

The Political Martyr in Lu Xun's Writings

Liu Hezhen: In Memoriam” 紀念劉和珍君 is one of Lu Xun’s 魯迅 (1881–1936) best known and most anthologized prose pieces.¹ All the elements that might endow it with significance converge here: a great writer on an issue of great moment; a young martyr killed by her own government; many other dead and wounded; and, as many saw it, contrasts between patriotism and capitulation, and between nationalism and imperial aggression. Lu Xun’s eloquent eulogy captured and personalized this explosive, historic moment.

“In Memoriam” was and is read as a political statement whose searing indictments are deepened by grief. This common conception, however, omits a crucial element that, when examined, tells us important things about Lu Xun. Overlooked is the fact that, despite the obviously passionate tone of the eulogy and the tense political atmosphere of the time, he did not write about the deaths of Liu Hezhen and the others in the usual political language. Indeed he completely avoided the formulaic, highly politicized rhetoric of martyrdom. Lu Xun did something far more complex: he wrote about a person and a death at a highly charged political moment in a way that achieved a unique conjunction of literature and politics. The relationship of literature to politics had troubled and engrossed him from his student days in Japan and continued to do so through every later stage of his creative life. “In Memoriam” represents a conjunction which was to prove unique in his works. Through this essay, Lu Xun had a profound effect on the public’s political feeling that could not be reduced to ordinary political discourse.

The famous incident of March 18, 1926, was the last major event of Lu Xun’s Beijing period.² Despite his twenty-five years of direct observa-

I GRATEFULLY acknowledge support from the Eugene Lang Foundation, which partially funded the research for this article.

¹ “Jinian Liu Hezhen jun”; see *Huagaji xubian* 華蓋集續編, in *Lu Xun quanji* 魯迅全集 (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1981; hereafter cited as *LXQJ*), vol. 3, pp. 274–79.

² Two compilations of contemporary material relating to this crisis, with somewhat different coverage, are: Sun Dunheng 孫敦恆 and Wen Hai 聞海, eds., *Sanyiba yundong ziliao* 三一八運動資料, *Zhongguo xiandai gemingshi ziliao congan* 中國現代革命史資料叢刊 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1984; hereafter *Sanyiba/1984*); and Jiang Changren 江長仁, ed., *Sanyiba can'an ziliao huibian* 三一八慘案資料匯編, *Beijing diqu gemingshi ziliao* 北京地區革命史資料 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1985; hereafter *Sanyiba/1985*).

tion of the revolts and revolutions that created martyrs, he was deeply shaken by this instance of government-directed violence. The death of someone he knew seemed to have reached into what T. A. Hsia described as Lu Xun's consciousness of the "terrible burden" of death.³ The violence that escalated from that point on was probably what caused Lu Xun to write some months later in Amoy (about the ending of "The True Story of Ah Q" 阿Q正傳),

I thought once I had exaggerated, but I do not think so now. If I were to describe events in China today exactly as they happen, they would appear grotesque to people of other countries or those of a future, better China.⁴

Yet in this tense moment, Lu Xun's approach in "In Memoriam" was not political, nor was it simple. He attacked the enemy but maintained a complex attitude towards the actions and rhetoric of his own allies. Despite the comparisons made in 1989 to the March 18 tragedy, one wonders how Lu Xun might have responded to the Tian'anmen incident, since the forty-seven dead and 200 injured in 1926 would have seemed small numbers.

LIU HEZHEN IN LU XUN'S EULOGY

The events of March 18, 1926, began with a large rally,⁵ hastily organized, in Beijing's Tian'anmen Square. Its participants were demonstrating against a Japanese ultimatum to the Duan Qirui 段祺瑞 government for the restoration of free passage for its ships on the river access to Tianjin and Beijing. At the rally's conclusion, a crowd of about 2,000, composed chiefly of university students, marched to the Government House to present a petition. While the demonstrators were in the courtyard in front of the building, the metal gates to the yard were shut, trapping them. Soldiers emerged on all sides and fired upon the unarmed petitioners and then advanced to beat them with truncheons. In the next few minutes forty-seven

died and more than 200 were injured. The attacks were brutal: a listing of the injuries and fatalities showed that many were wounded by both gunfire and bayonet. In many cases, the knife wounds were inflicted after the victim had already fallen to gunfire.⁶ The dead and wounded were found lying in places within the courtyard that suggested they were trying to flee rather than to attack, as the government claimed.⁷ That same day, a government statement claimed that the petitioners were armed "rioters" and named five leaders for arrest.⁸

The response to what quickly became known as the March 18 Tragedy (*sanyiba can'an* 三一八慘案) was nationwide. In each of the major cities, associations of students, workers, and merchants met together to issue protests as a unified group. In Beijing, more than 150 groups came together; in Tianjin, more than 300; in Shanghai, more than 160.⁹ Resolutions were passed, and telegrams of protest lodged with the Duan Qirui government. In Beijing, memorial services were held, separately by each university and also jointly, some attended by thousands and lasting for hours.¹⁰ In the cities of Guangdong, Nanjing, Wuhan, Changsha, Hangzhou, Chongqing, and Guizhou demonstrations and strikes took place over the next several weeks.

Public mourning was based on a clear conception of the dead as political martyrs. Many memorial committees carried the word "martyrs" (*lieshi* 烈士) in their names, as did the memorial services themselves. One at Beijing University had a banner for "The Martyrs of March 18" over the dais, and, flanking it, vertical banners read "The Blood of the Martyrs" and "The Flower of the Revolution." At the memorial service for Liu Hezhen and Yang Dequn at Beijing Women's Normal College, Liu's torn clothes were exhibited, as well as a photograph of her bloody corpse at the scene of death. The committee formed to bury the dead and to create a monument in their honor was called "The Committee for the Burial of the Forty-Seven Noble Martyrs." A memorial erected in 1929 read "The Public Grave

³ Tsi-an Hsia, "Aspects of the Power of Darkness in Lu Hsun," in *The Gate of Darkness: Studies on the Leftist Literary Movement in China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968), pp. 152-53.

⁴ "Ah Q zhengzhuan' de chengyin" 阿Q正傳的成因; see *Huagatiji xubian de xubian* 華蓋集續編的續編, in *LXQJ* 3, p. 380; trans. Yang Hsianyi and Gladys Yang, "How *The True Story of Ah Q* Was Written," in *Lu Xun: Selected Works*, 3d edn. (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1980) 2, p. 318.

⁵ Estimates of its size varied greatly, from 5,000 to 20,000. The former was used the next day in the newspaper *Shibao* 時報 (*Sanyiba*/1985, p. 67). The latter figure is commonly given today (*Sanyiba*/1984, p. 554).

⁶ The figure of 2,000 petitioners is given by Zhu Ziqing 朱自清, "Zhizhengfu da tusha ji 執政府大屠殺記" ("completed five days after the massacre"), *Yusi* 語絲 72 (March 29, 1926), in *Sanyiba*/1985, p. 341. *Sanyiba*/1985 provides a table of the dead, with hometown and school affiliation or occupation, and a table of the wounded, with school affiliation and the nature of the injury (pp. 116-17 and 118-27). Thirty-nine names are listed on the memorial erected in 1929 (text and names, *Sanyiba*/1984, p. 271, and *Sanyiba*/1985, pp. 115-17).

