According to Zhou, Lu Xun’s story belongs to the Shaky house family of writers with struggling with uncertainties through the lack of literary models. But how insecure was Lu Xun really? It could have been false modesty. It can also be deliberate minor errors to increase the credibility when portraying a mad persons mind (as in the case of Gogol’s madman, discussed below). And as for literary models he had several foreign literary examples using the vernacular to draw inspiration and courage from for the linguistic novelty in “A Madman’s Diary”.

It may appear to be extremely bold of Lu Xun to take on this task of producing the first piece of a new “living” literature in the new vernacular in New Youth. However, Lu Xun and other reformists were inspired by the success of the genbun itchi movement in Japan and he had read Fubatsei’s translation of Gogol’s “Diary of Madman” (Ma, 339-342). Fubatsei’s has been recognized for his contributions to the vernacularization of Japanese though his translations of Russian works (Ma, 340). Ma: “the colloquial stile of Futabatsei’s narrative was unprecedented in Japanese literary history”(Ma, 341). Lu Xun through knowing a little Russian, may also have been aware of the innovative language use in Gogol’s “Diary of a Madman” or at least discussed it with his brother when Zuoren translated it into Chinese. Maija Kononen has discussed the hybridity of the language of the protagonist in Gogol’s story:

Popriscin’s statement that only noblemen can write according to the norms relate to himself […] Popriscin’s quest for perfection in language indicates not only his identification with nobility, but also his yearning to be attributed to the crowd of the “normal”. The flawless punctuation, as well as grammatically and stylistically correct use of language are to be perceived as signs of normalcy, whereas deviation from norms would imply either stupidity or some kind of anomaly. Despite his efforts, Popriscin is not capable of holding to the norms of written language. He slips from the style of the written word to the language of his thoughts in his diary entries. This language of his inner monologue incorporates alternating styles of thought, imitating now speech manners, now written word, ranging from a sentimental literary style to the wordy phrasing of official jargon. However, the idiosyncratic norm-breaking style of Gogol’s mad diarist does not point to the union between madness and artistic creativity cherished by the Romantics. His muddled speech comprised of clichés is rather an indication of the opposite, lack of creativity turned to grafomanstvo. The fact that Popriscin’s writing meets neither stylistic nor formal standards could also be conceived as a conscious narrative strategy chosen by Gogol to make a travesty of the diary [Romantic diary fiction, the Russian Wertheriana in particular]as a literary genre. (Kononen, 86-86)

Lu Xun may have drawn some inspiration from Gogol’s innovative use of language, when he decided to split the short story into a Preface written in the “normal”, sane wenyan of the Confucian nobility, while letting the madman use the vernacular when expressing his thoughts in
the Diary entries. But this is clearly not simply an adoption of Gogol’s language use, structure and aims. In Lu Xun’s work the Preface seems to be the language of reason and normalcy, but when reading the Diary, we come to realize that the madman is not clinically ill. His thought language, the vernacular, is the language of “enlightenment”, of modern thoughts, of reform, of rebellion, a new language for a national literature. Lu Xun’s aim is not clinical madness, but prophetic madness and the creation of a literary language in the new vernacular within the national-language-nation-building discourse of the reformists at the time.

Patrick Hanan states that “each story of Lu Hsün’s is a venture in technique, a fresh try at the perfect matching of subject and form” (Hanan, 53), and indeed, “A Madman’s Diary” is an example of Lu Xun’s mastery in this regard, staging a linguistic/ideological battle in a carefully contructed diglossic literary world, and in addition, through translingual practice and multiglossia bringing in the third player on the fictional literary arena, foreign languages and ideologies, as reinforcements of the new vernacular. But it all comes at a price, the new multiglossic and cosmopolitan vernacular was hardly intelligible for a large part of the population at the time.

The wenyan part of “A Madman’s Diary” posed challenges for those not schooled in classical literary language and the ancient historical, philosophical and medical sources evoked. The new vernacular part on the other hand, was not based on the contemporary speech of the people in the streets but rather a language under construction towards becoming a unified national language. Lu Xun’s short stories are often interspersed with foreign loan words and new concepts, related to Western science, medicine, philosophy and literature, mediated through Japanese translations, or direct transliterations from English, and in some of his later short stories, he included English words proper (as in “Xingfu de jiating” [The happy family]). Wang Hui has claimed that the cosmopolitanism of Lu Xun’s vernacular, writing in baihua but with frequent references to Western writers and philosophers created an Europeanized hybrid language was far removed from the “language of the masses” Lu Xun advocated, but rather became the lingua franca of the new elite (Wang Hui, cited by Davies, 250). For readers, the story thus required both a classical and a modern, foreign education if one was to appreciate all its implications. This would limit the readers mainly to students who received a traditional education at home and then studied in Japan, such as the reformists in the New Youth camp.

