ABSTRACT

Lu Xun (鲁迅, 1881-1936), a native of ShaoXing, Zhejiang province began his education in the traditional chinese school where he studied Chinese classics. His exposure to Western literature in the later periods enabled him to combine the best of the East with the West in his creative works. As a writer, a philosopher, a scholar, and, last but not least, a patriot, Lu Xun's unique literary techniques and styles of writing are reflected in his short stories.

Lu Xun was highly successful in his work especially in his short stories. After his death, many scholars wrote books of him, translated his works and did research on his writings. Most of the research works focussed on the techniques and literary thought of his writings. The success of Lu Xun's short stories may be attributed to the influence of Western literary writings. However, though a very important aspect of study, it remained relatively neglected and attracted less attention. Therefore, I would like to concentrate my attention upon this particular aspect in this academic exercise.

The purpose of this study is to explore how Western literature has influenced Lu Xun's short stories. The study will examine Lu Xun's favourite Western writers and their works, and his stories which scholars believed to be influenced by Western literature.

The exercise is divided into six chapters. The first chapter, an introductory chapter, is to provide the rationale for the study
of Lu Xun's short stories and also a brief description of the approach to the topic. Chapter two concentrates on the life of Lu Xun, including his educational background, his stay in Japan for advanced studies and his career after he returned to China from Japan.

Chapter three discusses Lu Xun's favourite Western writers and their writings. Chapter four compares the Western writings, which had influenced Lu Xun, with Lu Xun's short stories. Whereas chapter five, Western techniques of literary style and expression will be examined to see how Lu Xun's writings have been influenced.

Chapter six concludes that Lu Xun was profoundly influenced by western literature as he studied many western short stories. Nevertheless, because of his early traditional education, he had been selective in his orientation towards Western teachings from which he absorbed only those thoughts and techniques he found to be most relevant. Using traditional Chinese literature as the foundation, Lu Xun synthesized these thoughts and techniques and came out with a distinct literary thought of his own.