⁷ Report in *Yenjing zhoukan* 燕京周刊 (*Sanyiba*/1984, p. 119).

⁸ *Sanyiba*/1984, p. 77; in *Sanyiba*/1985, p. 42, but dated the 19th.

⁹ Figures from Li Anbao 李安葆, *Lu Xun yu Zhongguo xiandai shi* 魯迅與中國現代史 (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1991), pp. 49-50.

¹⁰ An account of a joint memorial meeting in the newspaper *Jingbao* 京報, March 24, 1926 (*Sanyiba*/1984, p. 100).

of the Martyrs of March 18.¹¹ The dead, then and later, were ready-made symbols of patriotism.¹²

Lu Xun, too, was deeply affected. He had no part in the demonstration and did not learn of it until the day itself,¹³ but news of the deaths was brought to him soon after they occurred.¹⁴ One of the dead, Liu Hezhen, had been his student at Beijing Women's Normal College. Another student from the same college, Yang Dequn 楊德群, had also been killed, and nine more were wounded. Among the universities where he lectured, the Normal College was personally closest to him. Xu Guangping 許廣平, later to be his wife, was a student there, and it was at this college that he took his first open political action. This had occurred in 1925, when he and other faculty supported the activist students in their stand against the college administration and the Department of Education. After the March 18 tragedy, however, he refrained from the highly politicized language of martyrdom and instead achieved his own solution through the eulogy. But his restraint was not owing to a detachment from the events.

An old friend, Xu Shoushang 許壽裳, must have provided Lu Xun with the same stark account of the aftermath of the massacre that he later recorded in his memoir. Xu earlier had been president,¹⁵ and then dean, of Beijing Women's Normal and had brought Lu Xun in to lecture on the

¹¹ For the committee names, see *Sanyiba/1985*, pp. 8-9; the Beijing University memorial service, *Sanyiba/1984*, p. 99; Liu Hezhen's bloody clothes and the massacre photograph, *Sanyiba/1984*, pp. 232-33; the monument committee name, *Sanyiba/1984*, pp. 127-28; the grave monument, *Sanyiba/1984*, p. 271-73.

¹² Except for the martyr-and-hero angle, there is little Chinese bibliography on the eulogy, and no Japanese bibliography because of the sensitive topic of Japanese expansionism.

¹³ His *Diary* showed him at home all day (*LXQJ* 14, p. 572). That the plans were known to him only that morning we learn from "In Memoriam" (*LXQJ* 3, p. 276). Years later, Xu Guangping wrote that it was she who had told him that morning of the plan to petition when she brought him a manuscript she had finished copying. Disapproving, he detained her by asking her to copy another manuscript. See her *Lu Xun huiyi lu* 魯迅回憶錄 (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1962), pp. 17-18. His *Diary*, which is an unembellished record of items such as weather, visits, letters, books, and haircuts, does not note her among the visitors of that day.

¹⁴ Xu Xiansu 許羨蘇, "That afternoon, I brought the terrible news of the deaths to Mr. Lu Xun. He was deeply angered"; *Huiyi Lu Xun xiansheng* 回憶魯迅先生, in *Lu Xun yanjiu ziliao* 魯迅研究資料, vol. 3. This visit by Xu Xiansu is not recorded in the *Diary*, and Xu's account was written many years later, but it is probably reliable. A graduate of the college, she was in a position both to learn quickly of the deaths and to know Lu Xun on a personal basis - the former because she was employed at the college library, the latter because she was from Shaoxing, Lu Xun's hometown, where she had been a student of his younger brother, Zhou Jianren 周建人. In Beijing, as a native of Shaoxing, she often kept company with Lu Xun's mother, who only spoke the Shaoxing dialect. Her case is similar to that of three sisters from Shaoxing, of whom one, Yu Fang 俞芳, then age twelve, later also wrote a memoir, *Wo jiyizhong de Lu Xun xiansheng* 我記憶中的魯迅先生 (1981).

¹⁵ He was not the president against whom the students had protested the previous year.

history of Chinese literature. On the afternoon of the 18th, he had first gone to the college, but when news of the deaths came he went immediately to the scene at the Government House.

Xu's account brings home to readers today the sorrow and pathos of that day. When he arrived with Lin Yutang 林語堂, the new dean, they found the main gates closed. They went through a small gate left open and saw before them bodies and blood everywhere. He wrote:

The body of Liu Hezhen had already been placed in a flimsy coffin in a row with several others, all holding girl students. Her face and eyes still had such an appearance of life, and her forehead still had such warmth upon it that when I saw Dr. Mao among the people outside the gate, I hurried over to him and asked him to come in and examine her. But it seemed that her heart had long stopped, and there was already no hope.¹⁶

To Xu's picture, we may add the account of Liu Hezhen's fiancé, who tells us that he was with Xu Shoushang when, uncovering coffins one by one, they located Liu's body and determined that she was dead.¹⁷ Xu's account continues:

I also heard that there were many wounded in the hospitals, so I hurried there too. There I saw that the examining rooms were full of the dead - these must have been the ones who were not yet dead when they were brought to the hospital - or who had died on the way before they reached the hospital. The body of Yang Dequn (the other fatally shot student from the College) was lying on a table,¹⁸ her lower half dragging off the table's surface. Alas, how wrenching these sights were. Words cannot tell of them. I could not bear to look further.¹⁹

Lu Xun wrote nine essays on the events of this day, more than on any other subject. Every article he wrote from March 18 until April 13, five weeks later, concerned it in some way.²⁰ The best known and most frequently quoted are "Roses without Flowers, Part 2" 無花的薔薇之二, written immediately upon receiving news of the shooting, and the eulogy with

¹⁶ Xu Shoushang 許壽裳, *Wang you Lu Xun yinxiangji* 亡友魯迅印象記 (1947; rpt. Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1953), p. 68.

¹⁷ Fang Qidao 方其道, "Weihunqi Liu lieshi Hezhen shilue" 未婚妻劉烈士和珍事略, *Jingbao*, Aug 26, 1926 (*Sanyiba/1985*, p. 367).

¹⁸ The next day, *Shibao* listed the dead and wounded and located Yang Dequn at Gongchengguan Hospital (*Sanyiba/1985*, p. 71).

¹⁹ Xu, *Wang you Lu Xun yinxiangji*, p. 69.

²⁰ Six are chronologically arranged in *Huagaiji xubian* (*LXQJ* 3, pp. 259-78); two are in *Yecao* 野草 (*LXQJ* 2, pp. 216-20), a signal of their more personal nature; and a final one in *Eryiji* 而已集 (*LXQJ* 3, pp. 571-79).

which we are concerned, "Liu Hezhen: In Memoriam."

The eulogy recounts Lu Xun's reasons for writing and gives a brief description of Liu Hezhen's death. Most of it, however, is a series of reflections on the implications of her death. Clear statements of condemnation and of grief alternate with the almost private use of words and quotations from poetry. Although divided into seven sections, there is no obvious organization. The most one can say is that the middle sections (the third, fourth, and fifth) contain most of the information. The piece is organized by crescendoes of feeling rather than logic. Yet readers have generally used the explicit statements as a guide to the meaning of the whole.