For western readers, the diglossic battle between wenyan and baihua in “A Madman’s Diary” goes completely undetected. In most English translations, there is no difference in style between the Preface and the Diary and there are no footnotes informing about this stylistic difference or the significance of it. So even though “A Madman’s Diary” is regarded as part of the World literary canon today, its major qualities and their significance are lost in translation. Reading “A Madman’s

Lyell’s translation is to be commended in this regard. Lyell’s creates as stylistic difference between the preface and the diary in his translation and adds a footnote commenting that the preface was written in Classical Chinese (Lyell, 29). However, the deeper significance of this is not discussed. Lyell simply states that “The literary language of this introduction [the preface] establishes a somber and impersonal tone, against which the colloquial language of the diary entries stand out in stark contrast.” (xxi).
Diary” in English translation and with a title identical to Gogol’s The Madman’s Diary, and no knowledge about the implications of the title in Chinese, western scholars may see Lu Xun’s “A Madman’s Diary” as a simple case of “local content, foreign form” (Jameson, 49 and Moretti, 57). That is, a case of just passively adopting foreign models of fiction writing in the context of power imbalances between the imperialistic powers and a semi-colonized third world nation. But as I have shown in this study, this is far from the case. Scholars such as Ma Xiaolu, Tang Xiaobing and Zhou and Liu have already shown that the western influence on Chinese May Fourth writers is mediated through Japanese translations of western science and literature, and that in many ways, the Japanese reformation and language reform was the concrete model for the Chinese reformist writers.

My study aimed to highlight the agency of the May Fourth writers, and in particular of Lu Xun’s work, not the passive reception of western influence nor the site of straightforward resistance. In “A Madman’s Diary”, the multiglossic character of the work is carefully constructed, not only in terms of the wenyan vs baihua battle of languages and ideologies between the Preface and the Diary, and the choice of title, but also in terms of the Sino-Japanese European loan words and transliterations from English used to undermine linguistically and ideologically the traditionalist preface, while supporting the claims of the rebel in the diary.

In addition, we find another new “animal” in evolution, apart from the hyena, as the ultimate goal of Lu Xun’s human spiritual evolution. The “real human being”, a new hybrid concept in Chinese language, evoking both Chinese and foreign authorities, is not a simple adoption of foreign ideas, but part of Lu Xun’s “spiritual evolution theory”. It is a combination of Darwin’s theory of evolution, social Darwinism, Nietzsche’s superman, and Daoism’s ideas of human beings “pure heart” by nature and even the Confucian tradition of self-cultivation and the didactic function of literature. Lu Xun’s ideas expressed in his early essays advocate the development of free independently thinking educated and enlightened individual become “real human beings”, and the cry for spiritual warriors able to save China, though literary works filled with passion and patriotism, such as the Mara poets. Although Lu Xun never offered a complete theory of humanism he was, as Gloria Davies, points out incredibly concerned with humanism and the human being and advocated “self-aware, other-oriented altruism as the most fitting attitude to possess and navigate along the road of life. Like many of his wenyan-schooled contemporaries, Lu Xun attached great importance to the active cultivation of moral (or righteous) emotional guidance in life” (Davies, 233). Education and moral self-cultivation is of course is in line with traditional, Confucian morals and values.

With regard to translingual practice, Lydia Liu aims to “explain the modes of transmission, manipulation, deployment, and domination within the power structure of the host language” (26-27) and how “Meanings […] are not so much “transformed” when concepts pass from the guest language to the host language as invented within the local environment of the latter. In that sense, translation is no longer a neutral event untouched by contending interests of political and ideological struggles. Instead, it becomes the very site of such struggles where the guest
language is forced to encounter the host language, where the irreducible differences between them are fought out, authorities invoked or challenged, ambiguities dissolved or created, and so forth, until the new words and meanings emerge in the host language itself.” (Liu, 26-27). Liu’s description of “translingual practice”, as I have tried to show in this study, can in my view explain very accurately the processes at work in Lu Xun’s “A Madman’s Diary”.

The conclusion is that Lu Xun was not suffering from the effects of the “shaky house experience” rather, he displays strong agency, through translingual practice and multiglossia used in his literary work to stage the “battle” between languages and the ideas they embodied at the time.

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