Abstract

Lu Xun himself, in a revealing “inscription” written after *Wild Grass* was completed, sums up the guiding thematic motifs in contrasting pairs of images and concepts such as the following: emptiness and fullness, silence and sound, decay and growth, death and life, darkness and light, past and future, despair and hope. These motifs are set off in a perpetual chain of mutual interaction in circles of complementarity and antithesis: despair leads to hope, but hope in turn produces despair. Thus Lu Xun’s bipolarities of conflicting emotion and thought establish a vortex of paradoxes. It is a psychological impasse between hope and despair which produces complicated meanings in his works.

Charles Alber has discerned main structural principle of *Wild Grass* to consist of the interaction of oppositional polarities couched in “symmetry and parallelism.” In an article entitled “Aspects of the Power of Darkness in Lu Xun”, C. T. Hsia has pointed out that all the bright things as bright as it appeared to other writers, could not hide its dark spots under Lu Xun’s scrutiny. Therefore Lu Xun’s treatment of the darker themes is particular important since no one knows how long the twilight hours will last in China or in the heart of Chinese.

The focus of this thesis is to study the parallel structure of despair and hope in Lu Xun’s fiction. This thesis attempts to interpret how and why the hope and despair appear in Lu Xun’s thoughts and emotions. It also discusses how the hope and despair motifs are set off in a perpetual chain of mutual interaction in circles of complementarity and antithesis. The thesis is divided into seven Chapters: Chapter
One is an introduction to the scope and methods and aims of my study. Chapters two and Three explore the influences of traditional and radical Chinese cultures and fin de siecle movement on Lu Xun’s hope and despair. Chapter Four discusses the dark sides of his life. Chapter five and Six analyze hope and despair as an antithesis structure. Chapter Seven is a conclusion.