To most readers, then and now, Lu Xun's views on this occasion were clear: he scathingly condemned the government, unreservedly mourned Liu Hezhen and, by extension, all the other dead, and took resolve from their spirit for the struggle to come.²¹ And indeed all his prose pieces on this event make many unequivocal statements in support of this reading. "In Memoriam" alone contains many examples (the numerals in parenthesis indicate the section of the eulogy):

"[My grief] will be the sacrificial offering that one who dies later respectfully makes to the soul of one who has died." (1)

"My student – this was how I had always thought and how I had always spoken. . . . But now she is not a student of 'I who hangs on to life.' She is a youth of China who has died for China." (3)

"I had never feared to attribute the most ugly intentions to the Chinese people, but even so it was beyond my imagining, it was beyond my belief that evil and cruelty could reach to this level." (4)

"The three girls slowly, serenely turned in the face of those guns invented by civilized humans – what astonishing and wrenching heroism this is! The courageous record of the Chinese army in killing women and children, the military skill of the Eight Foreign Armies in punishing the students – these achievements unfortunately are wiped out by some streaks of blood." (5)

"But the murderers, Chinese and foreign, actually lift their heads up, not knowing that upon their faces are splotches of blood." (5)

"I have already said, I had never feared to attribute the most ugly intentions to the Chinese people, but this time several points have exceeded my expectations." (7)

This is emphatic and unambiguous, and at the same time in signature Lu Xun style, with the many exceptional turns of phrase and the savage irony that he never relinquished even in grief. Also characteristic is the

²¹ Li, *Lu Xun yu Zhongguo xiandai shi*, pp. 43–57, provides a typical such reading.

intense lyricism in the expression of grief (analysis of which is outside the present focus), which contributed to the authoritative power of the eulogy. Given the number of such passages, it is natural to read Lu Xun's responses as an eloquent statement of the national anger and grief that produced strikes and demonstrations all over the country.

Such an interpretation, however, tells only half the story. Lu Xun seemed to have joined in, but he did not. Strong statements were to be expected from Lu Xun, even in less heightened situations. With him, it was always perfectly clear which side he was on. Partisan and succinct, he made incisive derision his metier. However, it is important to notice another trait: although he took sides decisively in the eulogy, he did not express a simple opinion of his own side. He attacks the opposing side, but it is far from clear that he defends the actions of the side that he is on. With the March 18 events, his condemnation of the government is thorough and his feelings of anger and grief are clear, but his attitude towards political activism remains oblique. As with his fiction and his reluctant exercise of influence, his complicated attitude is based on an unillusioned view of human society that is pessimistic and not easily shaken.

Lu Xun's view of the activists is not easy to pin down. This is especially true concerning March 18, where the topic is the blameless young dead. He was writing in the context of a massive outpouring of grief, and if he had made fine, principled distinctions he would have risked giving comfort to the adversary. He was necessarily indirect in expressing reservations about the actions of the students. He wanted to indict the government, but he would not make a symbol of Liu Hezhen's death. Thus it was only after some delay – two weeks elapsed – that he found a way to convey his deep respect without falsifying his own position.

Lu Xun paid tribute by a careful choice of words especially in two places: in characterizing Liu Hezhen, and at the crucial moment of the deaths of the two students. Furthermore, the essential background to his careful use of words is a word that he carefully did *not* use. Lu Xun did not once use, not even in the initial intensity of feeling, the word *lieshi* (martyr), a word freely used by others, both then and now. This is a simple but significant sign of his troubled ambivalence. A related indication is that he did not use words like "courageous" or "heroic," also commonly used by others.²² How was it possible to write several thousand words in these tense

²² These words do occur in "In Memoriam," but as we see later, they do not refer to Liu Hezhen but to the actions of her classmates, a slight but important distinction.

times without the basic vocabulary of heroism and martyrdom? He did so by substituting an original phrase to describe Liu Hezhen, "that gentle smile and soft manner" (*weixiaode* 微笑的, *wenhede* 溫和的), and by using it in an unusual and mesmerizing way. In addition, at crucial moments, he resorted to an older, less strident, vocabulary like *xinran* 欣然, *congong* 從容, and *zhuanzhan* 轉輾, rather than the modern compound words like *weida* 偉大 ("heroic") with which "In Memoriam" is often glossed. In other words, his method was literary and stylistic, even though his topic was political.

Lu Xun avoided the word "martyr" by factual precision. Instead of "martyr," he used the factually correct description of the "forty-seven youth" or the "forty-seven dead."²³ When he wrote of Liu Hezhen alone, he also used the word "youth" 青年 (as in "a youth of China who has died for China"). He did this consistently in all nine essays.²⁴ Because the tone throughout is one of deep respect, of the reverence felt by "one who hangs on to life for one who has died," it is easy to misread the words "martyr" and "hero" into the text. Indeed, commentators universally add these words when paraphrasing Lu Xun. Even the Yangs' translation twice adds "martyr" where the author does not use it.²⁵

"Gentle smile and soft manner" – this phrase is Lu Xun's substitute for emotive words like "martyr" and "heroism." The phrase would be unstartling in a work of fiction, but when used repeatedly in a political eulogy, it produces a remarkable effect, verging on the strange, even inappropriate. Lu Xun uses it five times in all, and in each case, one cannot think of a synonym or a substitute: it is so individualized and so literary one does not really know what it means.²⁶ The usually excellent translation by the Yangs

²³ Among his contemporaries, several others, including Zhu Ziqing, Lin Yutang, and Zhou Zuoren, also avoided the word "martyr," but none replaced it with an equally intense phrase, as Lu Xun did, and none is misparaphrased repeatedly as Lu Xun is.

²⁴ The word "martyr" does occur twice in the March 18 writings, but not with reference to the forty-seven. Once the word was a general reference to all deaths (in "Si di" 死地, *Huagaji xubian* [LXQJ 3, p. 267]) and once it was a reference to four who had died in the 1911 revolution. These four were buried in Beijing but the tablet before their graves was still blank ("Kongtan" 空談; *Huagaji xubian* [LXQJ 2, p. 280]).

²⁵ They translate, "[as though] the martyrs walked into the trap themselves," whereas Lu Xun's words are 死者就如自投羅網一般 ("Empty Talk," *Selected Works* 2, p. 273; cf. "Kongtan," LXQJ 2, p. 289). The second example needs context to be clear, but basically the Yangs omit the several quotation marks used ironically in the Chinese: "In short, there has been a suppression, but where are the Reds?... At all events, the martyrs have been given a funeral," compared to 總而言之: "討" 則 "討" 矣, 而 "赤" 安在? 歸根結蒂, "烈士" 落葬 ("The 'Suppression of Reds,'" *Selected Works* 2, p. 277; cf. "Ruci 'taochi'" 如此討赤 [LXQJ 2, p. 284]).

²⁶ Only one article I am aware of has found this phrase notable. See Li Chuanyu 李傳瑜, "Liu Hezhen de weixiao yu wenhe" 劉和珍的微笑與溫和, in *Yuwen jiaoxue yu yanjiu* 語文教學與研究 12 (1984), where the author lists and paraphrases the five occurrences.

tries to blend in the phrase when in fact it sticks out. Indeed, as it is used, the description may even at times be at odds with the truth. Nonetheless, this unusual use of a literary phrase proves useful to Lu Xun. It allows him to avoid claiming special knowledge of her thoughts or feelings while she was alive. It allows him to give her a significance that is imagistic rather than political. And it imparts an intense and emotive urgency to the essay without using the political rhetoric of martyrdom.

As a description of Liu Hezhen in life, the phrase is initially used to describe how she looked when she is identified to Lu Xun:

Once I could put the name and the person together, I felt some silent surprise. I would have thought that a student who . . . had defied a president,²⁷ that such a person would surely have some air of boldness about her. But in fact she had a gentle smile on her face and was very soft in her manner. (3)

At this first occurrence, the phrase might seem merely to be the familiar literary device of using a gentle exterior to highlight contrasting interior qualities. But when describing her as a student of his,²⁸ Lu Xun uses the phrase again. Instead of elaborating on his initial impression, he writes merely that "I saw more of her then; she still had that gentle smile and soft manner." Closer acquaintance does not lead him to presume to know what inner qualities caused her to refuse "to submit to authorities." She remains an individual about whom we cannot discover much. The phrase both serves his scrupulous adherence to the truth and avoids attributing traits in hindsight, especially traits useful for symbolism.

In her death, this phrase serves a different function. "How could Liu Hezhen, with her gentle smile and her soft manner, how could it reach the point that her blood would be spilled for no reason before the Government House gates?" he writes, and "Liu Hezhen with her gentle smile and soft manner is dead." The destruction of this gentle individual provides an image of terrible finality, but without the context of heroism.

When Lu Xun comes to describe the moment of her death, we might expect that he would need to use a word like "courage." But he does not. He describes the scene with an ancient, unstrident adjective, *xinran*. The Yangs translate this as "gaily," which gives the right general idea. "I did

²⁷ She was head of the student union and one of six student leaders expelled from the college in May, 1925, by the president.

²⁸ When the college was dissolved by the president in September, 1925, some faculty, including Lu Xun, held classes off-campus. This was when Liu Hezhen came to Lu Xun's lectures.

not see this," he wrote, "but I heard that she, Liu Hezhen, went forward gaily."²⁹ *Xinran* means a sense of profound ease, such as felt at a moment of perfect fit. What does it mean that Liu Hezhen died as she "went forward gaily"? Lu Xun does not give a definite answer. "Gaily" is hard to explain; it cannot be "fitting" to die as she did, since Lu Xun was clearly appalled by the death of a young student at the hands of government soldiers. But *xinran* is as far as Lu Xun will go to say that there is a rightness about her actions in her own terms. This is far from the connection others made between the martyr deaths of the students and their heroic character. Like "gentle smile and soft manner," in the word *xinran*, the visible stands for a calm interior which is attributed to her but which remains nonspecific.

Lu Xun also avoids any martial heroism when it came time to describe the actions of her two classmates, using another old term, *congrong*. As Liu fell to gunfire, two classmates came to her aid, one after the other, and of them, Yang Dequn, also died while Zhang Jingshu 張靜淑 was wounded. "*Congrong*," Lu Xun writes of their conscious advancement towards danger. *Congrong* is the unhurried demeanor of someone self-composed. The Yangs translate this as "calmly": "That Chinese girls could face death so calmly" and "These three girls [turned slowly] ... calmly before the guns of the civilized."³⁰ "Serenely" is another possible translation. Besides *congrong*, the verb used here, *zhuanzhan* ("turned slowly," my translation), is also an ancient one, descriptive of slow, ceremonial movement. Again, what does it mean, that the girls "turned slowly ... calmly" at their deaths? No further explanation is made; Lu Xun gives us only a certain dignity imparted by the words. These ancient adjectives and verb, closely tied to traditional modes of behavior, especially inner composure, remove the deaths from modern manipulation.

Lu Xun's remarkable locutions hint of the difficulties that he found in this assignment. The apolitical, entirely personal, nature of "gentle smile and soft manner" and the association of *xinran* and *congrong* with other types of comportment gave him both a framework and a vocabulary that were not applicable to a political martyr. That Lu Xun was troubled and sought a formulation can be inferred in the two weeks that elapsed before he wrote the eulogy. (The other essays he wrote in the meantime concerned the political disputes that flared up immediately following the massacre, and show how much easier he found writing on such topics than on the fundamentals.) As he wrote in the eulogy, one week after the deaths (March 25),

²⁹ Yang and Yang, *Selected Works* 2, p. 271.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 2, pp. 272, 271, respectively.

when a memorial meeting was held at the college, his contribution was already missed and he was asked about it. But even then it took him a further week to write the eulogy. He finally wrote it on April 1, when he seemed to have declined to attend a second memorial at the college.

In short, by devising a personal phraseology, he removed Liu Hezhen from the realm of symbolism and from the possibility of having any easily agreed upon meaning. He found a vocabulary and a framework that allowed him to write of the death of a young political activist without mentioning politics or activism, indeed without mentioning heroism, or courage, or principles.

Such a portrayal of Liu Hezhen and her classmates, so firmly based on one image and three old words, is not inevitable. In fact, it is quite at odds with the picture left by one of the participants, Zhang Jingshu, a fellow student who survived. Admittedly, Zhang's account, written after 1949, is likely tainted by the formulaic requirements of Communist ideology ("a fiery air," "right hand raised high in a fist") that expected actions that would, as Lu Xun recognized, belie a "soft smile and gentle manner." In Zhang's description, Liu Hezhen is a typical serious, modern young woman, as a female student activist might well have been and as a photograph showed her to be: "short-haired, in a long blue gown that came down to the calves, with flat cloth shoes."³¹ These traits, today innocuous, were a challenge to authority at that time, when short hair and western-style education for girls had come under attack. In Zhang's account, both the demonstration and Liu Hezhen are rendered in a recognizably heroic manner:

With a fiery air, she carried the college flag with the characters "National Beijing Women's Normal College" at the head of the college's contingent. At noon, after the rally ended, more than two thousand of us proceeded to present a petition at Government House on Tieshizi Road, shouting along the way revolutionary calls such as "Down with Imperialism!" "Down with Duan Qirui!" and "Resist the Demands of the Eight Powers!" Liu Hezhen carried the school flag against her left shoulder and with her right hand raised high in a fist, called out the slogans in a loud enthusiastic voice, and walked forward with great strides.³²

The moment of death, too, is recognizably heroic. Zhang described hearing the sound of gunfire, after which the crowd rushed to a gate on the left

³¹ "Yi Liu Hezhen lieshi" 憶劉和珍烈士, excerpted in Jin Bangjie 靳幫杰 et al., eds., *Lu Xun zuopin xiangjie* 魯迅作品詳解 (Beijing: Beijing gongye daxue chubanshe, 1994), pp. 31-33. This piece was written after 1949. Zhang Jingshu lived until 1978 (*ibid.*, pp. 39-40).

³² *Ibid.*, p. 32.

(toward the gunfire), "Liu Hezhen rushing in with them, the flag at her shoulder." By contrast, a Liu Hezhen with a gentle smile and soft demeanor sets aside the archetypes of heroism.

The wording that distinguishes Lu Xun's eulogy also supplies its value and permanence. I would argue that "In Memoriam" became highly influential and memorable precisely through his choice of words. The one image repeated many times and the two ancient adverbs made it possible for Lu Xun to leave untouched the question of a person's character and motivation. He created a core of mysteriousness that avoided clichés and prevented us from capturing and categorizing her. As Leo Lee has pointed out, Lu Xun used images repeatedly until they "become metaphors implying complex layers of meaning."³³ This is what happens here. Layers of meaning are built up through repetition, but we are still not able to sum up Liu Hezhen. This somehow makes her more permanent. Other eulogists of Liu Hezhen supplied many adjectives. Some, such as classmates and a fiancé, may have known her better and hence have had more accurate descriptions. Yet their accuracy did not succeed in individualizing her. Lu Xun did not even aim for that kind of accuracy, but his result has endured.

Lu Xun's choice of a style for the eulogy has an equally lingering effect on the reader's recollection of Liu Hezhen and provides the context for his choice of words. David Pollard has drawn attention to the underlying rhythm of parallel prose, which contributes to this quality. Summarizing an article by Liang Xihua 梁錫華, he writes, "Once the essay's 'filler' words are set aside, certain passages fall naturally into lines of even length, and these lines have the measured cadence of verse. In addition, there are numerous examples of strict parallelism within and between structures."³⁴ Thus for "In Memoriam," we have, in addition to imagery and diction, the rhythm and memorability of poetry disguised as prose.

Lu Xun's achievement is clearer when we compare his eulogy with those by two men of comparable stature, Lin Yutang and his brother Zhou Zuoren 周作人, both known as masters of the essay form. Like Lu Xun, they were prompted by a personal connection with the college and by a sense of responsibility stemming from that connection. Both men, like Lu Xun, were on the faculty of several Beijing institutions, and Lin Yutang, in

addition, had become dean at the Normal College two days earlier.

Lin Yutang was both sincere and responsible. In writing his commemorative essay, he was impelled by sorrow – his essay was feelingly dated "three days after March 18" – and by his responsibility as the senior officer at the college.³⁵ His acquaintance with Liu Hezhen was necessarily slight, and in his essay, he wrote of the two or three times he had spoken to her, of what he learned of her from Xu Shoushang, his predecessor as dean, and of the classwork she had done for him. From his words, she seemed like a young student whom a professor had come to know from occasional contacts in student activities (the students had put on an English-language drama) and, in those eventful times, also through student activism (she called the morning of March 18 to say that the students would not be in class but at the demonstration). Literal, tactful, intelligent, Lin left the young activist no core of mystery.

Where Lin Yutang's contribution was well-meaning and prosaic, Zhou Zuoren's contribution was strangely solipsistic.³⁶ He began with an explanation of his own (delicately calibrated) temperament, and how he tended to be very upset by any unexpected event. Later he explained the reasons for his grief by quoting from himself on China and death. Finally he was grateful that at Liu and Yang's wake, he was spared the sight of their wounds and bloody clothes because they were already wrapped in their shrouds. The one moment not wholly filtered through his sensibility was a glimpse of the young women's bodies in their coffins, "the two lined up in sleep." Zhou was clearly deeply affected – perhaps that accounted for the unrelenting focus on his own emotions – but from our distance in time, the effect is odd.

Clearly, Lu Xun's memorial was both powerful and at the same time isolating. It removed Liu Hezhen from public discourse and hence from anything but personal significance. It even removed her from the personal traits that were shared by others. To have left her in the public realm would have been to expose her to "gossip" and "rumor" and to rapid "forgetting" – recurrent fears expressed by "In Memoriam" only two weeks after the massacre. Lu Xun succeeded, in a sense, in transporting her to another realm: a figure defined by a gentle smile, a soft manner, and that *xinran* moment in the face of death.

³³ Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Voices from an Iron House: A Study of Lu Xun* (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1987), p. 114.

³⁴ Liang Xihua, "Lu Xun de Jinian Liu Hezhen jun" 論魯迅的紀念劉和珍君, *Nanyang shangbao* 南洋商報 (March 1981). Summarized in David E. Pollard, "Lu Xun's *Zawen*," in Leo Ou-fan Lee, ed., *Lu Xun and His Legacy* (Berkeley: U. of California P., 1985), p. 77.

³⁵ "Dao Liu Hezhen Yang Deyuqun nüshi" 悼劉和珍楊德群女士 ("Elegy for Liu Hezhen and Yang Dequn"), in *Yusi*, March 29, 1926 (*Sanyiba*/1984, pp. 237-41).

³⁶ "Guanyu sanyue shibari de sizhe" 關於十八日德死者 ("On the Dead of March 18"), in *Zexie ji* 澤集 (Beijing: Beixin shuju, 1927), pp. 137-44.

LIU HEZHEN AND MARTYRS IN LU XUN'S FICTION

Martyrs play an important if off-stage role in two of Lu Xun's short stories, "Medicine" 藥 and "The True Story of Ah Q."³⁷ His portrayals of these martyrs and of Liu Hezhen are parallel in mutually reinforcing ways that deserve our attention. The earlier fictional martyrs show that the attitude toward political activism analyzed above in "In Memoriam" had existed consistently over a fairly long period of time – at least since 1919, when "Medicine" was written, perhaps since the anti-Qing movements leading up to the 1911 Republican revolution, the time period in which the two stories are set. Thus an examination of the short stories can increase our appreciation of its final expression in connection with March 18. After 1926, further government violence, this time in Canton and Shanghai, effected a change in Lu Xun's attitudes. He did not relinquish his ambivalence but he set it aside. While Lu Xun's political views at every stage of his life, from Japan to his death, are much studied, my discussion here, based on a new conjunction of the writings, allows us to trace some subtleties in them.

One notable parallel is that Lu Xun constructed the stories in a way that cancels the value of the sacrifice made by their fictional martyrs. Initially, the stories seem to suggest the opposite interpretation: the martyrs are portrayed as pure, courageous figures sacrificed in a world of self-interested individuals. But in fact, although Lu Xun definitely attacked the venal, corrupt world, he also gave the revolutionaries (presumably his side) the grim and sad fate of dying for systems that denied them any significance.

Because the genre is fiction, Lu Xun was able to manipulate the narrative, and thus he arranged the context so as to negate self-sacrifice. One example is his choice of character to recount the martyrs' deaths. In both "Medicine" and "Ah Q" we are told about their deaths by people who have no chance of ever understanding their idealism. In "Medicine" it is a coarse bully holding forth to his flattering audience. In "The True Story of Ah Q" it is Ah Q regaling the other layabouts. The dead became conversation topics, as Lu Xun feared would happen to the March 18 dead.

Another negating context is structural. In "Medicine" the plot is structured so that decent blameless people have a vital stake in the revolutionary's death (the parents of a sick boy, who hope ingesting his fresh blood will be effective medicine for their son). The unresolvable conflict is summed up by the family names: the two families, both pitiable, whose interests collide, are surnamed Xia 夏 and Hua 華, both names for China. Given

³⁷ In *Nahan*; *LXQJ* 1, pp. 439-47, 485-529.

these names, the martyr's struggle is a hopeless one, not the inspiring one the reader initially expects. In "Ah Q" the protagonist meets the same end as the revolutionary and like him, though for different reasons, does not sing a heroic song when paraded to his execution. It is Ah Q's doubly deprived death, a parody of a first death that no one understood, rather than the youth's idealistic one, that represents the fate China deserves. Together the stories show that martyrs in Lu Xun's fiction, if examined in totality, make comforting conclusions impossible, as does Liu Hezhen's death.

Using "Medicine," we can extend Lu Xun's refusal to condone noble death backwards in time to a historical revolutionary martyr, Qiu Jin 秋瑾 (b. 1875 or 1877), for she is a shadowy presence in this story. She is alluded to in both parts of the young martyr's name, Xia Yu, and like him, she died at a T-shaped intersection.³⁸ She was from Lu Xun's home town of Shaoxing, was a student in Japan at the same time, and was executed in Shaoxing in 1907 after an ill-planned uprising against the Qing dynasty. At the time, Lu Xun famously said that the large audiences she attracted for her political speeches had "applauded her to death."³⁹ Already at this early date, we see something different. Lu Xun could identify a fault on his own side of anti-Qing sympathizers as well as among the obvious executioners.

Another striking parallel is the ages of the dead, a youthfulness that in a subtle and saddening way undercuts their sacrifice. Like the revolutionaries of the stories, Liu Hezhen and most of her fellow martyrs were very young: three were twenty-five, six were twenty-four, twelve were twenty-three, and ten were even younger.⁴⁰ Liu Hezhen was twenty-three, and Yang Dequn was twenty-six. Lu Xun made up no personal information about the fictional martyrs. The historical dead did have lives to tell about, but Liu was so young that even after her death, when information about her was sought, little emerged. Her leadership of the students in the drawn-out protests against the administration was the most frequently mentioned fact. The accounts by her classmates mainly spoke of their grief and shock. Her fiancé's longer account (dated August 25-26, 1926) provided a glimpse of an interesting relationship, in which he helped finance her school fees by his job in the army. Coming to Beijing to visit her, he found himself

³⁸ The allusion to Qiu Jin 秋瑾 in the name Xia Yu 夏瑜 is as follows: Xia is summer and Qiu is autumn, while Yu and Jin are both written with the jade radical. This and other connections with Qiu Jin in "Medicine" are given by Sun Fuyuan 孫伏園, *Lu Xun xiansheng ersan shi* 魯迅先生二三事 (Shanghai: Zuojiashushi, 1949), pp. 18-20, 46-47. Sun was also from Shaoxing.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁴⁰ *Sanyiba*/1985, pp. 116-17.

enlisted in protest activities. Lin Yutang quoted from her English compositions to show her thinking. He spoke to her at the greatest length once when she was returning costumes used in a college play.⁴¹ The net effect was to reveal how young Liu Hezhen was. In one of his other essays concerning March 18, Lu Xun wrote, "those who have not known the fearfulness of death are not likely to be deterred by it."⁴² These are words that applied as well to the martyrs of "Medicine" and "Ah Q," and to Qiu Jin, who was about thirty.

A final parallel gives us a situation in which a clearly enunciated moral about the death of Liu Hezhen leads us to an interesting insight into "Medicine" and into Lu Xun. The sole lesson that Lu Xun finds in the March 18 deaths is in the way the three classmates came to one another's aid under fire. In "In Memoriam," Lu Xun writes of their courage several times, where he does use translatable, modern words such as *chenyong* 沉勇 (courage) and *weida* (heroic, heroism). The courage belonged to the two girls who helped their classmates: Yang Dequn, who died as she stepped forward to support Liu Hezhen ("a brave and true friend"), and Zhang Jingshu, who, seeing Yang fall, still went forward ("just as brave and true a friend"). Of the successive acts of courage, he wrote, "What startling and moving heroism this is!" And later, "What astonishing and wrenching heroism this is!" At the end of the eulogy, he generalizes the courage, seeing in it the heroism of all women, a courage "which has persisted through ... thousands of years of oppression." At this point, Lu Xun makes his only explicit suggestion that the deaths may have meaning: "If we are seeking the significance of these deaths and these wounded for the future, it lies here" (and even then his moral is conditional, "if we are seeking"). He goes on to say it was a courage all the more remarkable because women had only recently entered the public sphere. Perhaps he makes here an implicit defense of all the short-haired girls whose morals had been under attack for the previous year and a half.⁴³

Interestingly, this lesson of mutual aid among women is also found in

⁴¹ There are four accounts by classmates in *Sanyiba*/1984, pp. 226-37 and a fifth one in *Sanyiba*/1985, pp. 361-62; the fiancé's memoir, *Sanyiba*/1985, pp. 363-68; Lin Yutang, *Sanyiba*/1984, p. 239-40.

⁴² "Si di," *Huagaiji xubian*; *LXQJ* 3, pp. 267-68.

⁴³ Interestingly, Zhu Ziqing mentions the courage and magnanimous spirit of women too, telling of two women he overheard while fleeing the shootings. One spoke to another of the soldiers, in a forgiving spirit, "And they too are Chinese." See his "Zhizhengfu da tusha ji," *Sanyiba*/1985, p. 346. Zhou Zuoren remarks on this too, "Xin Zhongguo de nüzi" 新中國的女子; *Zexieji*, pp. 146-48.

the much earlier "Medicine." At the end of story, the two old mothers (of the sick boy who died and of the young revolutionary), unaware of their terrible connection, by chance meet at the graveyard, one son buried in the paupers' section, the other in the criminals'. No words can comfort them; the omens that they seek show themselves only cryptically. Yet the women leave the graveyard together, foreshadowing the later mutual aid in death among the women students. Lu Xun wrote that it was at another person's request that he had inserted two symbols of hope in the story.⁴⁴ One symbol which he did *not* insert at anyone's request, mutual aid among women, is, with the assistance of "In Memoriam," retrospectively evident here, and provides an interesting insight into Lu Xun himself.

Lu Xun's fiction has never been read only as fiction. Its trenchant attacks on people and groups have been read with painful relish and self-recognition. Political martyrs seem to constitute the only group that is unscathed by authorial disapproval. (Children are only partially exempted, although the minor character of the housewife-mother seldom acts hypocritically.) Yet despite their purity, martyrs are not figures of hope, just as Lu Xun could not make Liu Hezhen a figure of hope or significance. The continuity between the fiction and the *zawen* is interesting because it must have gradually become apparent to Lu Xun about this time that he would produce no more fiction, that it remained for the *zawen* to continue alone the work that fiction had once done.

LIU HEZHEN IN HISTORICAL MEMORY

In historical memory, simplification and selective recall are inevitable. This is certainly the case with March 18 and with "In Memoriam." Looking at their revival in 1989 at the time of the Tian'anmen incident (and including in this Lu Xun's other writings about March 18), we might say that in 1989 historical memory is characterized by two features: Liu Hezhen became a personification of student patriotism, and Lu Xun's one specific effort to exert influence (that is, to halt further deaths) was forgotten. It was never Lu Xun's purpose to cast Liu Hezhen as a personification of March 18. That she nonetheless became one shows how difficult it is to accept Lu Xun's views in toto. The second point becomes especially poignant in view of the parallel in student activism and in the subsequent dead

⁴⁴ These are a ring of flowers that magically appeared on the revolutionary's grave and a crow, to which the women had looked for an omen; "Xiezai Fen de houmian" 寫在墳的後面 ("Postscript to *The Grave*"), in *Fen* (*LXQJ* 1, p. 283).

and wounded of 1989, uncounted but thought to number in the thousands. This lapse in historical memory also is consistent with the common assumption that Lu Xun worked in the language of martyrdom.

Because of Lu Xun, Liu Hezhen is the best known of the forty-seven who died on March 18 – both compilations of March 18 material, for example, list her first in treating the biographies of martyrs. In 1989, her memory, although never in eclipse, was revived with the events of June 4, when the Chinese government again brought in troops and opened fire on student demonstrators. Among the demonstrators, one group felt a special connection to the events of March 18, 1926, even before the violence created the stark parallels for everyone to notice. This was a group of students from Beijing Normal University, a successor to Liu Hezhen's college. On April 27, 1989, on the eve of joining the demonstrators camped out on the Square, they anticipated death and wrote out a testament, signing it as a body, "A New Generation of Liu Hezhen." Their text rejected martyrdom ("We only ask to be true men") but nonetheless anticipated death ("The only wish we have is that the press will report with accuracy the manner of our death").⁴⁵ In the romantic, heroic view that the participants had of themselves, sacrifice had meaning.

With the violent ending of June 4, 1989, a more precise parallel with March 18 came to the fore. In the earlier months of escalating demonstrations, a general parallel with the student activism and cultural iconoclasm of the 1920s, summed up in China by the term "May 4," was apparent to everyone. At this time, too, other Lu Xun writings were invoked, including "Diary of a Madman" and "The True Story of Ah Q." In the violent wake of Tian'anmen, the March 18 writings, especially "Roses without Flowers, Part 2" and "In Memoriam," came to prominence and were frequently invoked. A collection issued by the students themselves (widely available only in French translation, *L'impossible printemps*, quoted above), used as an epigraph sentences from "Roses without Flowers, Part 2": "Lies written in ink can never cover over the truth written in blood" and "The debts of blood will be repaid in the same coin. And the longer the delay, the greater the interest!" And a magazine called, significantly, *Nahan* reprinted "In Memoriam" in its August 1989 issue.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Chen Lichuan and Christian Thimonier, eds., *L'impossible printemps: Une anthologie du printemps de Pékin* (Paris: Editions Rivages, 1990), p. 95. This is a collection of primary documents – pamphlets, manifestoes, telegrams, etc., – from the 1989 movement. I have not been able to see the Chinese texts, so the quotations are translated from the French.

⁴⁶ I have not been able to see this magazine. The information comes from Ruth Cherington, *China's Students: The Struggle for Democracy* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 223, n. 15.

On only one point in his March 18 writings did Lu Xun attempt to project his influence on a matter of action (rather than thought) – this was to prevent further killings. He did not accept the idea that there was something of greater value than life. To him, the dead held no example for the living. He did not take part in the demonstrations, strikes, and petitions that followed the massacre. He did not even, it seems, go to the second memorial service held at the college. His personal, lyric approach had highlighted his attitude to violence, and his use of nonheroic words meant that he saw no useful significance in the deaths. What he mourned were the deaths themselves. That this point, hardly subtle, is overlooked shows no one is inclined to listen. The neglect of this is part and parcel of overlooking the fact that Lu Xun did not participate in the language of martyrdom.

Because he could not directly deny the deaths any significance in a eulogy, Lu Xun made his point repeatedly in the other essays. "For China's sake, our awakened youth should not be willing to die so lightly again," he wrote. He rejected the actions that lead to useless death: "I sincerely hope that from now on such petitions will cease."⁴⁷ Nor did he accept that there were such things as useful deaths: "I am deeply grieved by the sacrifices made this time. I hope that such petitions will cease from now on."⁴⁸ Of course these were not the words selected by the students who quoted him in 1989.

His injunctions did not persuade, either in his time or later. Because he became a beacon and symbol of the left, it became important to find as much incipient confirmation of C.C.P. policy as possible in his writings. The genuine uncertainty that he established became firmed up in a certain direction. Thus the standard C.C.P. interpretation says that what Lu Xun really meant is that petitions should give way to action and be replaced by revolution. His remarks are turned into a foreshadowing of the eventual military triumph of the C.C.P. and his own leftward turn two years later. Where others attempt by their method of commemoration to provide an answer to Zhu Ziqing's question "What must we do now,"⁴⁹ Lu Xun essentially felt that there was no answer. This was hardly a helpful response and so it has been ignored.

I have come across one commentator, Huang Houxing 黄侯兴, who clearly understood Lu Xun's attitude towards violence and its application

⁴⁷ Both quotations from "Si di," in *Huagaiji xubian*; *LXQJ* 3, p. 268.

⁴⁸ "Kongtan," in *Huagaiji xubian*; *LXQJ* 3, p. 282.

⁴⁹ "Zhizhengfu da tusha," *Sanyiba*/1985, p. 347.

to the 1989 Tian'anmen Square bloodshed. "Lu Xun," he wrote, "had always understood that human life is precious."⁵⁰ Huang's comment had its own sense of urgency. He was writing in 1993 as editor of a Lu Xun reader for high school students – historically the educated young were Lu Xun's natural audience. In the reader, this eulogy is placed first. The sentence just quoted, however, was Huang's one venture into a clear statement of his views. Later in the teaching material, he made the following oblique comment, in which he seemed to have buried his main points – that the government has killed its own once more, that our basic assumptions must be rethought – among some doubtful assertions:

With the passage of time, the tragedy of March 18 has gradually been forgotten, but this moving eulogy, which combines feeling and literary skill, causes generation after generation of readers to learn of Liu Hezhen, to learn that in the recent history of China, there has once occurred the tragic event of the killing of young students by those in power. Furthermore, it causes generation after generation of readers to think about the path of Chinese revolution that has been filled with thorny difficulties and to reflect about their deep historical lessons.⁵¹

Thus are Lu Xun's sentiments truly perceived and, by necessity, wordily presented.

Another facet of Lu Xun's relation to 1989 can be seen in the ironies of 1999, ten years later, when one must reconcile the many deaths and sacrifices with the very different fates of some of the main actors, ranging from Chinese prison to M.B.A. studies at Harvard. In 1926, too, the young people whom Lu Xun saw almost daily at the time of the crisis soon dispersed to the four corners of the Chinese political scene and to vastly different futures. The discordant voices that said, soon after June 4, 1989, that memories of raw emotions fade and legacies become equivocal were possibly not heard. In this, as in much else, Lu Xun was prescient. He wrote of the brevity of memory two days, four days, and one week after the March 18 tragedy, as well as repeatedly in "In Memoriam" two weeks later. What was lacking for 1989 was a Lu Xun whose creation would, when simplified, create a heroic, romantic personification that could override the disparate outcomes of a historical moment.

⁵⁰ Jin et al., *Lu Xun zuopin xiangjie*, p. 12.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

THE MARCH 18 TRAGEDY IN LU XUN'S LIFE

The events of March 18 precipitated a major change in Lu Xun's life. Although he had no direct part in them, three weeks later he was rumored to be a target for arrest by the government (the government list was leaked and published in the newspaper *Chenbao* 晨報 on April 9).⁵² By the summer, two people on the list had been assassinated, and by the end of August, Lu Xun had left Beijing, his home for nearly fifteen years (1912–26). After false starts in Amoy and Guangdong, he took up the final stage of his life in Shanghai. Other important changes also took place. In his essays, a certain style came to an end, a style that Leo Lee has described as "a lyrical-metaphorical mode of writing" (such as in this eulogy), and as "a unique hallmark of his writings before 1927."⁵³ As for short stories, Lu Xun had ceased to write them. Intellectually, he embarked on a process of study and introspection about the utility of literature that ended with his explicit and open choice of the C.C.P. position that literature serves revolution. Although the entire process was slow, lasting several years,⁵⁴ when seen retrospectively, this endorsement lent a further significance to the already grave time of 1926.

To conclude, I would like to reverse the common emphasis on the departure from Beijing as the beginning of a new stage and discuss "In Memoriam" as a culmination, if an unplanned one, of existing trends. Specifically, I situate "In Memoriam" in the context of Lu Xun's increasing exercise of his own influence.

Initially Lu Xun was reluctant to use the influence that his writings had secured for him. He did not begin to do so until about 1924, when he gradually took on a number of different roles in the literary-intellectual world. But despite these movements towards institutional contributions, he remained himself, which is to say, too complex and too personal to offer usable guidance. "In Memoriam" shows these dynamics clearly.

Lu Xun could have started much earlier – Zhou Zuoren's actions are a good measure of what his education and connections allowed him to do, and in the early years they were often referred to as a team, as "the Zhou brothers." But he did not join the Literary Association when it was founded by leading Beijing figures in 1921, as his brother did; nor did he partic-

⁵² *Sanyiba*/1984, p. 77.

⁵³ Lee, *Voices from the Iron House*, pp. 116–17.

⁵⁴ In Leo Lee's view, this began with March 18 and only truly ended in 1930, a date convincingly later than most dates suggested (*ibid.*, pp. 140–42).

ipate, other than as a contributor, in the magazines that spearheaded the new thinking, such as *Xinqingnian* 新青年 and *Xiaoshuo yuebao* 小說月報. When he began to write in 1918, his writings soon came to epitomize the iconoclastic spirit of May 4, and his fiction provided characters and behavior that became a shorthand for China's situation. Yet almost his sole contribution was to continue writing. When "The True Story of Ah Q" (1922) brought him a new level of fame, he did not follow up on that either. The solitude that had characterized his first six years in Beijing persisted into his years of fame. He seemed not to want to influence people the way he had earlier in Japan, when he and Zhou Zuoren worked so hard on a magazine that was stillborn, a fruitless effort he still remembered nearly two decades later in 1922 when he came to write a preface to his collection *Nahan* 吶喊 ("Call to Arms"). Almost the only exercise of influence in the early years of his fame was to continue to write. He gave the alarm – *nahan* – but he would not lead.

The two years or so before 1926, however, saw a change. He began to exert his influence on the directions in literary and social change. He took lecturing positions at several universities (Beijing University, Beijing Normal University, and Beijing Women's Normal College). He began *Yusi* in 1924 when *Xinqingnian* closed. He worked with his followers among younger intellectuals to start other magazines (*Mangyuan* 莽原 in 1925) and their associated publishing societies (*Weimingshe* 未名社), and to establish ambitious publishing programs for them. In 1925 he took his first open political stand when he sided with students in their prolonged action against the president of Beijing Women's Normal. (This was when Liu Hezhen became known to him.) For these two years, his *Diary* was filled with notations of visits, letters, manuscripts, art work, payments, and other minutiae concerning publishing.⁵⁵ His exercise of influence became almost normal (although quirks remained: the magazine he edited for the longest time, *Yusi*, is an enigmatic mix of essays by aesthetes at one extreme and political activists at the other). Ironically, this activity came at a time when the initial momentum of May 4 had dissipated and its most active figures had gone off in different directions.

By the time of March 18, the fame of his writings had created some obligations for Lu Xun. He began "In Memoriam" by noting, through an apology, that at the memorial service at the college a student came up to ask him whether he had written yet about his student Liu Hezhen. When

he said that he had not, she replied that he ought to. Even someone from his own generation, Xu Shouhang, a man of considerable achievement, and more deeply involved with the college, came to see him repeatedly over the course of these weeks,⁵⁶ and in writing about the event, Xu quoted from Lu Xun's essays rather than express his own views.⁵⁷

March 18 represents an interesting moment in this two-year trend. On the one hand, "In Memoriam" seemed to increase his stature even more. As David Pollard notes, it probably "contributed significantly to the reputation that preceded him to Guangdong" and to his "reception as a revolutionary hero."⁵⁸ On the other hand, what Lu Xun said in the eulogy differed from what readers thought he said. A simplification process is usual in reading Lu Xun, its cause traceable to the nature of his opinions, in which he attacks the enemy but maintains a complex attitude towards his own side. We saw the fate of the only two explicit points he made, to which he specifically called attention (the mutual aid of women and his plea to avoid more deaths): they are both diluted and overwhelmed by paraphrases that assume that he extolled the sacrifice of death in numerous ways in the eulogy.

His prose pieces of March 18, in particular "In Memoriam," showed that in the midst of these many changes, he could still only be called a reluctant participant. He was influential, but his views and his expression of them were not translatable to another situation. His fundamental viewpoint on the tragedy of March 18 and on life had an intensely personal component that, although given public expression in his writing, remains not wholly useful to readers who look to him for answers. His thinking and his writing were not easily popularized, even though he was tremendously popular. He was ornery as a person – thus the phrase "a Lu Xun temper" – and his insights were singular. But whatever he wrote about lived on in memory. March 18 showed this dynamic in microcosm, brought into focus in "In Memoriam." I have not discussed in this article the many passages that are specific to his type of pessimistic outlook, which is due to temperament as much as a sense of being confronted with intractable issues. This is a point that has been well described by T. A. Hsia, who wrote of the double nature of the burden for Lu Xun: "one is traditional Chinese literature and culture, the other the writer's troubled psyche." From this "pro-

⁵⁶ *Diary* (LXQJ 14, pp. 572–77) for visits in March and April.

⁵⁷ Xu, *Wang you Lu Xun yinxiangji*, pp. 68–69, which includes the account quoted earlier of finding the bodies of Liu Hezhen and Yang Dequn.

⁵⁸ Pollard, "Lu Xun's *Zawen*," p. 76.

⁵⁵ *Diary* (LXQJ 14, pp. 467–593), from 1924 to his departure from Beijing, August, 1926.

found soul," which he also called "a morbid soul," came "a sadness which marks his genius."⁵⁹

He was an iconoclast, but he was not a revolutionary. It is doubtful that he became one later. Despite the trenchancy of his depictions and formulations, and the influence that they won for him, the "solutions" he provided were not usable. The personal nature and the complexity of his answers (which in any case are not conclusively stated) preclude his readers' following him. He gave no false answers, but an answer that rang true to him was not useful to others without abridgement. At this crisis, we see Lu Xun producing a combination of effective denunciation and dark, personal colorings. Can this be called leadership? The paradox of Lu Xun's influence is that a scrupulosity that was both intellectual and temperamental produced contradictory traits.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>LXQJ</i>	<i>Lu Xun quanji</i> 魯迅全集
<i>Sanyiba/1984</i>	<i>Sanyiba yundong ziliao</i> 三一八運動資料
<i>Sanyiba/1985</i>	<i>Sanyiba can'an ziliao huibian</i> 三一八慘案資料匯編

⁵⁹ Hsia, "Aspects," pp. 152, 154.